SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE

GOAL SETTING, PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT AND APPRAISAL PROCESS

October 2023

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DISCLAIMER

This booklet is intended to be used as a reference and procedural guide to the performance management and appraisal process. The general information it contains should not be construed to supersede any law, rule, or policy.

For technical assistance concerning specific situations, employers may contact the Office of Human Resources at (304) 766-5224.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Goal setting and performance development structure the way we do our work. No matter what department/division we are part of, the position we hold, or the expertise we contribute, the Goal Setting and Performance Development programs provide guidelines for institutional success. WVSU is deeply committed to the success and growth of every employee and believes that this process will enable them to be fully engaged and reach their full potential.

These programs link the University's strategies, goals, and mission to employee's individual jobs. They work together to:

- Provide structure and tools to support communication between managers and staff to ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the connection between their contributions and the mission, vision, and values of the University.
- Encourage development of the skills and behaviors (competencies) necessary for success in the ever-changing work environment.
- Provide a framework for written documentation of goal setting and achievement and a time for formal feedback on job performance.

As a Supervisor, you play a critical role in supporting our greatest asset: our exceptional faculty and staff. In Turn, Human Resources supports you as a supervisor with tools and resources to help ensure an equitable and inclusive process for performance management.

II.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The success of WVSU's Goal Setting and Performance Development program is dependent on the involvement, collaboration, and ownership of leaders, managers/supervisors, employees and Human Resources. Each plays an important role.

- **Division Leaders/Vice Presidents** support the Goal Setting and Performance Development process by:
    - Communicating the University's mission and goals
    - Identifying resources for employee development
    - Monitoring the application of the Performance Development program within their department/division.
- **Directors/Supervisors/Managers** implement the Goal Setting and Performance Development programs in collaboration with employees by:
    - Establishing performance expectations and goals
    - Identifying development needs
    - Coaching employees to achieve performance expectations
    - Preparing performance review documents and conducting the review meetings
- **Employees** collaborate with managers by:
    - Contributing to performance expectations and goals
    - Demonstrating the desire and flexibility to develop the skills and competencies necessary for success in the position
    - Requesting coaching to keep goals on track and to achieve expected performance
    - Providing input to the performance review process
- **Human Resources** supports leadership, directors, and employees by:
    - Providing the tools, training, and guidelines for effective administration of performance development and goal setting
    - Consulting with managers and employees on the processes or individual issues
    - Ensuring that the process in carried out in a fair and equitable manner

III. OBJECTIVES

The information contained in this "Supervisor's Guide" should enable a manager/supervisor to:

- Understand the performance development and appraisal process
- Develop, communicate and achieve agreement on performance expectations and standards
- Properly use coaching and counseling techniques to provide feedback and improve employee performance
- Properly complete goal setting and evaluation forms
- Successfully develop a performance plan, provide effective coaching and counseling, schedule check-in's as needed in advance of the final performance appraisal
- Explain the organization and process of WVSU's Performance Review Programs to other supervisors, subordinates and other individuals, as needed

IV.   GOAL SETTING

To be effective at evaluating an employee's performance, it is necessary for a supervisor to understand the entire performance management and appraisal process. In other words, supervisors need to see the "Big Picture" in order to recognize how the various parts of the system fit together. This can be achieved by looking at all of the system's parts, individually, and then studying how the various parts relate to one another. One of the best methods to accomplish this is to look at each of the parts of the process sequentially. Those parts include:

•   Goal Setting
•   Performance Development
•   Annual Performance Review

These three parts of the performance management and appraisal puzzle are reduced to the following oversimplifications:

•   First, tell employees what is expected of them and give them a chance to accomplish it
•   Second, tell them from time-to-time how they are doing, especially when they are not performing as expected and offer suggestions for improvement
•   Third, tell them how they have done overall throughout the performance rating period and use that information in future performance planning

Unfortunately, most things are easier said than done. However, this does not mean the performance appraisal process cannot be mastered. It can — mainly through study and practice. We will begin by studying what each part of the process entails, that is, what supervisors have to do, when they have to do it, and what forms they need to complete to document the action they took.
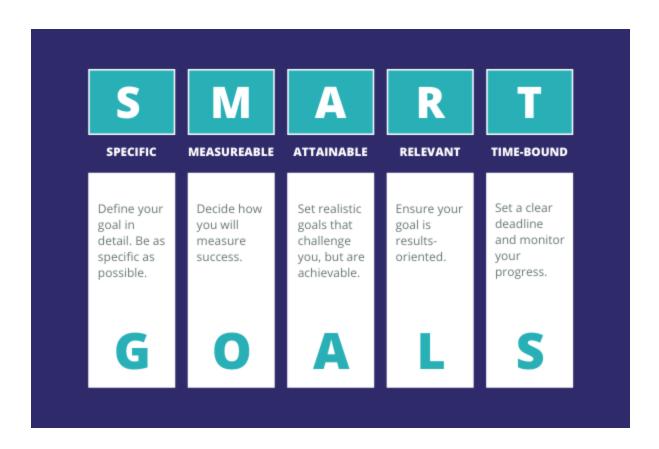
Goal Setting and Performance Planning

The most important part of the performance management process is the establishment of realistic, challenging, yet attainable, performance expectations and standards. Employees with easily accomplished expectations and standards may have their knowledge, skills and abilities overstated, while employees with very difficult or unattainable expectations and standards may have their knowledge, skills and abilities understated. The first group may appear better than they actually are and the second group may appear worse. Thus, supervisors must be able to develop and communicate expectations and standards to employees in a manner that can clearly be understood and accepted by the employee. It is difficult, if not impossible, for employees to accept or "buy into" expectations and standards they do not understand and/or do not agree with. With specific expectations and standards,

employees can understand clearly what performance is required of them — what they are being paid to do or achieve. As a result, work activities can be precisely targeted and planned and performance is likely to improve. Without specific expectations and standards, work activities are spread over too wide a range (through trial and error) and, due to a lack of focus, performance will likely diminish.

There are five important characteristics that all performance expectations should possess. All performance characteristics should pass the SMART Test. This means they should be:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**ttainable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-Bound

Specific: Define Your Goal

To reach your goal, it needs to be specific and well-defined. You are much more likely to accomplish your objective if it is clear-cut rather than vague. Be as detailed as possible. Here are some questions you'll want to answer when defining your goal:

- What do I want to accomplish?
- What is the purpose of achieving this goal?
- Why is this goal important?
- What do I need to do to meet the objective?
- Who is involved?
- When do I want to accomplish this goal?
- Are there any obstacles I have to overcome?

Measurable: How Will You Measure Success?

Setting a goal that you can measure is crucial because it allows you to track your progress and stay motivated. Having quantifiable data or criteria makes the goal measurable.
You should establish concrete criteria for measuring progress. Ask yourself these questions:

- How much?
- How Many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable: Can You Accomplish This Goal?

When goal-setting, you should push yourself outside your comfort zone and make goals that will challenge you. But, it's equally important to set goals that are realistic and attainable. Put simply, you must be willing to work to attain your goals, but you must also be able to achieve your goals.

Relevant: Is Your Goal Constructive?

A relevant goal is results-focused. It's not just an activity or an exercise. Your goal should help you advance in some way, either professionally or personally. A results-focused approach will help you achieve your goal while ensuring it's a productive pursuit.

Time-Bound: When Will You Accomplish Your Goal?

A goal should always have a defined deadline. Without a timeframe, there is no sense of urgency, and you're unlikely to attain it.

V.   Performance Development

Goal setting alone will not improve performance, it is only the first step in the ongoing performance development process between supervisor and employee of communicating and clarifying position responsibilities, priorities, and performance expectations to guarantee understanding and to enhance effectiveness in achieving the campus and departmental mission and goals. Whereas a performance appraisal is just one step, usually occurring on an annual basis, performance development is more holistic, involving greater communication efforts, using evaluation and feedback throughout the year. The process encourages a "coaching" style of management with frequent feedback. It also focuses on teamwork and adding value to the organization.

Supervisors must monitor employee progress and provide ongoing coaching to discuss successes and areas needing improvement. The feedback supervisors provide in this part of the process should be specific. The supervisor should solicit comments and ensure that criticism is constructive. Avoid emphasizing the negative and always find and acknowledge some employee successes.

Objectives:

- Elicit and increase two-way communication between supervisor and employee
- Clarify mission, goals, responsibilities, expectations, and work assignments
- Recognize quality performance and identify performance issues
- Development staff member's skill for current position as well as for future assignments or positions
- Identify opportunities to contribute to broader organizational needs and priorities

Ongoing coaching is an attempt to overcome performance weaknesses and build on performance strengths. Coaching and counseling is actually a set of relationships between a supervisor and an employee, rather than a series of skills to be taught. It can take many forms, including analyzing performance problems, identifying performance that can be improved, correcting improper or dangerous practices, discussing work with an employee to discover his or her point of view, and providing assistance and encouragement to the employee.

Key Concepts of Performance Development:

- It is a process, not an event (coaching, feedback, communication)
- It is primarily a communication tool for clearer understanding
- It is the establishing of position-specific critical duties for evaluation
- It is the establishment and communication of performance standards for each critical duty
- Requires employee involvement
- Provides for employee development

- May involve information from other supervisors, peers, and customers

Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Provide continuous coaching and feedback
- Establish and communicate job responsibilities, performance standards, priorities and expectations
- Monitor and document staff member's performance
- Identify job knowledge, skills and competencies to develop
- Remove barriers for good performance
- Accept responsibility for being a dynamic supervisor

Employee Responsibilities:

- Participate in identifying and defining job responsibilities and performance standards
- Provide and receive feedback in a constructive manner
- Accept responsibility for personal growth
- Assess strengths and areas for improvement

VI.   The Annual Performance Appraisal

If a supervisor has been diligent in pursuing a year-round performance development approach, the annual appraisal will almost write itself. The annual appraisal or review summarizes ongoing performance and development conversations and provides a record of past performance and expectations for work going forward.

No supervisor or manager can afford to take employee appraisals lightly. Employees who are suspended, demoted or dismissed are increasingly turning to the courts and regulatory agencies for relief from what they see as arbitrary appraisal actions by the employers. In far too many cases, the employees are able to produce records of consistently favorable appraisals, with no real warning of trouble to come. When the situations occur, their employers' actions are viewed with suspicion.

The following are tips for conducting the Annual Performance Appraisal meeting:

•   Review accomplishments, strengths, obstacles, and areas for development

•   Consider achievement towards goals and what might be needed moving forward

•   Determine the most important messages to convey to the employee

•   Be prepared to give and receive feedback

•   Keep a written log or journal throughout the year in which you enter detailed accounts of individual performance — good or bad — on typical tasks during "critical incidents" for use at review time. Supervisory notes should be maintained by the supervisor in an administrative file and **not** in the personnel file.

•   The review should be a two-way street. Let the employee talk about their own performance and problems. Determine whether they have a realistic assessment of their own abilities.

•   Be fair, but do not be afraid to give honest criticism when necessary. Most employees do not want a meaningless pat on the back. They want to know where they stand and how they can improve. Encourage the employee to talk. Stop and listen to what the employee is saying. Ask open-ended questions such as, "What do you think we can do to improve the situation?" Use a command such as "Go on," or "Tell me more." Restate the employee's last point as a question, such as "You don't think you can get the job done?"

•   Be direct and specific. Speak in terms of objective work data. Use examples such as absences, tardiness, quality records, timeliness of tasks or projects, accuracy, etc.

- Base your judgements on observable behavior, not general opinions or impressions. Even when rating personality or character traits, use specific examples of such traits in actual practice on the job.

- Do not tiptoe around an issue. Make sure the employee leaves knowing specifically what he or she is doing right and/or wrong. Give specific examples to ensure the employee understands and reach an agreement before he or she leaves on how performance will be improved and the time frame for achievement. Develop an action plan showing steps and expected results.

- Do not get personal. Refrain from using statements such as, "You are too slow in producing those reports." Instead, try to compare the employee's performance to a standard (e.g., "These reports should normally be done within ten days"). Similarly, do not compare the employee's performance to that of other employees (e.g., "He is quicker than you are").

- Critique the behavior, not the employee. Keep the discussion on a professional level, not personal.

VII. UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS AND FORMS:

Step I: The Initial Goal Setting Meeting

Associated Form - ***Annual Performance Review: Goals & Expectations***

During the first 30 days of each performance rating period (January), supervisors should meet individually with each direct report to identify, define, and describe performance expectations (e.g., responsibilities, duties, and standards). The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the employee understands and is committed to established performance expectations for his or her job.

This meeting should also include discussion of the goals, both individual and departmental, for the upcoming performance year. (Refer to Section IV. Goal Setting)

During this meeting the supervisor and employee should identify the specific goals, establish the method by which the goals will be evaluated and assessed, and identify the type of support needed from the supervisor, the team or the organization to effectively accomplish the goals.

NOTE: It is best to conduct the Goal Setting Meeting for the upcoming appraisal period at a later date, rather than when the Annual Performance Appraisal is completed. This will allow time for the results of the just-ended period to be more thoroughly considered and evaluated.

Step II: Ongoing Performance Development

There is not a form for performance development. This ongoing process helps ensure employee and supervisors discuss learning and development, build relationships, and improve engagement. Combined with the annual performance appraisal, ongoing development helps to continually improve communication and build relationships. When you ensure your employees are successful, you help your organization succeed. This can be documented in various ways, i.e. email to the employee, updating of the Goals & Expectations form, etc. (Refer to Section V. Performance Development).

Step III: The Annual Performance Appraisal

Associated Form – ***Employee Self-Assessment & Annual Performance Review***

Within 30 days following the end of the performance rating period (January through December), supervisors shall meet individually with each of their subordinate employees to review and rate the performance of each employee during the entire performance rating period. Included in this review is an Employee Self-Assessment Form for the employee to complete in advance of the Performance Appraisal Meeting. There

are signature blocks for both employee and supervisor on this form to ensure that the self-assessment was discussed during the performance review meeting.

The purpose of the final review meeting is to provide employees with a formal rating of their overall job performance throughout the entire rating period and to generate information to be used as the basis for future performance planning. The supervisor should have completed the Annual Performance Review Form in advance of the meeting. Both employee and supervisor should sign this form upon completion of the Performance Review Meeting. Signing the form does not indicate agreement on the rating given. The signatures show that the meeting was held and that both the Employee Self-Assessment and Annual Performance Review were discussed.

Additionally, the employee is allowed the opportunity to provide a response to be included with the Annual Performance Review form before obtaining the signature of the of next level supervisor, which is the final required signature. The employee response is a way for the employee to provide their thoughts or to provide some additional perspective in areas that an unfavorable rating was given. The performance review cannot be appealed, but the staff response page may provide the second level supervisor additional perspective about the assessment. Once all signatures are obtained the form should be sent to the Office of Human Resources for acknowledgement and record retention.

VIII. THE FINAL WORD

Regardless of how imperfect, performance management and appraisal will continue to be one of a supervisor's foremost duties. While supervisors may feel that they are not doing as well as they could, it does not mean the situation is hopeless. Through open and honest communication, employee involvement and participation, and mutual trust and cooperation, a performance management and appraisal system can improve employee performance and the achievement of organizational goals. One fact is certain, the success of the system depends on the supervisor's ability to understand and implement each element of the process.