2023 – 2024
Performance Management and Review Process for Staff
(For Managers)
Summer 2024
Agenda

- The Performance Process
- State of Affairs
- Accurate and Consistent Performance Process
- Feedback
- Preparing for the Reviews
- Goal Setting
Performance Review vs. Performance Management

Performance Review
- Formal documentation – a snapshot – of the past period of the performance management cycle

Performance Management
- Day-to-day, ongoing process that allows the manager and the employee the opportunity to communicate regularly about performance-related successes and challenges
Benefits of Performance Reviews

Benefits for Managers

▪ Help managers foster open communication with employees
▪ Good to set objectives for the future
▪ Improve team outcomes
▪ Kick-starts projects that may have fallen by the wayside

Benefits for Employees

▪ Identify future career opportunities
▪ Gain recognition and reward for their performance
▪ Help them to identify areas for improvement
▪ Provides a platform to address issues and grievances
Key Elements for a Successful Performance Process

- **Accuracy & Fairness**
  - Performance management must measure the important aspects of an employee's performance

- **Continuous Attention**
  - Performance management is ongoing

- **Consistency**
  - Employees participate in the same process

- **Clarity**
  - Feedback, goals, and development opportunities are clear

- **Two-way Communication**
  - Trust and openness are imperative
Performance Reviews Management at WPI

- Actively engage in both your evaluation and on-going development
- Openly discuss feedback
- Highlight your contributions to the WPI community
- Identify and discuss development/ advancement opportunities (career/ education/ learning)
- Set goals for the future
Understanding the 2023–2024 Performance Review Cycle

Process is completely done via Workday (period of April 1, 2023 to June 1, 2024)

Manager completes performance review by August 30, 2024

Manager and employee sign off on the evaluation by September 6, 2024

Employee completes self evaluation by July 31, 2024

Manager and employee meet to discuss and set goals
The New Review Process: 1) Employee Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions...

Achievements & Goals

1. What achievements were you most proud of during the past year? Please note any that specifically relate to WPI's Strategic Goals: Lead with Purpose 2021-2026.

2. What goals (specific, measurable results) do you expect to accomplish over this upcoming year

Areas of Development

3. Reflecting on your career goals and WPI's strategic priorities, in what areas would you like to develop over the next year? How can you effectively leverage your role to advance WPI's mission?

4. What resources or support would be most beneficial to you in achieving your goals?

5. Provide specific feedback that highlights how your skills, actions, and/or behaviors align with WPI's core competencies and values.
The New Review Process:
1) Manager Questionnaire

EMPLOYEE: Your manager will answer the following questions. No action needed. Please click next.

MANAGER: Please provide responses to the additional questions below.

Manager Feedback

Question
What goals/deliverables did the employee achieve that you are most proud of during the past year? Please note any that specifically relate to WPI’s Strategic Goals: Lead with Purpose 2021-2026.

Question
What goals (specific, measurable results) do you expect the employee to accomplish over this upcoming year?

Question
Considering your employee’s career goals and WPI’s strategic priorities, in what areas do you think the employee needs to grow in the coming year? How can they best leverage their role to support WPI’s mission?

Question
What resources or support would be most beneficial to the employee to help them achieve their goals?

Question
Provide specific feedback that highlights how the employee’s actions and behaviors align with WPI’s core competencies and values.

Question
Additional Comments
The New Review Process: 2) Competencies and 3) Rating Scales

- Competencies:
  - Inclusive Community Engagement
  - Dynamic Learning Mindset
  - Communication & Feedback
  - Management Skills
  - Job Results
  - Problem Solving & Decision Making

- Ratings:
  - Outstanding
  - Highly Successful
  - Successful
  - Inconsistent
  - Unsatisfactory
Accurate and Consistent Performance Management

Why should we care? Ensuring accuracy and consistency…. 

- **Builds Trust and Engagement**
  - Ensures employees feel valued and respected.
  - Fosters higher levels of engagement and motivation.
  - Reduces feelings of bias or favoritism.

- **Drives Continuous Improvement**
  - Provides clear and honest feedback for growth.
  - Encourages a culture of accountability and excellence.
  - Addresses performance issues promptly to prevent complacency.

- **Promotes Fairness and Equity**
  - Ensures all employees are held to the same standards.
  - Prevents perceptions of discrimination or unfair treatment.
  - Enhances morale and a sense of belonging.

- **Supports Employee Development**
  - Identifies specific areas for growth and development.
  - Helps tailor development plans to individual needs.
  - Guides employees in acquiring new skills and competencies.

- **Improves Retention and Reduces Turnover**
  - Increases job satisfaction.
  - Reduces the costs and disruptions associated with high turnover.
  - Helps retain top talent and maintain organizational stability.

- **Enhances Organizational Success**
  - Aligns employee performance with organizational goals.
  - Drives overall productivity and growth.
  - Creates a culture of continuous improvement and high performance.
Avoid Common Evaluation Biases

- **Central Tendency**: Everyone is rated the same.
- **Contrast**: Comparing employees against each other instead of against standards.
- **Halo/Horn**: One positive/negative trait overshadows others.
- **Inflation Bias**: Giving employee high performance to compensate for the lack of financial rewards.
- **Leniency**: Rating employee unrealistically high.
- **Recency**: Greater weight to recent actions.
- **Primacy**: Greater weight to early actions.
- **Similar-to-me**: Personal judgments overshadow real traits.
- **Strictness**: Rating employee unrealistically low.
Halo/Horns Effect Example

Problem

Bill is an Administrative Assistant in the Admissions Office and is known for his exceptional customer service skills. He consistently receives positive feedback from students and parents, often going above and beyond to assist them. During the annual performance review, Bill’s supervisor rated his performance as excellent in all aspects, without carefully examining his administrative tasks and project management responsibilities. The supervisor’s thought was, “There’s Bill again, always providing top-notch customer service! I just know he did great in every other area of his job.”

The tendency to let a single characteristic or answer of an employee – either particularly strong or particularly weak – influence the manager’s overall opinion of that employee.

Solution

Evaluate each competency area separately, using the definition and evaluation standards as your framework.
Inflation Bias (Rating Inflation) Example

**Problem**

Jill is a Program Coordinator in the Student Services Department. Due to budget constraints, the university has announced that there will be no merit increases this year. During the annual performance review, Jill’s manager rated her performance as excellent in all areas, despite some noted deficiencies in meeting project deadlines and managing administrative tasks. The manager’s rationale was, “I know Jill won’t get a raise this year, so I want to give her a high rating to show my appreciation for her hard work.”

**Solution**

The tendency to give higher performance ratings than warranted to compensate for the lack of financial rewards, such as merit increases or bonuses.

Evaluate each competency area separately and focus on accuracy. Discuss honestly with your employee; identify forms on non-monetary recognition, such as awards, certificates, public acknowledgements, professional development opportunities, and special projects.
Phil had performed superbly for most of the review period but made a mistake before the annual performance review (in early 2024). When rating Phil’s performance, his supervisor rated him rather harshly for the whole year.

The tendency to typically allow when an event happened (in this case, more recently) drive the overall characteristics of the employee as effective vs. ineffective.

Keep a record of the employee’s performance throughout the year. Maintaining frequent data points will help you keep the big picture in mind.
Leniency Bias Example

**Problem**
A manager wants to ensure that they maintain a positive work environment above all else. The manager tries to avoid “conflict”, so they rate their employees highly to maintain harmony despite some employees having demonstrated some serious development opportunities.

**Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusive Community Engagement</th>
<th>Dynamic Learning Mindset</th>
<th>Communication &amp; Feedback</th>
<th>Problem Solving &amp; Decision Making</th>
<th>Job Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
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<td>Will</td>
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**Definition**
The tendency to typically rate all employees with all high scores; it can be driven by the characteristics of the manager (easy grader vs. hard grader), rather than those of the employee.

**Solution**
When all high (or low, if it’s strictness bias) scores are present, take a few minutes to visualize the employee's strengths and weaknesses in their answers, then reassess their ratings.
Feedback

Information about the **past**, given in the **present**, with the goal of influencing behavior or performance for the **future**.

**Feedback includes:**
Information given for **reinforcement** or **redirection**.

**Types of Feedback**

- **Informal**
  - Ongoing, in-the-moment coaching given to employees, providing them with a clear idea of their performance throughout the year

- **Formal**
  - Intentional and planned process of giving feedback to employees

- **Constructive**
  - Feedback aimed at improvement

- **Positive**
  - Feedback aimed at acknowledging good performance
Constructive Feedback: SBI Model

Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) is a structured model used to provide clear, specific, and actionable feedback.

Components

- **Situation**
  - Describe the specific situation where the behavior occurred
- **Behavior**
  - Describe the observable behavior that you want to address
- **Impact**
  - Describe the impact of the behavior on others, the department, the division, or the university
Constructive Feedback: SBI Model

Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) is a structured model used to provide clear, specific, and actionable feedback.

Positive Feedback Example

- **Situation:** "During the last quarter’s team project on improving student enrollment..."
- **Behavior:** "...you consistently provided innovative ideas and took the initiative to lead the weekly status meetings..."
- **Impact:** "...which significantly contributed to the project’s success, increased team collaboration, and resulted in a 10% rise in enrollment rates."

Constructive Feedback Example

- **Situation:** "Over the past six months, during our monthly department meetings..."
- **Behavior:** "...you have frequently arrived late and seemed unprepared for your updates..."
- **Impact:** "...which has disrupted the meeting flow, delayed decision-making, and caused frustration among team members who rely on your input."
Constructive Feedback: The H.E.A.R. Model

- **Hear** and articulate the other person's reaction without interrupting
  
  **Example:** "I'd like to hear your thoughts on how the recent project went. What went well, and what challenges did you face?"

- **Explore** the employee's thoughts and feelings about their performance and the feedback (e.g., open-ended questions)
  
  **Example:** "Can you tell me more about the difficulties you encountered with the project deadlines? What factors contributed to these challenges?"

- **Refocus**/redirect the conversation towards constructive solutions and future goals and to explore what's true about the feedback
  
  **Example:** "Let's discuss how we can manage deadlines more effectively in the future. What support or resources would help you stay on track? I believe you have the skills to overcome these challenges and excel in your role."

- **Acknowledge** and validate what you hear the person say
  
  **Example:** "Can you tell me more about the difficulties you encountered with the project deadlines? What factors contributed to these challenges?"
**Other Tips for Providing Feedback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tip</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give the feedback in a private setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain a neutral tone</td>
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<td>Don’t label or categorize the behavior</td>
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<td>Allow the employee to react and give their perceptions on the situation</td>
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<td>Avoid generalizations such as “You always do…” or “You never do…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give the feedback as an &quot;I&quot; message rather than a &quot;You&quot; message.</td>
<td>&quot;I was disappointed when you didn’t deliver on that project&quot;, versus &quot;You didn’t send the files for the project on time.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow the scope of the feedback</td>
<td><em>Do not overload the employee with a mountain of comments, also called “dumping.”</em></td>
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Feedback based on Performance Level

The Outstanding Performer
Performance levels and accomplishments far exceed expectations
- Suggest new responsibilities within their present position
- Try to keep the employee focused, interested, and engaged
- End on a positive note

The Highly Successful Performer
Consistently and often exceeds expected performance levels
- Encourage them to grow and develop; be specific
- Suggest new responsibilities within their present positions
- Help them to identify strategies that will contribute to sustained performance
- Discuss a plan of action: goals, next steps, etc.
- End on a positive note

The Successful Performer
Consistently demonstrates effective behaviors and qualified experience for the position
- Highlight that a successful performer is the expected level of performance
  - There is nothing wrong with scoring as ‘successful’ in the process
- Discuss a plan of action to take more ownership, exceed goals, and initiate processes
- End on a positive note
Feedback based on Performance Level

**The Inconsistent Performer**
Demonstrates expected performance inconsistently and achieves some but not all goals

- Explain your concern
- Encourage them to grow and develop; be specific
- Help them to identify strategies that will contribute to improved, consistent performance
- Work on developing a performance plan
- Discuss timeframe for meeting performance plan goals
- Discuss a plan of action: goals, next steps, etc.
- End on a positive note

**The Unsatisfactory Performer**
Rarely achieves the expected performance level.

- Explain your concern
- Inform the employee about goals and expectations
- Work on developing a performance plan
- Get the whole story
- Work with the employee in determining the behaviors or performance that are needed
- Discuss timeframe for meeting performance plan goals
- End on a positive note
Employee Responses Following Feedback

Defensive
- Listen to what the employee has to say and paraphrase back.
- Don't solve the problem.
- Help the employee gain insight to the problem with open-ended questions.
- Determine the cause and solution.

Angry
- Encourage them to grow and develop; be specific.
- Stay calm and centered; maintain eye-contact.
- Listen to what the employee has to say and paraphrase back.
- Avoid arguments; let the employee "run down for as long as they need until the employee can listen to you.
- Bring discussion and focus back to performance and standards.
- Give them time to process and offer reassurance.

Unresponsive or Withdrawn
- Be patient and friendly.
- Show empathy and concern.
- Stay silent and wait for the employee to say something.
- Ask open-ended questions and encourage participation.
- Encourage the employee to talk by expressing how important his or her input is to you and the review process.
Receiving Feedback as a Manager

**Openness**

- **Creating a safe environment:** Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable giving feedback.
- **Encouraging honest communication:** Promote a culture of open and honest communication.
- **Listening without judgment:** Receive feedback without being defensive or dismissive.

**Listening**

- **Active listening techniques:**
  - **Paraphrasing:** Restate what the employee has said to ensure understanding.
  - **Summarizing:** Summarize the key points of the feedback to confirm clarity.
  - **Clarifying:** Ask questions to clarify any ambiguities or to gain a deeper understanding.
  - **Non-verbal cues:** Use body language to show attentiveness, such as maintaining eye contact, nodding, and leaning slightly forward.
Receiving Feedback as a Manager

**Action**

- **Demonstrating responsiveness:**
  - Show commitment to acting on the feedback received.
  - Take specific actions based on the feedback to demonstrate that it is valued.
- **Communicating changes:** Keep employees informed about the actions taken in response to their feedback.
- **Continuous improvement:** Use feedback as a tool for continuous personal and organizational improvement.

**Building Trust**

- **Transparency:** Be transparent about how feedback is used and the changes it brings.
- **Consistency:** Regularly seek and respond to feedback to build a culture of trust and openness.
- **Acknowledgment:** Acknowledge the effort employees put into providing feedback and thank them for their contributions.
Preparing for the Review

Before starting the review...

- Make time for the process
- Request a self-evaluation from each direct report
- Request feedback from others (where appropriate)
- Compile important documents (e.g., job descriptions) and get a list of accomplishments and projects
- Assign appropriate ratings
- Craft high-quality, specific, and actionable feedback
The Review Meeting

Framework for Review Discussion

- Discuss meeting purpose and structure
- Create a positive environment
- Review last year’s goals
- Clarify any immediate items and settle any concerns
- Determine and discuss future goals
- Schedule the follow-up meeting
- Close discussion
The Review Meeting

During the Discussion

Explain the meeting purpose and structure

Make sure you are:

- Clear
- Concise
- Objective
- Follow a logical order
- Providing examples of specific behaviors and situations
- Taking into account remote work challenges
SMART Goals

Make Sure to Set Goals That Are...

**Specific** – Clearly defined goals specific to the role of your employee

**Measurable** – Establishes a concrete criteria for measuring progress toward goal completion

**Attainable** – Set goals that are realistic and achievable

**Relevant** – The goal must be worthwhile and related to the employee’s skills

**Timely** – A goal should be grounded, with a definite end date within which it must be achieved
**SMART Goals – Examples**

- **Improve communication skills**
  - Complete a course in the next term on improving communication (verbally and written) on the LinkedIn Learning

- **Improve presentation skills**
  - Improve presentation skills (e.g., reduce ums) by the end of next term by attending training sessions, seeking opportunities to present, and reading books about it
Let’s answer some questions...

Specific – Who is involved? What do they accomplish? What is the purpose of doing this? What are the requirements and the constraints?

Measurable – How much? How many? How will they know when it is accomplished?

Attainable – Does the goal inspire them? Does the goal challenge them? How much do they need to learn? How much time are they going to dedicate to the goal? Who can help them?

Relevant – Look at their situation. How relevant is the goal? Is it part of a life or career path? How will it help them as they pursue next steps?

Timely – When does the goal need to be accomplished?
Follow-Up After the Review

What comes next...

**Action Plans:** Develop and monitor action plans to address areas of improvement and support development goals.

**Regular Check-Ins:** Schedule meetings to review progress and provide ongoing support.

**Continuous Support:** Ensure continuous support and resources are available to employees to help them achieve their goals.

**Documentation and Record Keeping:** Consider a way to track progress of goals to ensure an accurate, fair, and consistent approach to performance reviews.
Performance reviews are a snapshot in time, whereas performance management is an ongoing process.

Performance reviews can be challenging, but there are steps managers and employees can take to prepare.

When delivering feedback, managers should strive to be constructive in their message.

Managers can fall victim to common rating biases; being aware of them is the first step in ensuring that they a) do not contaminate the performance ratings and b) remain as accurate as possible in their ratings.

There are many benefits of setting goals (e.g., making employees aware of strengths and weaknesses).

Goals written should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-based).

T&I is here to help!

- Talent Partners
- Resources (LinkedIn Learning)