**UUP Staff Performance Program: Frequently Asked Questions**

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| **Will changes be made to the overview of responsibilities from year to year?**  As in the past, it is possible that an employee’s responsibilities may change from one year to another, or as circumstances warrant. The Performance Program should be updated to reflect such changes. |
| **What is an example of putting a strength to a responsibility? What is the difference?**  A strength is a personal quality which a person demonstrates. If that quality would be beneficial for a certain job role, an objective might be assigned to reflect that. For example, a person who demonstrates good organizational skills might be assigned to design a tracking system or a filing system. Someone with strong technical skills might be called upon to work helping with the implementation of new technology tools within the department.  Note that the objective is not created based on the individual employee’s strengths; the objectives are based on department needs, and individual employees may be assigned the objective because they demonstrate the ideal strength for that objective. |
| **Is the job description the same as the performance program?**  No, the performance program is more detailed and specific. However, it is a good idea to use the job description as a starting point for writing the performance program. |
| **How many things should be listed in the overview of responsibilities?**  There is no set number, but the overview should include all of the employee’s core responsibilities. |
| **Who should be writing the first draft of the performance program for an employee?**  The Memorandum of Understanding states that the results of discussions (regarding duties and responsibilities) “…shall be reduced to writing by the immediate supervisor and shall constitute the performance program…”  When a supervisor is new in their role, they might ask the employee to create a list of their overall responsibilities, which the supervisor will use to draft the performance program.  The final document is meant to be written and finalized through consultation between the supervisor and the employee. |
| **Is the annual review and performance schedule two different things?**  No. The annual review should occur as close as possible to the date the performance program was finalized and signed. Following the annual review, the performance program may be affirmed (i.e., the supervisor and the direct report agree that it is unchanged) or it may be revised, and the next annual review will take place one year later. |
| **Can an employee request a review outside of the annual review schedule?**  Yes, an employee can request feedback from their supervisor at any time. This feedback may be either verbal or written; however, such documentation is not placed in the employee’s personnel folder.  As a best practice, supervisors should be providing feedback to their direct reports on a regular basis so there are no surprises at the time of the annual review. |
| **If there is a short-term goal for the year and for some reason it was not possible for the employee to meet that goal (through no fault of the employee), what happens?**  If circumstances beyond the employee’s control made it impossible for the employee to complete a short-term goal, they are not evaluated on that goal. For example, if plans to implement a new technology fell through because of budget constraints, then anyone assigned to work on that project is not responsible.  Depending on timing, the employee’s performance program might be revised to reflect a change in goals. For example, if the project is canceled early in the performance program year, the performance program might be revised with a replacement goal. |
| **If there is a major change to a performance program prior to the annual review date, should there be an evaluation at that time based on the original performance program?**  Not necessarily. This would depend on timing. If the major change occurs more than six months prior to the evaluation date, the performance program might be revised to reflect the change. |
| **Should short-term responsibilities be listed in the employee’s main responsibilities?**  Short-term responsibilities are meant to be a sub-set of the main responsibilities. They may reflect an urgent or rising need within the department. |
| **How to short-term development objectives and short-term performance objectives differ, and should they be related?**  Short-term development objectives are focused on individual employee development and learning. Performance objectives are the things an individual is doing.  They may be related – for example, if a performance objective requires a skill that an employee does not have (e.g., the employee is tasked with building an Access database to be used for tracking and reporting, but they don’t know Access), then one of the employee’s short-term objectives might be to develop that skill (in this case, learning Access). |
| **How many objectives should one have and when should these be set?**  There should be 5-7 pairs of responsibilities and performance objectives. The template has space for 7 pairs. |
| **Why wouldn’t a recurring objective be part of the short-term performance objectives? Should they be related?**  Recurring objectives are not limited in scope and will likely appear on an employee’s performance program for several years. Short-term objectives are meant to be reflect a short-term need, such as a specific project or intensive area of focus that will not continue over the long-term. |
| **Is the Personal Effectiveness / Skills for Success section more about the job or the particular employee?**  This section is meant to assess which specific “Skills for Success” are required for the job. For an employee to be effective in the role, they will need to demonstrate those skills which are considered Essential and Beneficial. As part of the job search process, candidates may be assessed on whether they possess those skills – in other words, they are selected to fit the role; the role is not designed to fit the employee. |
| **Will an employee currently be evaluated on the old form while having a performance program on the new form?**  Employees who currently have performance programs which were written in an earlier format will be evaluated using that format. Going forward, all *new* performance programs (whether they are completely new, revised, or affirmed) should be set on the new template. |
| **Will the evaluation form be available to supervisors when they are creating the performance program so the program can specifically back up the evaluation?**  The evaluation form will be available (along with training sessions) beginning at the end of 2018.  An employee’s responsibilities and objectives should be written to reflect department needs, and the evaluation should focus on whether the employee met those objectives. The format of the evaluation should not determine the employee’s level of success. |
| **What is the difference between flexibility and adaptability?**  Flexibility is about being able to make short-term adjustments due to business needs. Adaptability is being able to make changes in processes over the long-term or on an ongoing basis.  It requires flexibility to change one’s schedule due to a last-minute business need. Adaptability is necessary when a department institutes a new process or program, and employees need to adjust to it on a long-term basis. |
| **Can I include an attachment to list Supervisory Relationships (i.e., there isn’t enough room on the form, or the organization is complex)?**  Yes, if there isn’t enough room on the form then you may use a separate attachment to list direct reports. |
| **Who should be seeking out the secondary source for feedback, the supervisor or the employee?**  The supervisor should be getting feedback from secondary sources when putting together the performance evaluation.  The immediate supervisor, in consultation with the professional employee, shall identify in the written performance program the secondary sources to be consulted as part of the evaluation process and the relationship between each secondary source and the professional employee. |
| **Is it required that secondary sources be listed in performance programs every year?**  A thorough and complete performance program will include secondary sources. |
| **What happens when an employee attaches a rebuttal to their performance program?**  Ideally, the supervisor and the direct report will try to resolve any concerns regarding the performance program. However, if the supervisor and the employee do not concur on the performance program, the employee may attach a statement to the performance program within 10 working days from receipt.  Human Resources reviews all performance programs. If there is an attached statement of concerns, they will work with the manager to resolve the issue. |

All references are to the “Memorandum of Understanding Between The State University of New York and United University Professions Relating to a System of Evaluation for Professional Employees”