

Managers Guide to Appraisals

Purpose

Appraisal is a formal opportunity for you to discuss and review an individual's performance and development with them, identify what support they need in the future and to reinforce desired behaviours

The Appraisal Meeting

Covers the following elements:

Progress – assess performance against agreed targets / objectives and behaviour

Feedback – providing information to individuals on their performance and progress and on what is required to continue to perform well in the future, particularly in view of any changes and evolution of job roles

Positive reinforcement – emphasising what has been done well and making only constructive criticism about what might be improved. Always give recognition when you can

Exchange of views – share views about what has happened, how individuals can improve their performance, the support they need from their managers to achieve this and their aspirations for their future career

Overall job satisfaction – to what degree the individual is satisfied in their job, discuss areas for improvement and how this might be achieved

Raise queries/concerns – discuss any queries/concerns the individual has relating to their role or objectives that requires support/guidance

Development – development needs identified for working in their role to support the individual to achieve the objectives. Focus on skills, knowledge, individual style. What is the progress towards achieving development plans

Agreement – conclude what action is required to improve and sustain performance generally

and overcome any issues raised during the discussion

Preparation

In preparation for the appraisal meeting you should consider the following and gather information beforehand:

Objectives – reflect if the objectives were achieved, but if not, what may have the reasons been for this

Progress – whether individual is performing above, within or below the requirements of the role

Action/Development – what are the training/development needs that may have been identified during the progress towards an objective, and what actions/activities are required to complete the objective

You should also consider:

- how well the individual has performed since the last appraisal meeting
- the extent to which any agreed development plans from the last appraisal meeting have been implemented
- the feedback to be given at the meeting and the evidence that will be used to support it
- the factors that have affected performance, both within and outside the individual's control
- the points for discussion on the possible actions that could be taken by both parties to develop or improve performance
- potential directions the individual's career might take
- possible objectives for the next review period

Best practice

✓ You (line manager) and the individual both have an opportunity for views to be shared in an open discussion

- ✓ Ratings should be accurate and consistent, i.e. not influenced by feelings of sympathy, antipathy or pity
- ✓ You should try to avoid rating everything centrally in order to provide accurate information
- ✓ Objectives should be realistic
- ✗ The appraisal is not the time to introduce surprises i.e. new information/issues
- ✗ The appraisal is not the time to raise disciplinary matters. These should be dealt with as they arise
- ✗ The appraisal should not be biased by a recent issue, good or bad
- ✗ Sensitive issues should not be avoided, but dealt with clearly and tactfully

Forms

Record the discussion on an appraisal form and interim review form, give a copy to the employee to use

Give the employee a self-appraisal form so they can prepare

Ratings

You can rate the achievement of the objectives in a similar form of the below:

Exceeds Expectation E - Consistently exceeds standards and responsibilities of the post. Achievements are beyond those reasonably expected

Meets Expectation M - Consistently meets and sometimes exceeds standards of the position; achieves planned results

Needs Improvement NI - Meets the expectations in some job aspects but possesses one or more important performance deficiencies. Requires excessive supervision and training

Unacceptable UN - Fails to meet the expectations in most job aspects. Unable or

unwilling to reach minimum levels of performance

The Meeting

A good and constructive review meeting consists of:

- The individual doing most of the talking
- You listening actively to what they say
- Time for reflection and analysis
- Performance is analysed
- The whole period is reviewed and not just recent or isolated events
- Achievement is recognised and reinforced
- The meeting ends positively with agreed action plans to improve and sustain performance in the future

Avoid:

- Focusing on a catalogue of failures and omissions
- You controlling the discussion
- Ending the meeting in disagreement with each other
- Leaving the individual feeling disengaged or de-motivated by the process

Questions

It is important for you to ask both open and probing questions.

Open questions are general rather than specific; they enable people to decide how they should be answered and encourage them to talk freely. Examples include:

- How do you feel things have been going?
- How do you see the job developing?
- How do you feel about that?
- Tell me, why do you think that happened?

Ask probing questions to obtain more specific information on what happened or why. Examples are:

- That's very interesting. Tell me more about ...?
- To what extent do you think that ...?
- Have I got the right impression? Do you mean that?