

The Annual Performance Review Process: Guidelines for Supervisors

The annual performance review is both the end and the beginning of the performance management cycle. It is a synopsis and assessment of the preceding calendar year and sets out performance expectations for the calendar year ahead. Supervisors are encouraged to use these guidelines as a tool to assist in their planning and preparation for annual performance reviews at UT Dallas.

The Process:

Due Dates - Per [University Policy](#), the formal annual performance review should be conducted during the first quarter of the calendar year. It is best to conduct it as close to the close of the calendar year as possible. Policy requires that a copy of the completed and signed review be submitted to Human Resources Management by the 5th working day in April for inclusion in the employee's personnel records.

Supervisor's Role - Good management practices will lead a supervisor to provide clear guidance, coaching, and feedback to their staff throughout the year on job duties and responsibilities, performance goals and expectations, appraising the performance and future development opportunities. The annual review is the capstone for this process.

In the annual performance review, the supervisor summarizes these discussions in writing using the appropriate performance review form. The goal of the performance review is to provide administrators and staff with feedback on their performance and accomplishments for the previous year. As a result of this process, the employee should have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities and the supervisor's performance expectations. Also through this review process, specific action plans are to be developed to help direct expected performance for the coming year and allow the employee to achieve established performance goals.

Planning for the Performance Review:

Before the Review Meeting - Before meeting with the employee, plan ahead. To assist in ensuring timely and complete preparation for the review process, it is often valuable to have the employee complete a self assessment. A sample self assessment form is located [on the HRM web site](#). Consider the following in preparing for the employee's review meeting:

- Remind employees of the review cycle and when you expect to start.
- Provide advance notice to the employee when and where you intend to hold the review meeting (a good rule of thumb is to give a week's notice).
- Inform them how the review meeting will be conducted and what they should bring or provide to you in advance of the review meeting.
- Provide employees with a self assessment form, their current position description, and directions for completing a self-assessment.
- Prepare a draft review taking note of items in your personnel file, including:
 - Documentation and notes of previous performance discussions;
 - Last year's performance review;
 - Performance expectations and job description;
 - Goals and objectives established for the previous calendar year;
 - Records of compliments, complaints and disciplinary actions from the previous year;
 - Any other information relevant to the staff member's performance; and
 - Sample work products, especially if you plan to use these as examples.
- Tell the employee how much in advance of the actual review meeting that you would like to review the employee's self assessment.

- Review the employee's performance and prepare the appropriate performance review form, focusing on the entire calendar year, not just recent events.
 - Compare the employee's actual performance to established expectations, goals established at the last review, and the position description;
 - View employees as individuals; avoid comparing them to one another; focus on how their performance measures against the expectations for the position they occupy, and
 - Assess strengths (i.e. competencies) and weaknesses (i.e. areas for improvement or growth).
- Where appropriate, you may want to discuss your draft performance review with the next level supervisor, department head, and/or dean. Include any additional input, suggestions, and/or comments.
- Finalize the draft performance review. This should include the rationale for ratings, goals and expectations, and ideas for the development plan. Once the final draft is ready, some supervisors find it useful to send a draft to the employee 24-48 hours in advance of the scheduled review meeting. This helps the employee to be better prepared for the review meeting.

Human Resources Management is available to assist supervisors and employees in preparing for the annual performance review process. Call HRM for a consult (972- 883-2221).

During the Meeting - Meet with the employee on a conveniently agreed date to discuss the performance review. The ideal performance review is one that can be characterized as a two-way conversation. The conversation will typically include:

- A discussion of the duties as outlined in the position description as well as current job duties;
- Communication of expectations about what constitutes successful performance;
- A review and discussion of goals, plans and concerns for the coming year and any development plan that is to be put in place for the coming year;
- An opportunity for the employee to attach their personal comments about their evaluation; and
- Any additional, mutually agreed upon comments that are to be added to the final copy of the appraisal document.

After the Meeting – When the annual performance review meeting has been completed, the supervisor should take the following actions:

- Obtain signatures from both the employee and supervisor. *(If an employee chooses to not sign the review form, note instructions that follow later in this document and listed under Key Elements on Review Forms, see item #7.)*
- If required by your department/school, the final copy should also include the signature of the next level supervisor or administrator.
- Distribute copies as indicated on the introduction page of the review forms.
- Send a signed copy of the completed review form (i.e. all pages) to Human Resources Management, AD 10, for inclusion in the employee personnel records.

The Forms:

Three forms – Effective January 2011, three (3) forms have been designated for conducting the annual reviews for university employees. These forms replace all prior annual review forms and are to be used for all university employees, other than persons with faculty titles. These forms are:

1. Classified, non-supervisory staff.
2. Classified, supervisory/managerial staff.
3. Administrative & Professional staff.

Supervisors should make sure to use the correct form when conducting the annual review. If uncertain about which form to use, contact Human Resources Management (HRM) at 972-883-2221. The forms are available on the [forms](#)

page of the HRM web site. No substitute forms or alterations of the forms are permitted, unless HRM has specifically approved and authorized the substitute forms or changes.

All three forms are in the PDF format. The forms can be opened with Adobe Acrobat, completed, saved to your hard drive and printed. Users having only the free version of Adobe Acrobat Reader need to have version 7 or higher in order to save a copy of the review to their hard drive.

Key Elements on Review Forms – All three of the review forms share the following common elements.

1. **Identifying Information** – This section of the form requests identifying information such as employee name, UTD ID, position title, department information, supervisor’s name and the date of the review meeting. When supplying the name of the employee, please use the employee’s full name versus nick names or “Americanized” names. Please include the employee’s name and UTD ID number on all pages after page one of the actual review form. There is a space at the top of these pages for the employee’s name and ID.
2. **Rating Factors and Factor Scores** – Each form has a series of rating factors and blocks for designating a rating score. For classified, non-supervisor staff this includes nine (9) rated factors plus space for other comments related to performance, which is non-rated. The supervisory/managerial version of the classified rating forms adds six (6) factors related to supervisory and managerial functions. For the nine performance factors and other comments, supervisors will have 6 lines of text (or about 650 characters/spaces) for their comments. For the ten (1) factors listed on the A&P review forms, supervisors have about 7 lines of text (or about 750 characters/spaces) for comments. The special project factor on the A&P form also will accept about 7 lines of text (or about 750 characters/spaces).
3. **Performance Highlights** – This section is for summarizing the employee’s strengths, competencies and areas for development and/or improvement. HRM uses the comments in these sections to identify campus training needs. Supervisors are encouraged to complete these sections with this in mind. Each block allows for 7 lines (or about 350 characters/spaces).
4. **Goals and Performance Planning** – This is an important content area for all of the performance reviews. The information entered into this section acts like a performance map for the coming performance review period. Supervisors will list goals and personal/professional development plans that will guide the employee’s performance for the coming year. These goals will form the basis for the next year’s review process. So, it is important that the supervisor and employee spend time in identifying appropriate goals for the coming year. The review forms call for specificity in mapping these goals and provide three columns for the supervisor to describe the performance goals expected for the coming year:
 - a. Column 1 should include a list of targeted performance goals that the employee will be expected to meet for the coming year. These goals should be specific, measurable, realistic, and results oriented. If supervisors need assistance in goal setting or discussing potential goal statements, please contact HRM (972-883-2221). This column allows for 38 lines of text (or about 1700 characters/spaces).
 - b. Column 2 allows the supervisor and employee to identify what steps will need to be taken to attain the targeted goal. This might include some kind of training or other activity that the employee can perform or learn in order to improve, develop or enhance their skills and knowledge. This column allows for 38 lines of text (or about 1600 characters/spaces).
 - c. Column 3 requests a timeline or date when a given performance goal or development target should be met. As a rule, all such dates should fall within the coming review period. This column allows for 38 lines of text (or about 600 characters/spaces).

5. **Overall Rating** – This section on the form provides for an overall rating value for the performance review year. This rating should be related to the specific factor scores and reflective of the supervisor’s analysis of the employee’s performance as a whole, for entire performance review period. A section is also provided for the supervisor to comment and explain the overall rating given to the employee. For an overall rating of “*Unsatisfactory*” or “*Exemplary*,” the supervisor should provide extended information why the employee warrants the lowest or highest rating in our performance review system. This information should be specific. It will be reviewed by HRM. This section allows for 12 lines of text (or about 1375 characters/spaces). If necessary, additional pages may be added and attached to the performance review form.
6. **Employee Comments** – All employees have the right to add comments concerning their annual reviews. Such comments may include acknowledgement or disagreements with the performance ratings given by the supervisor. Prior to affixing signatures, the supervisor should ask the employee if they wish to add comments. If so, the employee may add them in the designated block or provide written comments at a later date, not to exceed 20 days from the date of the performance review meeting. If the employee plans to submit written comments after the review meeting rather than include them on the form, the supervisor should note that on the review form or notify HRM directly that the employee will be submitting their comments in a separate document. The comments section allows for 18 lines of text (or about 1900 characters/spaces). If necessary, additional spaces may be added and attached to the performance review form.
7. **Signatures** – In this final section of the form, space is provided for three signatures: the employee, the supervisor who conducted the performance review meeting and a next level supervisor or administrator charged to sign off on the performance review. As noted on the review forms, an employee’s signature does not mean they agree with the evaluation results. It indicates that the employee and supervisor met to discuss the performance review. Some employees will still choose not to sign the form. In those cases, it is recommended that the supervisor note their refusal to sign on the form or request a witness to verify the employee’s refusal to sign the form. For both the supervisor and next level reviewer, please print the name and then sign on the appropriate lines.

Distribution of the Form – Once all signatures have been affixed, distribute copies as shown on the introduction page of the appraisal form. All pages of the review forms, with the exception of the introduction page, should be included in the appraisal copy sent to HRM.

Questions & Training Opportunities - For questions related to these guidelines or the UT Dallas performance review process, please contact Human Resources Management at 972-883-2221. We also encourage supervisors to attend the annual training and calibration sessions on the performance review process offered in January – March of each year. Special classes about the performance review process are also offered during this same time period for all employees who are new to the University or want to better understand the process that supervisors will follow when conducting the annual reviews. For more information, please contact HRM.

Useful HRM Web Links:

- Forms Page - <http://www.utdallas.edu/hrm/forms/>
- Performance Management Web Pages - <http://www.utdallas.edu/hrm/er/pm/>
- University Policy - http://www.utdallas.edu/business/admin_manual/pdf/d112300.pdf