

DOUGLAS COUNTY

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL MANUAL

(Non-Supervisory Employees)

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INSTRUCTIONS MANUAL FOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

(Non-Supervisory)

SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

Any organization's success ultimately depends on the caliber and performance of its employees. A formalized performance appraisal system should attempt to accomplish several goals for the employee, the supervisor and the employer.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS SHOULD:

SUPERVISOR BENEFIT:

1. Encourage communication between supervisors and employees related to employee development, career path, retention, etc.
2. Supply data to assist supervisors in making informed decisions relative to promotions and other employment related decisions.
3. Provide supervisors with an understanding of the employees' view of their job and place in the departmental structure.
4. Give supervisors an opportunity to determine who has the ability/potential to be a successor for key jobs within the department.

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT:

1. Supply employees with an understanding of their work performance as viewed by their supervisor.
2. Present employees with recognition of job performance in which they excel as well as those areas needing improvement.
3. Furnish employees an opportunity to discuss work related ambitions, expectations and/or problems.
4. Provide employees a formal method with which to meet and confer with their supervisor relative to any problems confronting both parties.

EMPLOYER BENEFIT:

1. Provide a succinct overview of the productivity and suitability of an individual.
2. Allow the employer to determine the degree of match between the individual and the job.
3. Provide data to create a profile of group performance.
4. Establish a method to assess employment practices and their impact on staff. For example, if a pattern of improper performance standards contribute to poor performance, or failure is the result of not utilizing the probationary period, etc.
5. Measure of quality of supervision.

Regardless of how many benefits are attributed to the formalized system, the efforts of the rating supervisor and Department Head are essential to the system's success. In viewing the form, note the emphasis placed on written comments by the rating supervisor. The comment sections for each rating area are important as a means of informing employees of positive and negative factors affecting job performance. These sections can also be utilized to specify new or re-stated goals.

By not using the comment sections, the supervisor creates a "missed opportunity" for open communication with the employee, which also impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of the department.

Supervisors may be required to make difficult judgments regarding performance; therefore, it is necessary to put aside personal likes/dislikes of an individual and focus instead on behaviors and outcomes of job performance. Performance appraisals are not popularity contests, but rather an attempt to adequately measure the employee's performance relative to the position held, the untapped skills and abilities the individual offers, and the level of initiative they possess. Completing and conducting the annual performance review is a strategic assessment and evaluation of the staff.

SECTION II - PREPARATION FOR THE APPRAISAL PROCESS

The sequence for the performance appraisal process is as follows:

1. Prepare and gather information by the rating supervisor.
2. Complete the actual appraisal form.
3. Review and discuss with Elected Official/Department Head (EO/DH) or designee prior to meeting with the employee.
4. Review and discuss appraisal with the employee.
5. Forward the appraisal form to the Human Resources Director for review and approval.

STEP ONE: Preparation and Gathering

It is important throughout the performance period that the rating supervisor gather and record all critical incidents related to the performance of an employee. Critical incidents are basically those items that are above or below the average performance level. A log maintained regularly with this information will provide the rating supervisor with necessary information with which to complete the appraisal form.

All critical incidents recorded in the log should have already been discussed with the employee at the time of occurrence. This assures that comments and ratings for a particular appraisal factor will not be a surprise to the employee at the time the appraisal is presented to the employee. Do not allow one incident (no matter how significant) to unduly affect the overall view of performance.

Also, in preparation, the rating supervisor should review the position (job) description ensuring it is up-to-date. Utilize the position description as a guideline, so only job related matters are evaluated and communicated.

Personal problems should not be included in the document unless these problems have negatively impacted work performance which can be objectively documented. Furthermore, the appraisal content should address both specific behavior and performance items as well as the employee's total performance.

The rating supervisor needs to set aside sufficient time to review information, write comments, and determine individual and overall ratings. Performance appraisals are not to be discussed with unauthorized individuals and such action will result in discipline for all parties involved.

STEP TWO: Completion

SECTION A: Computer Label (is this still how we do this?)

Check the computerized label at the top of the form for accuracy. The Human Resources (HR) department should be notified immediately of any incorrect information. Do not make corrections or change the appraisal dates. Depending upon the corrections, a new form may need to be generated.

SECTION B: Type and Time Period

An appraisal will be one of the following three types:

1. Probationary: An appraisal on an employee who has completed the new employee probationary period. Emphasis is on exhibited desire and ability to perform the duties and responsibilities. The rating supervisor is to allow adequate time for consultation with any co-workers impacted by the employee's performance. The rating supervisor should ensure that the probationary review is completed at or close to the end of the probationary period.

NOTE: The determination regarding a new employee's retention should be concluded prior to the end of the new employee probationary period and in advance of the performance review.

2. Annual: An appraisal done on employees who have remained in the same classification since the last scheduled appraisal.
3. Promotional: An appraisal which is done on employees who have changed classifications. As with probationary appraisals, the rating supervisor is to assure the process is completed prior to the end of the promotional period.
4. Transfer/Demotion: An appraisal is completed when these employment changes occur to record the employee's performance up to their transfer/demotion date.

By denoting the type of appraisal completed, individuals reviewing will have an immediate reference point for both the ratings given and comments made on the appraisal form.

The rating supervisor should also note the time period the appraisal covers. Incidents which occur outside of the rating period shall not be considered by the rating supervisor nor should they affect the appraisal process.

SECTION C: Instructions

Review the rating scale and each rating's definition. Using a standard rating scale ensures a uniform approach by all rating supervisors.

SECTION D: Rating Scale

Note and use the numerical rating which most closely reflects the employee's performance.

0 = UNSATISFACTORY: Employee consistently does not achieve minimal requirements.

1 = MARGINAL: Employee achieves most requirements of the position. Improvement is slow and more direct supervision is required than is normally expected.

2 = SATISFACTORY: Objectives for this position are being met. Performance represents that which is expected from a competent and qualified employee.

3 = COMMENDABLE: Employee frequently exceeds the expectations for this position. Performance reflects progressive improvement and acceptance of additional responsibilities.

4 = SUPERIOR: Superior performance is the norm rather than the exception. Achievements on a day-to-day basis exceed the expectations for this position. The employee requires minimal or no supervision and easily accepts new duties.

SECTION E: Rating Factors

Factors 1 through 5 are stated on the appraisal form. In these factors the term "standards" is used as a rating device. For the purpose of the appraisal, "standards" shall be defined as:

1. The rules as set forth by the Human Resources Department, or
2. Departmental guidelines regarding performance standards if the employee has advance knowledge of these performance expectations.

In review of performance appraisals, Human Resources will consider whether or not "standards" used are fair and attainable and whether they exceed the requirements of the existing position descriptions. An example of an unacceptable standard would be a departmental standard which would require 60 wpm typing speed when the existing position description states 40 wpm. The purpose of the appraisal process is to review performance and expectations.

Human Resources will review if it finds unfair or arbitrary standards have been used in the appraisal process.

Should any clarification on the use of standards or the language of the factors be required, contact Human Resources.

Optional Factor Six (6): A space has been provided next to this factor area for the EO/DH to note approval. In allowing for an optional rating factor, Human Resources recognizes that some position descriptions may emphasize some responsibilities and duties not covered in the five standard factors. When the optional rating factor is deemed necessary, it must be used for all employees within that job title employed in the respective department.

When using the optional factor, the rating process will be performed in the same manner as the other five factors.

While Human Resources does not desire to inhibit the use of the optional factor, certain safeguards must be met in order to protect both the fairness and universal aspect of the appraisal process. The following standards must be met:

1. The optional factor must be job related,
2. The factor cannot repeat those stated in the five standard factors,
3. The factor cannot inflict unfair burden on the employee, and
4. The factor cannot create an unfair advantage to the employee.

The judgment of the Human Resources Director shall prevail should it be determined that the optional factor is improper and/or interferes with the objectives of the appraisal system. The Human Resources Director reserves the right to negate the optional factor and adjust the employee's score using the five standard factors.

If the rating supervisor and/or EO/DH are uncertain as to the use of the optional factor, contact should be made to the Human Resources Director for any additional clarification.

SECTION F: Employee Performance That May Hinder Future Development

This section should be used to identify and discuss with the employee any significant problem(s) which, if not corrected, could prevent or inhibit future advancement. Depending upon the severity of the problem(s), the employee's continued employment could be in jeopardy. No rating is to be assigned.

Performance Goals

Where appropriate, give employees specific and attainable goals to achieve during the next rating period (e.g., address public by using their name, increase caseload by "x", and reduce errors to no more than 3 a month).

SECTION G: Employee's Contribution to County

Indicate performance of employee which is noteworthy and deserves praise. This entire process is designed to be positive in nature and this section was included to help the interview end on a positive note. No rating is to be assigned.

SECTION H: Overall Rating

The overall rating is to be determined in the manner as prescribed by the Human Resources Department. The total numerical score of all factors rated is to be divided by the number of factors used in the appraisal arriving at an average score.

Non-Supervisory appraisal score totals are to be divided by five (5) unless the optional factor is used and then the numerical score will be divided by six (6). When the overall rating is computed, the total (numerical score of all factors rated divided by number of factors used) is to be rounded to the nearest tenth (e.g., 1.25=1.3; 2.75=2.8).

STEP THREE: Review

The rating supervisor should review those observations, ratings, and goals stated on the appraisal with the EO/DH prior to the employee conference to ensure departmental agreement relative to the employee's performance rating.

STEP FOUR: Employee Conference

Communication is key to the success of a well managed performance appraisal system. The employee appraisal conference is designed primarily to:

1. Give the employee a clear vision regarding his/her role within the organization,
2. Furnish recognition of performance deserving merit,
3. Supply the employee with feedback regarding those areas presenting an opportunity for improvement and suggestions on how to achieve that improvement,
4. Create an opportunity to build a stronger working relationship between supervisor and employees,
5. Eliminate any misunderstandings that may exist, and
6. Provide an occasion for the employee to discuss any facets of work that are vague, confusing, or not understood or in which the employee would like assistance.

It is acknowledged that in some cases this process will be difficult. To minimize any difficulties some assistance is provided to help in conducting a successful conference. These are only suggestions and the method used will be dependent on the level of communication and rapport between the employee and the rating supervisor.

1. Schedule Adequate Time: This will vary with each appraisal, so give consideration to the amount of time needed based upon the content of the performance appraisal, the nature of the individual involved, and the amount of coaching that may be necessary during the conference. It is important not to rush the conference or give the impression that the employee or the process does not merit enough time. Conferences do not need to be overly lengthy, but should provide sufficient time for a complete exchange of information.
2. Privacy: The conference should be conducted in an area/office which assures maximum privacy. The contents of the appraisal are a matter only for consideration and knowledge of the employee, the rating supervisor, and the EO/DH. Privacy also creates an atmosphere in which the employee may feel more at ease and free to speak and also ensures that negative factors discussed do not immediately become common knowledge.
3. Relevancy: Although it may be helpful to engage in some social small talk, don't let the interview ramble at great lengths on subjects not relevant. It should be remembered that the performance appraisal and the conference are not meant to punish or scold an employee but rather help the employee and the rating supervisor identify the strengths and weaknesses of both the employee and issues within the department. Used in this manner, the performance appraisal can become a positive morale builder.
4. Corrections: Any employee problem areas should be identified and time allotted for discussion and recommendations on steps necessary to improve the situation as well as the establishment of a date within which improvement should be attained. Supervisors should note the time period specified for improvement and monitor the employee's activity accordingly. If improvement is shown, the employee should receive recognition of this fact. If no improvement is achieved, further counseling or corrective action may be necessary.

Upon completion of the conference, the employee must sign in the area designated. It should be noted that the employee's signature only denotes knowledge of the appraisal and its contents. The signature does not denote agreement or disagreement with the contents of the performance appraisal. An employee may refuse to sign the appraisal, which is permissible. If the employee so chooses, the rating supervisor should note on the appraisal form that the employee refused to sign. This notation should be initialed by the rating supervisor.

Space is provided on the form for any comments that the employee may desire to make. The employee shall not be restricted, inhibited, or discouraged from making written comments on the appraisal form or in furnishing any additional written comments to be attached to the form.

STEP FIVE: Review by the Human Resources Department

When the signatures of the rating supervisor, EO/DH, and the employee have been secured, the appraisal form is to be forwarded promptly to the Human Resources Department for review. The review will ensure that all procedures have been adhered to and that the appraisal is complete. Should there be a violation of procedures or concern regarding a particular rating, the Human Resources Director shall bring the matter to the attention of the EO/DH.

The Human Resources Director reserves the right to change, modify, or negate any portion of the performance appraisal when the procedures and guidelines have not been met.

After the appraisal has been reviewed and approved by the Human Resources Department copies of the approved appraisal will be distributed to:

1. The personnel file of the employee.
2. The Elected Official/Department Head.
3. The employee.

SECTION III - SUMMARY:

Supervisors should use the performance appraisal as a year-round tool to measure the employee's effectiveness. If an employee's performance deteriorates, it should be noted in order to determine if the reason is job-related and/or to determine what steps need to be taken to aid in correcting the situation. If the problem is not job-related, but personal in nature, the supervisor may be limited in the actions which can be taken. In both instances, the supervisor should consult with the EO/DH.

Meritorious conduct should also be noted and brought to the attention of the employee and the EO/DH for proper recognition.

With the cooperation of all the parties involved, the performance appraisal process can be a useful tool in the development of both supervisory and non-supervisory employees.