



LANGSTON UNIVERSITY

Performance Management Guidelines for Employees

Performance management is the cornerstone of our human resources system. It is an important process because it enables Langston University to achieve several goals:

1. To measure past performance and recognize achievement
2. To reward employees commensurate with their achievement
3. To develop employees by building on strengths and targeting weaknesses for improvement
4. To ensure that results are achieved
5. To provide information to help in making decisions about the employee's future with us
6. To document performance deficiencies in case dismissal is necessary at a later date.

Langston University has established management and development of people as a high priority by assigning the highest possible value to this kind of work in the performance management system. Employees and their supervisors find that performance management is demanding and time-consuming work, but our experience has been that it is well worth the effort. Employees have a right to expect a regular feedback on their performance, and are more likely to perform well if they get it.

Performance management is meant to be an ongoing process and should not be confined to the annual completion of a form. By communicating frequently on performance, supervisors and employees forge productive working relationships. A single error does not take a disproportionate importance, and supervisors are less likely to be unduly swayed by more recent events when completing the form. Many employees find it helpful to keep notes on their achievements year round that they can refer to during the performance management process.

An important part of performance management is the performance interview. For maximum effectiveness, employees are encouraged to prepare well, including taking the follow steps:

1. Keep good records
2. Complete the self-appraisal carefully and thoroughly, providing specifics, including examples and quantitative measures of performance
3. Prepare for the interview well by re-reading the self-appraisal and adding notes

Because the performance management interview may be the only opportunity for an employee to have a structure discussion with a supervisor about performance, it is also an appropriate time to discuss the following related matters:

1. Job description. At least annually, the job description should be reviewed to make sure it is still current and comprehensive. If you think there are significant changes, a revised version should be submitted to your supervisor with a request that the rating be reviewed. A revised job evaluation questionnaire may also be needed.
2. Career development. Employees may want to discuss their career plans and how best to prepare for other positions. Willingness to relocate may be an issue.
3. Training. This is the time to consider whether or not additional training may be helpful in improving performance. This training may take the form of college and university courses, workshops, and seminars conducted by professional associations and consultants, or an individual program of reading and research. An employee may apply for educational benefits to cover the cost.

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One of the most valuable facets of the performance management system is the setting of objectives for the coming year. This process can be made more effective by keeping several principles in mind:

1. Employees should participate in setting objectives because people are generally more committed to the achievement of goals they have helped to set.
2. Goals should be reasonable, observable, and measurable. It is difficult to assess the level of achievement when a goal is vaguely stated, e.g., “Improve working relationship with Chapter Board Chairman.” Instead, it is more helpful to state: “Enlist the assistance of the Board Chairman to secure pledges from 75 percent of Chapter Board members.”
3. Setting goals establishes priorities for the coming year. Without knowledge of the supervisor’s priorities, an employee may err by spending 40 percent of his or her time toward achieving a goal that is only the fifth most important objective for the year.

While some jobs lend themselves to goal setting better than others, objectives may be established for any job. Just as a fundraiser may agree to increase the goal by 10 percent, a typist or data entry operator may agree to reduce the error rate by 10 percent, and a secretary may reduce the turnaround time on dictated correspondence from two days to one. Also, special projects offer possibilities for goal setting. The need for a new file system or a renovated office suggests goals for the employees involved; writing a manual or designing an effective procedure also implies objectives.

Receiving praise for good performance is the pleasant part of performance management. The more difficult, but equally necessary, part of the process is receiving constructive criticism and discussing performance deficiencies. This part is important for two reasons:

1. Since a major goal of performance management is performance improvement, employees need to know where they are falling short of expectations so that they may improve.
2. Employees who want to upgrade their current jobs or be promoted need to find out what will be required in the way of additional knowledge, skill, and ability.

In order to derive the maximum benefit from the performance management process, try to follow these suggestions:

1. Approach performance management with a positive attitude, determined to benefit from the experience.
2. Participate actively in the interview instead of merely listening to the supervisor. Ask questions, make a suggestion.
3. Demonstrate your willingness to consider constructive criticism and suggestions for performance or unwarranted, do not hesitate to disagree with the facts, but resist the temptation to be defensive or argumentative.
4. Keep the discussion professional and objective.
5. Request additional supervisory support or assistance if needed, and request follow-up meetings to discuss progress.

One final suggestion: Focus on substance—duties, objectives, performance requirement, achievement, the comparison between your performance and Langston University’s expectations. Your goal should be to provide and obtain as much substantive information as possible on your performance—for your benefit and Langston University’s. Any employee who would like help with the performance management process should consult his or her own supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.

Employee's Statement of Goals

Employee _____ Title _____
Reports to _____ Date _____

1. The purpose of my supervisor's position and the unit he/she supervises is:

2. My supervisor's goals for the next twelve months should be:

3. The purpose of my position is:

4. My goals for the next twelve months are:

5. To achieve these goals, I will need to overcome the following obstacles:

6. Actions my supervisor is currently taking that are particularly helpful in enabling me to achieve my goals are:

7. Actions my supervisor is currently taking that hinder me from achieving my goals are:

8. My supervisor can best help me achieve my goals by doing the following over the next twelve months:

9. I plan to do the following over the next twelve months to achieve my goals:

Signature of employee _____ Date _____

Received by and discussed with _____

Date _____

Employee's Worksheet for the Performance Review Meeting
Performance Management/Individual's Worksheet

Employee _____
Reports to _____

Title _____
Date _____

The following questions are intended to help you prepare for your performance review meeting with your supervisor. Be as specific as possible. Use more paper if necessary.

1. What do you consider to be your major on-the-job accomplishments since your last review?

2. How well do you know what you need to know in order to do your work? What additional information do you need?

3. Are there any changes that could be made to improve your effectiveness?

4. What skills or new knowledge would you like to develop to improve your performance?

5. What can you, your supervisor, or the University do to improve your performance and increase your job satisfaction?

6. What are your long-range career objectives and what are your plans to accomplish these objectives (potential job rotations, promotions, additional responsibilities, education, or training)?

7. What goals would you be interested in working toward between now and the next performance evaluation?

8. How will progress toward these goals be measured?

LANGSTON UNIVERSITY
Employee Concerns for Discussion at Performance Review

To:

We will be meeting on _____ to discuss your performance over the past year and to form plans for developing your potential as an employee.

Your input is a very important part of this meeting. You can prepare for the meeting and help me address your concerns by reading over the following questions and writing down those aspects of your performance and development you would like to discuss. Please return this form to me _____ days before the meeting.

What do you consider to be your most important accomplishments on the job over the past year?

What steps could you take to improve your performance? Is there anything I can do to help you improve?

Do you have any questions about what is expected of you on the job?

What are your career goals over the long term? Are there any training courses or assignments you would like to take on now to help prepare you for advancement?

Please mention any accomplishments, awards, or activities over the past year that might give me a more complete picture of your strengths and abilities.

Do you have any concerns that you would like to discuss at this meeting?

Date

Employee