



Staff Performance Management Guidance

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Introduction

Purpose

This guidance document outlines Clemson University's Staff Performance Management Program. It is a reference for employees and supervisors and has the following goals:

- To define the concept of performance management
- To summarize the process at Clemson University
- To provide resources and tools to help employees and supervisors fulfill their roles in the process and comply with the Staff Performance Management Policy

Scope

The guidance covered in this document is governed by Clemson's [Staff Performance Management Policy](#) and applies to classified and unclassified staff and their supervisors. Faculty performance management is governed by the *Faculty Manual* and is not covered in this document.

Defining Performance Management

Performance management is an ongoing process for measuring, documenting and addressing job performance. Performance management uses job functions, objectives, and competencies, all of which should align with University, college/division and departmental goals, as evaluation criteria.

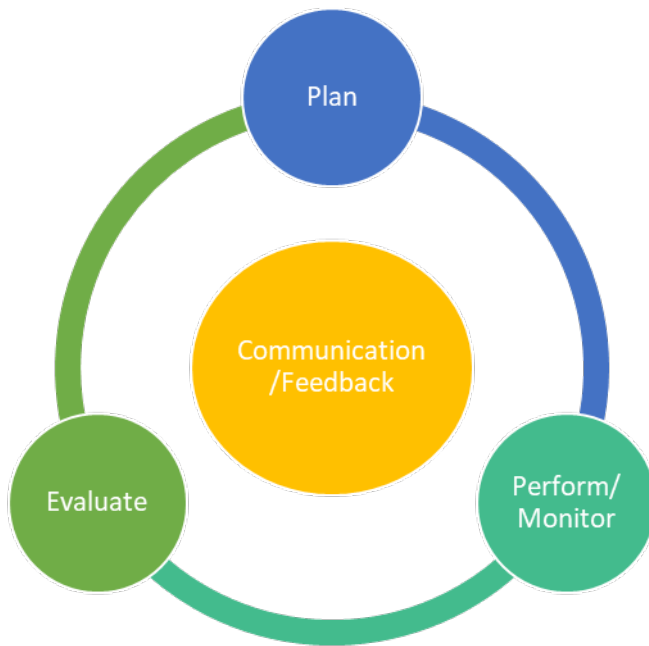
Performance management is a cyclical process, in which the supervisor sets clear performance expectations, provides regular feedback, supports professional development and documents a formal evaluation. Performance management is successful when each of the process stages is completed in a timely manner. Generally, the performance management process establishes the supervisor's expectations for the staff member for the review period.

The goals of Clemson's Performance Management Program are as follows:

- To establish clear performance expectations between employees and supervisors
- To align employee development with the broader institutional context (University strategy and goals) and individual employee career targets
- To assess actual performance and accomplishments as they compare to established expectations
- To encourage open and ongoing communication, coaching and feedback between employees and supervisors
- To provide support for employment and salary actions (including, but not limited to merit increases, bonuses, promotion, demotion, and termination)

Clemson's approach to performance management as a cycle of integrated activities is summarized in the graphic below. The process depends on and is facilitated by ongoing communication and feedback between the employee and the supervisor. This cycle creates a culture of coaching and mentoring and encourages a "no surprises" approach by ensuring that both parties are aware of expectations and how performance compares to those expectations.

Staff Performance Management Cycle



Plan:

Establish and agree on job duties and performance objectives, including success criteria.

Perform/monitor:

Perform responsibilities and monitor progress; provide praise and address performance improvement issues.

Communication/feedback:

Engage in informal discussions, ensure alignment with expectations, address concerns early and often, and promote growth and professional development.

Evaluate:

Conduct annual (required) and mid-year (suggested) performance evaluations.

Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this document.

| | |
|------------|---|
| Competency | A set of knowledge, skills, or personal/performance characteristics needed to succeed in the job duties and responsibilities. |
| Employee | Any person in a non-student position at Clemson University who receives compensation from the University and where the University has the right to control and direct how the work is performed. For the purposes of this document, “employee” refers to the staff member being evaluated through the Staff Performance Management Program. |

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| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Goals | Large, complex plans that are established by the University, college/division and the department to guide each unit's work. Departmental goals should directly align with college/divisional goals, and college/divisional goals should align with the University's goals. The collective success of these goals allows the University to meet and exceed the expectations put forth by the Board of Trustees. |
| Job Duties | The tasks or collection of related tasks that an employee is responsible to effectively complete to be successful in his/her position. |
| Job Functions | The combination of the job duties as listed on an employee's position description and the corresponding success factors. |
| Objectives | Individual projects and tasks established between employees and supervisors. Objectives should focus on the achievement of the department's goals. |
| Performance Evaluation | The formal annual process during which the supervisor and employee discuss the employee's performance for the review period. The conversation and assessment is based on the expectations discussed during the planning stage (or as modified and discussed during the review period). |
| Planning Stage | The initial stage of the performance management lifecycle. The planning stage establishes agreed upon annual performance expectations. During the planning stage, the supervisor and the employee discuss job functions, objectives, and competencies and document them on a performance management form. |
| Rater | The employee's supervisor who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. |
| Review Period | The time period for which the employee's performance is evaluated. |
| Reviewer | The next higher-level supervisor to whom the rater reports. |
| Self-Review | Self-review is the initial stage of the performance evaluation process. It is during this part of the process that the employee assesses his/her own performance for the review period in preparation for the discussion with the supervisor. |
| SMART Goal | SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, and Time-bound. This acronym describes the ideal characteristics of an objective in the performance evaluation process. |
| Supervisor | The employee's supervisor who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. |

Program Overview

Review Period

The review period is the timeframe for which the employee’s performance is evaluated. Generally, the review period covers twelve months; however, it may be shortened for an employee returning to work after a term of leave or for an employee in probationary or trial status in order to align with the established review date for the college/division.

Each college and division selects a review period that best aligns with the appropriate academic or business calendar. The available periods are:

- March 1 to February 28/29
- July 1 to June 30
- September 1 to August 31

Each college/division provides OHR with their review period selection. If the period is changed, the college or division is asked to notify OHR, who will assist in the transition to the new period.

Mandatory Process for Regular Classified and Unclassified Staff Employees

The Performance Management Program is required for all covered FTE employees as well as all FTE probationary employees. Given the benefits of using the program to set expectations, provide feedback and evaluate performance, Clemson strongly recommends that supervisors utilize the process for their TLP, TGP and other temporary staff as well.

Key Program Activities and Responsibilities

Below is a summary of key activities that occur during each stage of the cycle. For more details on roles and responsibilities, please see the Roles and Responsibilities section of this document.

| Key Activities | Employee | Supervisor | Reviewer |
|---|----------|------------|----------|
| Plan | | | |
| 1) Review position description for accuracy | X | X | |
| 2) Determine departmental goals valid for the review period | | X | X |
| 3) Review University and college/department strategy and goals | X | X | |
| 4) Review past performance evaluations to help determine areas of focus | X | | |
| 5) Discuss goals for performance review period | X | X | |
| 6) Finalize and sign off on planning stage | X | X | Optional |
| Perform/Monitor | | | |
| 1) Perform duties of the role | X | | |
| 2) Monitor progress against plan | X | | |
| 3) Address performance deficiencies | X | X | |
| Communicate/Feedback | | | |
| 1) Conduct feedback sessions / informal check-ins | X | X | |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2) Provide positive and constructive feedback | | X | |
| 3) Identify opportunities for development | | X | |
| Evaluate | | | |
| 1) Gather information to support evaluation | X | X | |
| 2) Conduct self-review | X | | |
| 3) Meet to discuss annual evaluation | X | X | |
| 4) Sign-off and submit evaluation | X | X | X |

Planning

The planning stage, which is developed collaboratively between the employee and the supervisor, is the initial stage of the Performance Management Program. The planning stage is critical to the program because it establishes the foundation against which performance is later measured. It provides a road map for performance for the year.

The planning stage occurs within four to six weeks of the start of the review period. The supervisor sets a meeting with each direct report to discuss and document the plan for the year. In advance of these meetings, employees should prepare for the discussions by reviewing previous performance evaluations; University, college/division and department goals; and personal development goals.

The following considerations apply to the planning stage:

- **Review position description:** Both the employee and the supervisor should review the position description to ensure that it reflects the true responsibilities of the current job. If changes to the position description are required, the supervisor submits the changes to the Office of Human Resources (OHR) for review and approval prior to finalizing the planning stage.
- **Agree on performance expectations:**
 - **Job functions:** Based on the up-to-date, approved position description, document job duties and determine the success criteria for demonstrating top and successful performance levels.

Objectives: Performance objectives may fall into multiple types. Regardless of type, Clemson utilizes the SMART (acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-bound) format to define the desired results for the given objective. Objective types include:

- **Organizational objectives:** Each staff member is to be rated on **at least one** ClemsonForward strategic goal. Departments are not expected to contribute to every goal. Be realistic about where your goals “fit,” using the definitions as a guide (see ClemsonForward Strategic Plan). Administrative and support units may find ways to align with ClemsonForward through their responsibilities for one of four key enablers.
- **Performance objectives:** Performance objectives support the department/college and are related to the job duties.
- **Professional development goals:** These goals enhance the skills or knowledge relevant to the current role or help to develop skills for a future role.

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| Guidance for Supervisor | Guidance for Employee |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule the planning stage meeting in advance.• Review the current position description.• Assess the employee's strengths and development areas.• Review University strategy, college/division goals and department goals; translate these goals to individual employee objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the current position description.• Consider professional development and career goals.• Review previous performance evaluations.• Review University strategy, college/division goals and department goals; translate these goals to individual employee objectives. |

Coaching and Feedback

During the year, the employee performs his/her job responsibilities with an eye on meeting or exceeding the performance expectations established during the planning stage. The employee and supervisor are encouraged to meet for informal feedback discussions on performance throughout the period. Having frequent check-ins develops a “no surprises” approach where the employee and supervisor are aware of performance progress. With coaching and feedback, performance management becomes a part of the culture – not something that is done once a year. This approach supports the basis of the Performance Management Program – the professional development of the employee.

The following considerations apply to the review period:

- **Monitor progress against plan:** Employees should monitor their progress against the expectations developed in the planning stage to help stay on track and recognize the need to make course corrections.
- **Make adjustments to the plan:** In order to identify the need for change, supervisors and employees should pay careful attention to the plan throughout the year. The planning stage is a dynamic document and can be updated based on substantial changes that may impact the employee’s priorities and goals. It is important that the supervisor discuss any changes to the planning stage with the employee so that the new expectations are clear.
- **Identify opportunities for development and growth:** Supervisors and employees identify opportunities to meet or exceed the expectations developed in the planning stages through work assignments, special projects and training/development. See the “Continuing Career Development” section in this document to understand what additional, on-going development opportunities may be available for the employee.
- **Provide recognition:** When a supervisor identifies positive behaviors and results, the employee should be recognized. Employee recognition is the acknowledgement of an individual or team's behavior, effort and accomplishments that support the organization's goals and values. The intent of acknowledging positive behaviors and actions is to (1) encourage the behavior, (2) increase morale, and (3) express appreciation for the value the employee or team brings to the University through such performance.
- **Address performance deficiencies:** Supervisors should address areas of performance deficiencies as they are identified. By recognizing performance deficiencies and discussing them

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with the employee, the supervisor provides the employee the opportunity to improve. The intention at this point is to focus discussion on the development of the individual, such that performance more closely aligns with expectations. However, in cases where an informal process does not achieve the desired results, the supervisor may, when warranted, employ the substandard performance process.

| Guidance for Supervisor | Guidance for Employee |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify growth / development opportunities.• Conduct informal feedback discussions.• Remove obstacles / roadblocks.• Address performance deficiencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an action plan.• Monitor progress against plan.• Document performance.• Seek out growth / development opportunities. |

Evaluating Performance

The annual performance evaluation occurs towards the end of the performance review period. At this point in the process, the employee and his/her supervisor formally evaluate the year's performance. As discussed above, Clemson strongly encourages ongoing communication and feedback between employee and supervisor throughout the review period. In this model, by the time of the annual performance evaluation, both parties should know how actual performance compares to the expectations documented in the plan. A mid-year review, which can help achieve mutual awareness, is optional but highly encouraged.

The following considerations apply to the annual performance evaluation:

- **Self-review:** Prior to the evaluation, the employee should conduct his/her own assessment of the year's performance against plan (without providing a rating). This exercise gives the employee the opportunity to think through areas of accomplishments as well as opportunities for improvement and to be prepared for the discussion with the supervisor.
- **Information gathering:** In preparing to discuss the performance evaluation with the employee, the supervisor should gather performance information from a variety of sources, including:
 - Feedback from others within the University with whom the employee has a high level of interaction in performing his/her job responsibilities.
 - Performance notes that the supervisor has documented throughout the performance review period.
 - Notes from informal feedback sessions with the employee.
- **Scheduling:** The supervisor and employee should schedule the performance evaluation in advance. Care should be taken to provide sufficient time for a thorough evaluation discussion, the documentation of the evaluation and the submission of the performance evaluation.

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Remember, performance evaluations must be submitted no later than the last day of the review period.

OHR has prepared checklists for both supervisors and employees with suggested steps to prepare for the performance evaluation discussion. (Refer to the Help section at the end of this document.)

| Guidance for Supervisor | Guidance for Employee |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Gather feedback.•Review notes/documentation from informal feedback sessions.•Conduct and sign off on performance evaluation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Conduct self-review.•Discuss and sign off on performance evaluation. |

Rating Scale

Clemson uses six ratings to evaluate performance: top performance, exceptional performance, successful performance, developing performance, improvement needed, and unsuccessful performance. Each rating (and the performance the rating is intended to identify) is outlined in the table below.

In an evaluation, the supervisor rates the performance of each job function and objective using one of the six ratings. (The competencies are rated either acceptable or not acceptable and do not use the six ratings.) Finally, the supervisor gives the employee an overall performance rating using one of the six ratings. The overall rating should be supported by the individual ratings on the job functions, the objectives, and the competencies. The three performance components (job functions, objectives, and competencies) are weighted evenly. In other words, the duties of the job that are/are not performed and the behaviors related to the performance are deemed equally important in achieving results.

Example:

Job Function 1: Successful Performance
Job Function 2: Exceptional Performance
Job Function 3: Improvement Needed
Competency 1: Acceptable
Competency 2: Acceptable
Objective 1: Exceptional Performance
Objective 2: Successful Performance
Overall Rating: Successful Performance

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| PROPOSED RATING | PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTION |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Top Performance | Significantly exceeded expectations for all job functions, objectives, and competencies; made significant or unique contributions to the University and is considered a role model; is considered to have the highest potential for ongoing development and advancement. This rating is intended to be reserved for the highest level of performance. |
| Exceptional Performance | Consistently demonstrated more than expected results in all job functions and objectives; consistently demonstrated the full range of positive job-related competencies. |
| Successful Performance | Consistently demonstrated full achievement in all job functions and objectives and frequently exceeded expectations; consistently demonstrated positive job-related competencies. |
| Developing Performance | Did not fully meet the stated job functions and objectives for the review period; demonstration of competencies was inconsistent; This rating is appropriate for employees who need to develop skills or receive additional training in order to fully contribute in their role. Consistent performance monitoring, coaching and improvement is necessary. |
| Improvement Needed | Did not consistently meet performance expectations in terms of job functions and objectives and required frequent supervisory direction; achievements, contributions and/or competencies did not meet the requirements for the position; significant improvement is necessary, and a Performance Improvement Plan or Warning Notice for Substandard Performance may be required. |
| Unsuccessful Performance | Actual performance of duties and achievement of objectives and/or competency behaviors did not meet the stated job functions and objectives for the review period; performance negatively affected team or University success. NOTE: This rating only may be used after the substandard performance process has been followed. |

Established Review Date

Performance evaluations are due no later than the last day of the college/division's established review period. The completed and signed performance evaluations are to be submitted to the Office of Human Resources by the last day of the review period. As part of their supervisory responsibilities, supervisors are expected to complete the required performance management process in a timely manner. OHR encourages supervisors to plan ahead to ensure that the process is thorough and that adequate time is allocated for documenting and submitting the annual performance evaluations. Exceptions to the review periods must be pre-approved by OHR.

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Concedes Rating

If OHR does not receive a performance evaluation by the last day of the established performance review period, the employee receives a “Concedes to Successful” rating. If an employee receives a “Concedes to Successful” rating, OHR sends an email to the supervisor to request the finalized evaluation within two weeks. If OHR does not receive the evaluation within two weeks, the supervisor’s supervisor is informed of the missed evaluation. Continued non-compliance with the performance evaluation due date is escalated to the college dean/division vice president as appropriate.

Career / Professional Development Goals (optional)

Employees are often interested in taking extra steps to develop skills and experience that will help them achieve the goals associated with their jobs and provide future career opportunities. Note that, here, we are discussing development opportunities that are over and above the expected development required as a part of the employee’s planning stage.

It is the responsibility of the employee to plan for and obtain their identified training/development opportunities. In addition, there are no guarantees that, once an employee completes such training and/or development, additional compensation and/or job opportunities will be available. Rather, this additional training/development should be viewed as better positioning the employee for future job opportunities.

Employee Development Methods

An individual’s career can development in untold number of ways, but each step of development will likely fit into one of three general categories: experience, exposure, or education. Development plans utilizing all three categories are most effective for positive and long-lasting change.

Some employee development occurs on the job, with the supervisor or an experienced co-worker leading the development activity in the context of the actual work environment. Other development occurs at training facilities or other non-work locations. In addition, many employees take advantage of the educational benefits Clemson offers for eligible employees through its Employee Tuition Assistance Program and online training courses.

The following are effective methods to help employees develop/reinforce new skills:

Mentoring - Mentoring matches employees with more experienced colleagues through formal or informal programs.

Cross-training - Cross-training refers to training employees to perform job duties other than those normally assigned. Cross-training can be a short-term or ad-hoc opportunity, or it can be an ongoing, planned process.

“Stretch” assignments - Challenging projects and “stretch assignments” give employees a chance to learn while doing real work. Developmental assignments allow employees to develop the new skills, knowledge and competencies necessary for higher-level positions.

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Job enlargement or job enrichment - Job enlargement involves expanding the employee's job by adding more tasks and duties, typically at the same level of complexity.

Job shadowing - Job shadowing requires more than just having an employee follow a colleague around all day. Shadowers view the organization from a different perspective and learn firsthand about the challenges facing workers in other departments.

Job rotation - Job rotation is the systematic movement of employees from job to job within an organization.

Employee Tuition Assistance Program (ETAP) – Clemson University is committed to attracting, retaining, rewarding and developing top talent, and the University understands the importance of higher education with respect to career development. The goal of the Employee Tuition Assistance Program (ETAP) is to encourage professional growth, enhance employee performance and support employee career development. Please see the ETAP web page for additional information and eligibility requirements for the program. [ETAP Web Page Link](#)

Online employee development - Clemson makes an online training resource called Skillport available for all employees. Skillport can be accessed through the following link:
<https://ccit.clemson.edu/training/elearning/>.

Several of the above developmental opportunities require support by a supervisor. To explore an ongoing career development opportunity that requires supervisory support, employees should prepare a proposal to discuss with the supervisor. The proposal should highlight the benefits to the department and college/division as well as the employee's own career development. A template for Career Development is available as a resource to help create a proposal. Access the template through the link in the Help section at the end of this document. Supervisor-supported plans are typically only available to employees with a performance ratings of "Top Performance" or "Exceptional Performance" or if there is a significant departmental skills gap that needs to be filled.

Again, there is no guarantee that a development plan will be adopted, and, if it is, neither a pay increase nor a career progression should be the expected result of completing an ongoing career development plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Supervisor

The supervisor plays a key role throughout all stages of the performance management process. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that performance management, as described in this document, is provided to each direct report. Specifically, supervisors ensure that direct reports have a planning stage and annual performance evaluation discussion and that the appropriate documentation is submitted according to the timeline. Further, supervisors should help to promote an environment and culture that supports performance management, coaching and feedback.

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Employee

The employee is at the center of the performance management process. The employee is responsible for actively participating in the completion of the annual planning stage, which establishes the performance expectations for the year. In addition, the employee is responsible for his or her performance as it relates to the goals and expectations set in the planning stage. During the review period, the employee monitors actual performance against the expectations and goals that were documented during the planning stage. At the end of the performance review period, the employee completes a self-review to prepare for the performance evaluation discussion with the supervisor. Employees are encouraged to seek out informal opportunities for feedback and coaching with the supervisor during the review period.

Reviewer

The reviewer (The supervisor's supervisor) is responsible for reading and understanding the planning stage and the performance evaluation and confirming that both are completed for the employee. The reviewer discusses the goals of the department/unit with the supervisor prior to the planning stage to help align individual goals with the overall goals for the unit.

Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) manages the administration of the Performance Management Program. OHR develops and maintains the policies, guidance, forms and tools that govern and support the process. OHR serves as a performance-management resource for the University, providing guidance and training and resolving issues and questions. The HR partner for the college/division is available as a consultant to supervisors on all aspects of the Performance Management Program.

Resources

Office of Human Resources Contacts

- College & division Human Resource partners
- Employee Relations

Forms

- [Position description template](#)
- [Staff Performance Management Planning and Evaluation form](#)
(If you receive a “Please wait...” message, click [here](#). Form must be downloaded to function.)
- [Career development planning and worksheet](#)
(If you receive a “Please wait...” message, click [here](#). Form must be downloaded to function.)

Other

- [Clemson University Strategic Plan](#)
- [SMART goal worksheet](#)
(If you receive a “Please wait...” message, click [here](#). Form must be downloaded to function.)
- [Providing Effective Performance Feedback](#)
- [Tips for Difficult Conversations Regarding Performance](#)
- [Supervisor’s Planning Stage Checklist](#)
- [Supervisor’s Evaluation Stage Checklist](#)
- [Employee’s Evaluation Stage Checklist](#)