

The Ohio Performance Review System (OPRS) Manual

Instructions and Forms for Evaluating
Bargaining Unit and Exempt Employees

Prepared by

State of Ohio
Department of Administrative Services

The logo for OhioDAS, featuring the word "Ohio" in a black serif font and "DAS" in a bold, blue sans-serif font. The "D" in "DAS" is stylized with a white circle inside it.

March 18, 2009

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ii

Introduction ii

Purpose of the Ohio Performance Review System 1

Participants in the Ohio Performance Review System 2

Affected Employee Groups 2

Performance Review System Overview 3

Mid-Probation and Final Probation Performance Reviews 3

Phase I: Performance Planning/Setting Goals and Objectives 4

How to Begin 4

What do Well-Written Goals Look Like? 4

Measurements 5

What Does a Measurement Look Like? 5

Evaluating Goals 5

Types of Goals 6

Filling out the Goals and Objectives Attachment 6

Sample Goals and Objectives Attachment Form 8

Phase II: Performance Monitoring 9

Rationale for Performance Monitoring 9

Observing Employee Performance 10

Performance Feedback and Coaching 11

Documentation 12

Modifying Performance Expectations 13

Progressive Discipline and Performance Review 13

Phase III: Annual Performance Review 14

Performance Review Conference Overview 14

Preparation 14

Guidelines for the Performance Review Conference 15

Effective Communication Skills 16

Discussing Performance Improvement 17

Discussing Employee Development 18

Completion of the Review Form 18

Filing and Distribution 19

Step-by-Step Review 21

Further Information 24

Attachments 25

OPRS Goals & Objectives Attachment Form

Exempt Forms

Bargaining Unit Forms

Contract Language 26

Acknowledgement

Planning for the transition to a merit-based pay system in Ohio government, the Department of Administrative Services appointed a committee in 2000 to design a Performance Review System for both bargaining unit and exempt employees.

In creating the Ohio Performance Review System, the committee carefully considered

- Classification groupings in various state agencies
- Current trends in performance appraisal design
- Performance appraisal systems used by the private and public sectors
- Application of merit reward for good performance

This effort resulted in a system tailored to meet the needs of employees and management, thereby meeting the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code and negotiated labor agreements.

The Ohio Performance Review System Committee is grateful to everyone who contributed their time, effort, and ideas to the development of the Ohio Performance Review System.

Introduction

This manual is an important source of information regarding the administration of the Ohio Performance Review System (OPRS). The proper application of the procedures will ensure that employees are evaluated on a fair and objective basis.

Periodic training is provided by the Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Division, to assist managers and supervisors in evaluating bargaining unit members and/or exempt employees.

Effective implementation of the Performance Review System is in the best interests of

- Workers for state government, who want to know how they are doing and how they can improve.
- Management, to clarify goals that can be achieved and reward good performance; and
- The citizens of Ohio, who rightfully expect efficiency in governmental operations.

It is the responsibility of every manager and supervisor to honestly evaluate the work performance of their employees at least once a year. Performance evaluation is not only a management right; it is a management duty (OAC 123:1-29-01, 123:1-29-02, and 123:1-29-03).

This duty is even more important now because of the need for timeliness. The evaluation form must be completed prior to the established deadline, or the step raise will be issued automatically. By scheduling the performance review approximately sixty days prior to the date of the employee's next step raise, an agency will ensure that the form can be filed thirty days prior to the step date. This time line will allow the processing time needed to deny a step raise or ensure movement to the next step.

It is just as important to complete the evaluation form so that communication, which is crucial to the success of the OPRS, can occur.

Purpose of OPRS

The ultimate purpose of the Ohio Performance Review System is to improve the effectiveness and productivity of state government. Meeting this commitment requires that each state employee and manager perform his or her job as capably as possible.

Performance review is utilized by managers and supervisors to

- Work toward attainment of the agency/division mission, goals, and objectives
- Inform the employee of strengths, weaknesses, and progress
- Improve performance and productivity
- Strengthen work relationships and improve communication
- Develop employee skills
- Recognize accomplishments and good work

The consistent use of the OPRS will assist managers and supervisors in the planning, monitoring, evaluation, and development of employee performance. This process will also enable employees to clearly understand their job duties and performance expectations and how they fit in to the overall purpose, vision, and goals of the agency and their respective division.

Because the State of Ohio recognizes the criticality of this managerial function, a manager or supervisor who during his own rating period fails to complete the performance evaluation process for each of his direct reports will not advance to the next step.

It is therefore, imperative that the manager or supervisor establish a record keeping system that includes at least the following:

- The step dates for all direct reports
- The date sixty days preceding each step date (i.e., the date prompting preparation for the completion of the evaluation form)
- The date by which the evaluation form must be completed and processed (i.e., thirty days before the scheduled step date)

The establishment of this system is the responsibility of the individual supervisor or manager.

Participants in OPRS

<i>Supervisor</i>	Rater who participates in performance planning, carries out the monitoring of the plan, performs the evaluation, schedules and conducts the performance review conference in a timely manner, and completes and signs the performance review form.
<i>Reviewer</i>	Level of management above the Supervisor who reviews, adds comments to, and signs the performance review form.
<i>Appointing Authority</i>	Agency director, or Superintendent of a Mental Health, Mental Retardation, or Rehabilitation and Correction facility, who reviews and signs the performance review form.
<i>Employee</i>	Individual being evaluated who participates in performance planning, adds comments, and signs the Performance Review form.

Affected Employee Groups

Procedures and forms have been developed to enable the OPRS to meet the needs of Ohio's diverse work force of both bargaining unit and exempt employees. Separate sets of procedures and forms have been developed for bargaining unit and exempt employees.

The forms and their performance dimensions have been designed to "group" classifications that have the same or similar work functions. They cover the following employee groups:

Bargaining Unit

- Clerical
- Professional/Paraprofessional
- Trades/Technical
- Labor
- Protective Services
- Direct Care
- Teachers

Exempt

- Manager/ Supervisor and Professional/Paraprofessional
- Support Staff

Performance Review System Overview

Phase I

Performance Planning - Takes place on an annual basis. At this time, the supervisor/rater and the employee meet to discuss the job duties of the position in order to establish goals and or performance expectations. This meeting will give the employee a clear understanding of his or her performance expectations for the upcoming rating period.

Phase II

Performance Monitoring - An ongoing process throughout the year. To monitor effectively, the rater should observe and record performance (on the respective form) while maintaining frequent communication with the employee.

Phase III

Annual Performance Review - This is the final phase of the evaluation process that proceeds the requirement for rater, appointing authority and employee signatures are secured and should be viewed as optional especially where local circumstances or supervisor style make compliance problematic; nevertheless, should the supervisor chooses to follow this suggestion, he/she should schedule the conference during the 60 day period preceding the employee's next step increase. Following the performance review conference with the employee to discuss past performance and future plans, the rater should summarize the Phase II monitoring and evaluate the employee's performance over the entire year using the appropriate OPRS form.

Mid-Probation and Final Probation Performance Reviews

Phases I, II, and III above are also applicable to Mid-Probation and Final Probation Performance Reviews, except, of course, for the time periods involved. These two initial performance reviews may be even more critical than the Annual Performance Reviews.

As soon as possible after a new employee comes on board, the supervisor and the employee should discuss performance expectations to cover the first half of the employee's probationary period. The Mid-Probation rating compares employee performance to these performance expectations.

After the Final Probation Review, the supervisor and employee should begin Phase I of the OPRS by establishing goals and performance expectations. The goals and expectations should encompass the time period up to the employee's next step date. These goals and expectations will be used as the basis for the first Annual Performance Review.

Phase I: Performance Planning/Setting Goals and Objectives

A critical component of the State of Ohio's Performance Review System is performance planning. This phase involves two components: discussing performance expectations as they relate to dimensions and setting goals and objectives. This phase begins at the onset of employment and at the beginning of each performance review cycle.

A **goal** is defined as a desired end result, which is achievable by a series of action steps or **objectives**. If the goal is correctly written, the employee will know definitively whether the goal has or has not been achieved (i.e., the attainment of the goal will be confirmed by some **measurement**).

How to Begin

The setting of goals and objectives should be a collaborative effort between employee and manager. The manager has undoubtedly established goals for the unit, and these should be shared with the staff, providing them with some direction for establishing goals of their own.

As a manager or supervisor, you should encourage each employee to consider the following:

- **specific** ways to improve current service, to streamline procedures, to save time or money, to reduce errors, to increase accuracy
- whether or not the goal is **realistic** (i.e., obtainable)
- whether or not the achievement of the goal is **within their control**
- what **measurement** will indicate they have achieved the goal

What Do Well-Written Goals Look Like?

A well-written goal will be specific and job-related. Contrast the pairs of goals below:

Poorly written goal: To support the efforts of the Performance Review Committee.

Well-written goal: To complete the "Goals and Measurements" section of the instructional manual for the State of Ohio's Performance Review System by August 31.

Poorly written goal: To improve service to my internal customers.

Well-written goal: To improve service to my internal customers by decreasing the time required to process travel expense reports.

The first goal of each pair is vague and, as you might have noticed, would be hard to judge whether it was achieved or not. The second goal of each pair is very specific. The achievement

of these goals will be apparent; the employee will have a product in hand on August 31 or the average processing time can be computed.

In judging the quality of a goal, ask this question: **How will I know definitively if the goal has been achieved?**

The answer will rest, of course, in the description of the goal's **measurement**.

Measurements

Each goal must also include **measurements** of progress or a means of determining when or if an objective (action step) has been completed or a goal has been attained. The measurement should be agreed upon by both supervisor and employee at the time the goal is established.

Measurements are observable indicators of quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, cost savings, accuracy, completeness, customer reaction, and quality.

They are whole numbers, dates, percentages, lengths of time, amounts, averages.

They are a means of comparing the end result to some baseline identified at the goal's inception.

A measurement may be as simple as a statement of the end result (e.g., all outstanding employee grievances will be resolved).

What Does a Measurement Look Like?

A date for completion (e.g., by August 31)

A whole number (e.g., 250 of 500 applications will be screened for minimum qualifications)

A percent of increase (e.g., a 10% increase in the number of return customers)

An amount of time (e.g., a decrease in time required, from 5 to 3 days)

A percent of decrease (e.g., a 25% reduction in the average number of errors, i.e., from 20 errors per 1000 keystrokes to 15 errors)

A cost savings (e.g., a 10% savings)

An improvement in quality (e.g., more favorable participant reaction to a training program after a change to program content).

Evaluating Goals

Once the employee has established his or her goals, the manager will evaluate them and approve them, or work with the employee to refine them.

The manager should ask these questions: Do the individual goals support the unit goals? Do unit goals fit in and support section and division goals and finally support agency vision and purpose?

Depending on the past performance and capability of the employee, the manager may find it necessary to challenge the employee to reach for more or encourage the employee to set more realistic goals. In all cases, the manager should evaluate whether or not the attainment of the goal is within the control of the employee, i.e., does the employee really have the resources or the position to influence the outcome?

And what happens when, during the rating period, circumstances beyond the control of the employee affect the likelihood that the goal will be achieved? Suppose changes in the economy, a reorganization, or the loss of key personnel make the attainment of the goal unlikely? What if a shift in organizational focus makes the attainment of the goal meaningless?

The wise manager will revisit the goal with the employee and judge what modifications to the goal are necessary, what adjustments to the timeline are required, and whether or not the employee should actually proceed with the action steps at all. In such cases, holding an employee to the attainment of a goal that is meaningless or not attainable is counterproductive.

Types of Goals

The State of Ohio Performance Review System recognizes two types of goals, breakthrough goals and maintenance goals.

Breakthrough goals are goals that if attained have *dramatic* impact on the way the organization and/or the state conducts its business. The end result is one in which cost savings are realized, efficiency is increased, or many agencies benefit. The employee may achieve a breakthrough goal individually or may be a critical member of a team charged with a special project.

Maintenance goals are goals that if attained support the goals of the unit or section. The end result improves efficiency, saves money, or maintains current operations.

Filling out the Goals and Objectives Attachment

Once the supervisor and the employee have agreed on the employee's goals for the next rating period, complete the Goals and Objectives Attachment together.

- After entering the goal on the attachment (complete one attachment for each goal), check the box describing the type of goal, i.e., breakthrough or maintenance.
- Enter the action steps necessary to attain the goal, and projected start and end dates. Key staff (Lead and Support) are optional entries and may not be appropriate for all action steps.
- Describe the measurement agreed upon in the goal setting phase. If a baseline figure is available, enter that in the space provided.

A baseline is a description of the "present state" and is usually a number that will be compared to another number calculated at the end of the rating period. That number will describe the end result and determine if, in fact, the employee has attained the goal.

In the example, the measurement is described as “decrease the time required to process travel expense reports by two days.” The baseline is the average number of days currently needed to process an expense report, in this case 7.

- Sign and date the form, indicating that both supervisor and employee have agreed to the goal established and the measurement described.
- At the end of the rating period, compare the baseline to the end result.

If at the end of the rating period, processing time has decreased to 6 days, then the employee has failed to meet the goal and is “below target.” If, on the other hand, the average number is 4, then the employee is “above target.” An average number of 5 results in an “on target” rating.

State of Ohio Performance Review System

Goals and Objectives Attachment Form

NOTE: For help on how to set goals and objectives or to complete this form, refer to pages 4-7 of the Ohio Performance Review System Manual

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY:

DIVISION:

SECTION:

GOAL: To improve service to my internal customers by decreasing the time required to process travel expense reports.

BREAKTHROUGH
MAINTENANCE

Objectives	KEY STAFF LEAD	SUPPORT	START DATE	END DATE	Completed Y/N
Identify and track customer errors requiring expense forms to be returned			July 1	July 31	
Review procedures to determine if instructions are confusing, especially those describing entries identified as "trouble spots"			August 6	August 10	
Rewrite instructions if necessary			August 13	August 17	
Re-issue procedures for completing travel expense reports			August 20	August 20	
Hold informal training sessions, explaining procedures			August 27	December 31	
Track # of days needed to process reports			July1	December 31	

MEASUREMENT INSTRUCTIONS: Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

DESCRIPTION OF MEASUREMENT	BASELINE	RESULTS
Decrease the time required to process travel expense reports by two days	7 days	

Manager/Supervisor Signature

Date

Employee Signature

Date

Phase II: Performance Monitoring

Observing and Documenting Employee Performance throughout the Rating Period

The second phase of the OPRS cycle begins immediately after the performance expectations and goals are set in Phase I.

In this ongoing phase, the rater should regularly keep track of job performance on the log provided in the performance evaluation form and give the employee feedback as to how he or she is doing based on the performance expectations and goals discussed and recorded in Phase I.

Phase II represents a central element in the performance appraisal process. It is during performance monitoring that you

- Observe performance
- Record incidents of effective and ineffective performance
- Consider whether performance expectations and goals should be revised or even replaced
- Communicate frequently with the employee about work progress (document communications)
- Give constructive feedback (document communications)
- Monitor the employee's progress in completing specified phases of his/her goal

Rationale for Performance Monitoring

Why is Performance Monitoring Important?

- The traditional once-a-year performance review is insufficient as a performance management and communications tool. Instead, appraising performance should be a continuous process that begins as soon as performance expectations and goals are established. Employee performance and progress on goals should be observed, monitored, and recorded by the rater throughout the review period. The resulting information provides the basis for the rater's subsequent evaluation of the employee's performance.
- Where the employee is meeting or exceeding performance expectations and goals, recognition and praise will reinforce progress toward attaining work unit objectives and increasing productivity. High performance workplace concepts should be encouraged.

- If the employee is not meeting, is only partially meeting expectations, or is behind schedule on accomplishment of his/her goals, performance monitoring allows performance deficiencies to be identified early and, when possible, quickly corrected. Coaching, training, and other development activities should also be considered wherever appropriate and initiated as soon as is practical.
- For the employee to perform at the desired level, it is essential that the rater communicate regularly (at least monthly) with the employee about actual performance in relation to performance expectations and goals.
- Merit raises, bonuses, and exemplary performance are based on the results of performance. Monitoring will provide documentation needed to defend or justify award or denial.

There are two keys to effective performance monitoring: communication and documentation. Communication between the rater and the employee (noted or recorded) throughout the review period helps to ensure that there are no surprises in the annual review conference. If the job or work environment changes, performance expectations and goals may need to be changed. Throughout this period, the rater should document key or critical incidents reflecting effective and ineffective performance. A log is provided with the performance evaluation form for this purpose. In this way, annual reviews are objective, maintain their job-relatedness, and provide more information for the discussion at the annual conference.

Observing Employee Performance

The importance of observing employee performance is often overlooked by raters. Frequently, when supervisors are asked to describe the things that they observed, they are unable to cite specific incidents that took place; as a result, important facts regarding work performance are forgotten or distorted.

Focusing on work performance rather than personal traits or characteristics is an important skill, since it promotes objectivity in the observation of employee performance. Documented observations of performance provide the most objective information for the supervisor's ratings. The documentation can be in the form of the log provided with the performance evaluation form, dated notes, activity reports, or other work records. All of these items should be attached to the performance evaluation form prior to the review session. Special attention should be paid to timeliness, quantity, quality, and team effort.

The observations of employee performance used for ratings also serve as a communication tool for giving direct feedback to the employee, thus giving the employee an opportunity to improve his or her work performance.

For example, a manager is summoned because an unruly client is becoming loud and threatening. Upon arriving at the scene, the manager observes an employee who calms the client, defuses a potentially explosive situation, and then renders service the client was originally seeking. The manager should note or make a record of the incident.

Indirect observation of work performance can be accomplished by a review of employee work records and absenteeism records.

Other examples of indirect observation of employee work performance are: (1) a phone call or a letter from a citizen regarding the courteous treatment the citizen was afforded by an employee, or, conversely, regarding abrupt and discourteous treatment; (2) comments from a supervisor of another section on how helpful and courteous an employee was during a recent assignment involving cooperation between the sections, or how little help was afforded by a particular employee.

Performance Feedback and Coaching

Constructive feedback is an important performance management skill and should be used throughout the monitoring phase.

(NOTE: A record of these interactions is critical if the supervisor's decision to deny the employee's step increase is challenged. Without documentation verifying these communications, it is likely the decision to deny the step increase will be reversed.)

Practiced correctly, feedback provides information that enables employees to make needed adjustments and correct mistakes; it also reinforces those processes that are proving most effective in achieving performance expectations. Feedback is both instructive, when providing guidance, and supportive, when providing praise. The result is a more confident and competent employee.

Important research findings in support of the use of feedback indicate that

- Employees learn faster when feedback is precise
- Frequent feedback increases motivation
- Frequent feedback produces high self-assurance and friendliness
- Feedback improves performance when it includes comparison to a previously established goal or performance expectation
- Frequent objective feedback increases job satisfaction.

After feedback has been given, it is frequently necessary for the manager to coach the employee to enable him/her to use the new information to improve performance. The manager should guide the employee in the use of appropriate work strategies and problem-solving approaches.

Feedback Guidelines

Specific	<i>Information should be to-the-point and convey concise instructions to the employee to maximize understanding.</i>
Timely	<i>Feedback should be given to the employee in a timely fashion so that immediate action can be taken while details are still clear.</i>
Work-Related	<i>Feedback should be objective and work-related, and should focus on the employee's job performance. If there is a performance problem, the supervisor should discuss how an employee's performance deviates from what is appropriate for goal achievement. (Personal traits or characteristics should not be mentioned; it causes the employee to be defensive.)</i>
Frequent	<i>Frequent feedback (both positive and negative) can lead to greater acceptance of constructive criticism and to performance improvement.</i>

Documentation

Documentation of work performance is an important function of the monitoring process. The type and frequency of incidents which should be documented requires the judgement of the supervisor. It is impossible to remember over the course of a year all the information that relates to an individual's performance or accomplishment of goals. Most people remember more recent events; yet recent time periods may not accurately represent the entire performance review period. Managers may remember only ineffective performance, which may not reflect overall performance.

For these reasons, it is necessary to maintain ongoing performance documentation of all employees. Supervisors should regularly record their observations in the log provided with the performance evaluation form.

The documentation log should

- 1 Be accurate, performance-related, and completed in a timely manner
 - Reflect objective facts
 - Be job-related
 - Contain constructive criticism where necessary
 - Be based on direct observations
 - Identify specific work performance of the employee
 - Be dated and anchor the activity to a specific time frame

- 2 Be consistent
 - Written in the same format and level of detail for each employee
 - Conform with other records and actions
- 3 Reflect ongoing discussions with the employee concerning performance and progress

Modifying Performance Expectations

Occasionally, the supervisor may decide that changing circumstances warrant a revision of performance expectations and goals. There are several legitimate reasons for making such changes. These include instances in which significant changes occur in priorities, personnel, and resource availability. When it becomes apparent that such a situation exists, the supervisor should meet with the employee to redefine or revise performance expectations and goals.

Keep in mind that the additional or revised expectations and goals must remain consistent with the employee's position.

Progressive Discipline and Performance Review

Performance review is not a substitute for the process of progressive discipline. Performance review and progressive discipline are two separate management responsibilities. The disciplinary process must begin as soon as possible after an incident occurs.

The performance review may reflect how the poor behavior that resulted in discipline affected the overall work performance of the employee.

Phase III: Annual Performance Review

Performance Review Conference Overview

The final phase of the Ohio Performance Review System is the performance review conference, which may be used at the supervisor's option. It should be scheduled in the sixty-day period preceding the date of the employee's next step increase. An effectively managed performance review conference can improve the ongoing communication between the supervisor and employee and for that reason supervisors who can accommodate it, should do so. The following suggestions will improve the prospects that it will be successful.

During the performance review conference, the supervisor should

- Review the employee's current performance goals and/or expectations, and discuss performance effectiveness during the past rating period
- Develop a performance improvement plan to address improvement opportunities and/or to increase employee effectiveness during the next rating period
- Establish individual performance goals or expectations for the next rating period and demonstrate how they support the goals of the organization (Phase I)

Preparation

Thorough preparation for the performance review conference, by both the supervisor and the employee, can set the stage for an effective performance review conference.

Prior to the performance review conference the supervisor should:

- Make copies of the agency mission and any unit or section goals (for himself/herself and the employee);
- Make copies of the employee's position description (for himself/herself and the employee);
- Review the employee's position description and be prepared to adjust the duties or revise the document to reflect actual duties being performed;
- Make copies of a blank employee evaluation form (for himself/herself and the employee);
- Make copies of the employee's last performance review
- Provide all copies to the employee;
- Assemble and review all documentation related to the goals, objectives and actual performance of the employee;
- Complete a preliminary evaluation of the employee, basing evaluation and comments on specific performance activity documented throughout the rating period. Be prepared to reach agreement with the employee regarding their effectiveness over the past rating period.

Prior to the performance review conference, the employee should

- Review the agency mission and unit goals to see where their job duties and individual goals contribute to the overall effectiveness of the agency and unit;
- Review their position description and be prepared to discuss how the job has evolved over the past rating period;
- Review any documentation they have that demonstrates their effectiveness;
- Complete a self-evaluation. Be prepared to reach agreement with the supervisor regarding their effectiveness over the past rating period.

Scheduling the date, time and location of the performance review conference should be done by the supervisor. However, the supervisor should contact the employee with several dates as options, and let the employee select the date that best fits within their schedule.

The performance review conference is a private discussion and should **only** involve the supervisor and the employee. Exceptions to this position should only be made after discussion with your manager and the human resources manager. Steps should be taken to ensure privacy and minimize interruptions or distractions. The process should not be rushed; ample time should be provided to fully address all performance issues.

The supervisor should plan for a conference that encourages the employee to think about their performance and allows for discussion of any concerns, issues or questions the employee might have regarding their duties, working conditions, opportunities for training, etc.

Guidelines for the Performance Review Conference

The following information presents general guidelines or key points to keep in mind for conducting an effective performance review conference.

Please remember the performance review conference involves only the supervisor and the employee. During the discussion, the supervisor should focus on how performance expectations and individual employee goals were or were not achieved using specific examples from throughout the rating period.

- 1 Start with Self-Assessment.** The Ohio Performance Review System is built on a philosophy of employee participation and joint input into the performance planning and review processes. This philosophy should be carried into the performance review conference. The supervisor should encourage employee input in the discussion. The employee then compares his or her performance against the expectations established for the performance review period.
- 2 Respond Briefly to the Employee Self-Assessment.** The supervisor should provide supportive comments where his or her appraisal agrees with the employee's point of view. Those areas where there may be disagreement also need to be addressed. The supervisor's documented observations should be referred to when he or she replies to the employee's self-assessment. The employee should be encouraged to discuss other facts or circumstances that affected or impacted performance.

- 3** **Review Performance Dimensions and Status of Individual Goals.** The supervisor should verbally review each performance expectation or dimension and the status of each individual goal. He/she should recognize acceptable or superior work, as well as note where the employee has been unsuccessful in meeting performance expectations. The supervisor should also determine with the employee if there are any areas where help is needed to improve performance.

Individual and work unit expectations for the next rating period should also be discussed.

Effective Communication Skills

- 1** **Communicate Openly.** As described above, the performance review conference should be a give-and-take session in which you examine areas of agreement and disagreement. For example, the employee might disagree with one or more of your ratings. Hear the employee out -- there may be information you have overlooked. Share your position; show the employee that you are interested in conducting an objective conference. If you think, on reflection, that a rating should be changed, do so. Of course, remember that the final appraisal should reflect your honest judgement. The employee always has the option of disagreeing with your evaluation and providing a written response.
- 2** **Try to Manage the Emotional Level.** Should an employee become angry or hostile, it is important that you do not. Allowing the employee to talk or "vent" is often a good strategy. Listen carefully to try to understand the real reasons the employee is upset. Sometimes it will help to restate the employee's position in your own words to confirm your understanding.

If emotions get too high, consider postponing the remainder of the session. Ask the employee if he or she thinks that might be a good idea, and reschedule the remainder of the conference for a specific date, place, and time.

Discussing Performance Improvement

Many performance review conferences will include discussions about how performance can be improved. The following are guidelines for such discussions.

The supervisor should

- Establish what improvements are needed and the expected time frame for achievement.
- Maintain a "problem-solving" orientation, involving the employee in the identification of potential solutions to performance problems.
- Discuss the performance dimensions, the status of individual goals, and focus on future performance. Lead into a discussion of plans for improving performance or building on current strengths. This begins the performance-planning phase for the next performance review period.
- Present suggestions or ideas, and obtain the employee's ideas, wherever performance needs improvement. Identify for the employee that there is a need in specific areas for improvement. Try to pick an area or areas that is (are) acceptable to both parties or where improvement is imperative. Demonstrate an interest in assisting in the employee's development.
- Cite specific actions that the employee can take to improve.
- Develop a Performance Improvement Plan on the appropriate page of the performance evaluation.
- Agree with the plan or work to make it acceptable.
- After discussing performance expectations, decide on a specific course of action. Try to obtain the employee's commitment to the course of action.
- Let the employee know where performance is effective. Indicate that there is potential for being outstanding in certain areas and provide suggestions to accomplish this.
- Where the employee is rated as "Below Target" or "Does Not Meet," it is mandatory that remarks be included on the Performance Improvement Plan which indicates how the employee can reach an acceptable level of performance by the next review conference.

Discussing Employee Development

In addition to covering employee performance during the rating period, the conference is also a good time to discuss plans for professional development. The major responsibility for employee development lies with the employee; the supervisor should attempt to be helpful and supportive regarding career opportunities.

Sources for employee development may include

- State-sponsored training
- Outside training (seminars, workshops, etc.)
- Academic training at local secondary schools, colleges, or universities
- Reading material references
- Computer-based training and education programs

Completion of the Review Form

In the Ohio Performance Review System, how an individual has performed overall is answered in two ways: first, in the employee's oral summary, provided during the conference or at another meeting later in the process, where the pre-evaluation conference is not used; second, in a written summary, provided on the performance review form. The written summary **must** be consistent with the oral summary.

The supervisor may complete the Performance Review form during the meeting or after the employee leaves the conference:

To complete the section evaluating the status of individual employee goals:

- Compare the projected timeline and the measurement (including the baseline) entered on the Goals Attachment page at the beginning of this rating cycle to the end result documented and discussed during the performance review conference.
- Make an "X" to indicate the status of each goal and whether the employee is "above," "on," or "below" target.
- Support your rating with comments in the space provided.
- Make an "X" in the appropriate box, indicating if the employee "meets" expectations, "does not meet" expectations, or is performing "above" expectations.
- Support the rating with comments in the space provided.

Rater comments are work-related statements that justify each rating. The comments should cite specific examples of objective measurable performance and demonstrate that the employee has met, exceeded, or fallen below previously established expectation levels.

Avoid the use of personality factors or traits, which are not work-related, to describe the employee; instead, describe the actual work behavior of the employee that exemplifies the personality factor or trait. For example, an unacceptable comment might be: "Mr. Jones has a positive attitude toward his clients." This statement tells what kind of trait Mr. Jones exhibits when he works with his clients. However, in order to validly assess Mr. Jones' behavior, we have to say how his behavior tells us he has a positive attitude. An acceptable comment might be: "Mr. Jones ensures that each client is received and treated politely. He does his best to obtain medical and support services for his clients as soon as possible."

The following statements are further examples of correct rater comments:

"Ed is an excellent worker. His speed, accuracy, and attention to detail result in high-quality manuscripts."

"Charles has some difficulty dealing with demanding situations. When required to answer questions from the press on rather sensitive issues, he is unable to relay the agency's position in a clear and confident manner."

"John is very creative. In the last eight months, he has designed the XYZ form adopted by our agency for client intake, a client computer tracking program, and a new counselor's work log."

"Fran is careless in her work; her lack of organization has resulted in lost documents, causing delays in processing. Five affected clients have written complaints."

"Jane is highly dependable. She consistently completes assignments before the deadline dates."

NOTE: Each statement above addresses the "how" (descriptive or operational) aspect of the employee's work behavior.

Sign the form as the *Rater*.

Filing and Distribution

Whether the supervisor chooses to hold a pre-evaluation conference or not,, the completed evaluation form must be submitted to the appropriate reviewing manager for approval. The reviewing manager should review the ratings for accuracy and objectivity, noting any disagreement with the rater or simply adding his/her own comment in the reviewer "Comments" block, then sign in the space provided. The form should then be forwarded to the appointing authority for review and signature.

Each agency must establish its own processes for managing the filing, completion, and distribution of performance evaluation forms. Established deadlines for completion must be met because of the impact the process has on the granting or denial of an employee's annual step increase.

The form with all required signatures is returned to the supervisor, who obtains the employee signature and comments, and distributes signed copies to the employee, the rater and the agency files.

Step-by-Step Review

This subsection of the manual describes each step of the annual performance review process.

Step 1:		Prepare for Performance Review
		<p>Familiarize yourself with performance review process and the contents of each page of the form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions • Agency Mission and Unit/Section Goals • Performance Log • Goals and Dimensions • Performance Improvement Plan • Performance Summary
		<p>Inform the employee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance review conference, when used, should be in the sixty-day period immediately preceding the date of the employee's next step increase; • Schedule a date, time (allow at least a three-day lead time) and location; • Ask the employee to review the information that you have provided (listed below) and to come to the conference prepared to discuss their job performance over the past rating period. Provide the employee with copies of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His/her current position description • A blank copy of their performance review form (ask them to rate themselves prior to the meeting and to think of specific examples of their performance that supports their ratings) • A copy of the agency mission and any unit or section goals • The employee's last performance review
		<p>Review all documentation related to employee performance (created during Phase II, Performance Monitoring) and prepare to use that documentation as support for your ratings. Potentially, each rating will need to be supported by specific examples of that behavior noted during the year.</p>

Step 2:		Review Employee Performance
		<p>Consider whether employee performance expectations were achieved or not achieved during the rating period.</p>
		<p>Review documentation regarding individual performance and note specific examples of performance behavior for each performance goal or dimension.</p>
Step 3:		Prepare for the Performance Review Conference (Optional)
		<p>Determine a strategy to get the employee to commit to performance improvement.</p>

		Review any sensitive issues with your supervisor and/or someone from human resources, i.e., instances where the employee's performance has been below target or at an unacceptable level (does not meet). Instances where your evaluation may impact regular step increases.
		Schedule a quiet private meeting area for the conference, somewhere where you are not likely to be interrupted, i.e., a conference room.

Step 4:		Hold the Conference (Optional)
		Attempt to put the employee at ease.
		Explain the purpose(s) for the review and the topics to be covered (listed on the first page of the evaluation form)
		Discuss the organization's reasons, as well as your own, for reviewing performance.
		Solicit the employee's active participation by asking him/her to provide a self-assessment for each performance goal and/or dimension.
	a.	Allow the employee to summarize his or her self-assessment of progress and achievement related to each performance expectation.
	b.	Ask pertinent questions to clarify reasons for success and/or failure, i.e., can you think of a specific example when ...
		Review the employee's performance.
	a.	Review accomplishments and how they compare to previously specified goals.
		Review observations and documentation.
		Review the effectiveness of the employee's actions.
		Review factors beyond the control of the employee.
	b.	Provide the rationale for the evaluation based on achievements. In some instances, your initial evaluation may change based on information provided by the employee, i.e., they may remind you of special circumstances that impacted their ability to accomplish or address a dimension that was out of their control.

Step 5:		Develop a Performance Improvement Plan
		In performance areas where the employee was "Below Target" or "Does Not Meet," require a specific plan to address the performance issue(s).
		Determine the kind and amount of improvement that may be needed.
		Use a "problem-solving" approach.
		Establish individual expectations in accordance with work unit expectations.

		Identify specific improvement needs and strategies.
		Conduct the performance planning discussion or schedule a meeting to conduct it later.

Step 6:		Discuss Employee Development
		Encourage the employee to conduct a self-assessment of his or her abilities, skills, and qualifications.
		The supervisor should also assess the abilities, skills, and qualifications of the employee.
		When appropriate, determine sources for obtaining additional qualifications or improving skills.

Step 7:		Complete the Rating Form		
		Carefully review the rating levels.		
		Goals: <u>Status</u> Complete In Progress	Goals: <u>Rating Level</u> Above Target At Target Below Target	<u>Dimension Rating Levels:</u> Above Meets Does Not Meet
		Evaluate the employee's level of effectiveness on each performance dimension or expectation. Consider the relationship between objectives accomplished and the performance expectations that were established.		
		Mark an "X" to indicate your judgment of performance effectiveness.		
		Add rater comments to clarify and justify your ratings (regardless of rating).		
		Prepare the Performance Improvement Plan for the next rating period.		

Step 8:		Filing and Distribution		
		Each agency should establish its own internal processes for managing the filing, completion, and distribution of evaluation forms to insure timeliness, i.e., that related deadlines are met. However, the following outlines a successful process that is being offered as a sample.		
		Forward the completed review form to the reviewing manager for comment and signature.		
		The reviewing manager forwards to the appointing authority for signature.		
		Return form to the rater, who obtains the employee signature and comments.		
		Distribute copies to the employee, rater and agency files.		

Further Information

Bargaining unit employees should refer to their respective union contracts for information on appeals of performance reviews.

Exempt employees should contact their agency human resources office for information on appeals of performance reviews.

Attachments

OPRS Goals & Objectives
Attachment Form

Merit Step Recommendation Form

OPRS Exempt Forms

Manager/Supervisor &
Professional/Paraprofessional
Support Staff

OPRS Bargaining Unit Forms

Trades/Technical
Direct Care
Clerical
Professional/Paraprofessional
Labor
Protective Services
Teacher

Contract Language

Performance Evaluation – Use – OCSEA, Section 22.01, District 1199, 43.16(A)

Effective July 1, 2001, all non-probationary employees shall be given an employee performance evaluation during the sixty (60) day period immediately preceding the employee's next step increase. Those employees who are at top step shall be evaluated annually, thereafter.

Employee performance evaluations shall be used for all purposes for which employee evaluations are normally used, including but not limited to, merit based incentive programs designed to award employees for specific form of job performance. The performance evaluation shall include a summary conclusion section for the supervisor to rate the employee's overall performance as either "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory".

Step Movement – OCSEA, Section 36.03

Newly hired employees will move to the next step in their pay range after completion of probation. Subsequent step movement shall occur after one (1) year of successful completion of probation provided the employee receives an overall rating of "satisfactory". Correction Officers and Juvenile Correctional Officers shall receive their initial step increase upon the completion of their probationary period or six (6) months of service as a Correction Officer or Juvenile Correctional Officer which ever comes first. All employees of the Department of Youth Services and the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction assigned to classifications which required a one hundred twenty (120) day probationary period pursuant to the previous Agreement, which expired on February 28, 1997, which require a one hundred eighty (180) day probationary period, as set forth in Article 6 shall be eligible for a step-increase in the pay period following the successful completion of one hundred twenty (120) days of the probationary period.

If the employee's performance evaluation is not completed on time, the employee shall not be denied a step increase.

Step Movement – District 1999, Section 43.03

Step increases shall be effective after six (6) months from the date of hire, and shall occur annually thereafter if the employee receives an overall "satisfactory" rating on his/her six (6) month and annual performance evaluations thereafter.

Employee performance evaluations shall be used for all purposes for which employee evaluations are normally used, including but not limited to, merit based incentive programs designed to award employees for specific form of job performance. If the employee's performance evaluation is not completed on time, the employee shall not be denied a step increase.

Performance Evaluations – Appeals – OCSEA, Section 22.03, District 1199, Section 43.16(C)

An employee may appeal his/her performance evaluation, by submitting a "Performance Evaluation Review Request" to the Management designee (other than the Employer representative who performed the evaluation) within seven (7) days after the employee received the completed form for signature. A conference shall be scheduled within seven (7) working days and a written response submitted within seven (7) working days after the conference.

If the employee is still not satisfied with the response, the employee may appeal his/her performance evaluation to the Agency designee (e.g., Human Resources, Labor Relations).

This level of appeal shall not be available to any employee who has received a rating of "Meets" or "Above", in all categories.

The appeal shall contain a reason and/or documents to identify why the performance evaluation is not accurate. Any documents used by the Employer in evaluating an employee's performance shall be furnished by the Employer to the employee upon request. The Agency designee may hold a conference or do a paper review of the performance evaluation. A written response will be issued within fourteen (14) calendar days after the appeal is requested. The performance evaluation appeal process is not grievable, except as outlined below:

If an employee is denied a step increase because his/her overall performance is rated "unsatisfactory", the employee may appeal such action directly to Step Three (3) of the Grievance Procedure. If the grievance is unresolved at Step Three (3), appeal may be taken to Step Four (4) of the Grievance Procedure, The Office of Collective Bargaining. No further appeal may be taken. Should the appeal be successful, the step increase shall be retroactive to the date on which it was due. If the employee's performance evaluation is not completed on time, the employee shall not be denied a step increase.