

Office of **HUMAN**  
**RESOURCES**



# Handbook for the Core Performance Management Process

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Background on Performance Management

The impetus for an improved performance management system emerged from many issues, including:

- a legislative mandate from the General Assembly in 1994 requiring a performance management system at the university,
- the need to provide accurate, reliable performance data for pay decisions, and
- perceptions of unfair and inconsistent management practices in the use of the previous system.

Former President Gee appointed a university-wide steering committee to develop a new performance management system that would be ongoing in nature and based on continuous learning and improvement. This committee sought the input of various campus constituencies including faculty, staff and university leaders, as well as information from private businesses and other higher education institutions. Based on this data, the following underlying goals and principles were developed to guide the new system:

### Goals:

- Improve staff performance in meeting university goals and objectives
- Support staff development and continuous learning
- Align compensation with desired organization outcomes
- Strengthen management accountability

### Principles:

- Performance management is a shared commitment to high performance.
- Performance management balances autonomy and accountability at the individual and organizational levels.
- Effective performance and continuous learning should be encouraged and supported.

In addition to creating the underlying goals and principles for the new performance management system, the committee also sought to ensure the alignment of key university values throughout the campus. This led to the development of core competencies for staff and supervisors.

The core competencies have multiple uses. They are helpful during the interview and selection process because they identify specific behaviors that result in key outcomes, such as customer service. In addition, the competencies aid supervisors and employees in setting performance standards and goals, thus providing a foundation for feedback throughout the year. Finally, the competencies can be used as measures of performance during the annual review. The competencies, for staff and supervisors, are outlined on the next page.

## **University Core Performance Competencies**

### **For all employees:**

1. ***Quality Service***
  - Listens carefully and responds to customer requests and problems
  - Delivers friendly, courteous service to internal and external customers
  - Demonstrates a commitment to increasing customer satisfaction
  - Looks for and makes continuous improvements
  - Performs with accuracy, thoroughness and effectiveness
  
2. ***Respect and Community***
  - Establishes and maintains respectful and cooperative working relationships
  - Demonstrates respect for individuals in all forms of communication
  - Supports unit and university goals and priorities
  - Demonstrates respect for a positive, diverse work environment and university community
  - Handles interpersonal conflicts constructively
  
3. ***Learning and Development***
  - Constructively uses feedback from multiple sources
  - Seeks new challenges and increased responsibility
  - Demonstrates willingness to try new approaches
  - Seeks and participates in learning and development activities
  
4. ***Focus On Results***
  - Sets goals in alignment with unit and university priorities
  - Organizes work to achieve goals
  - Identifies and solves problems
  - Achieves targeted results
  - Accomplishes a fair and agreed-upon workload
  - Accepts responsibility for own actions
  - Attends work as scheduled

### **Additional competencies for all supervisors and managers:**

1. ***Performance Management***
  - Sets clear expectations with staff
  - Gives feedback in a respectful, constructive way
  - Encourages staff to seek feedback from multiple sources
  - Promotes self-development and responsiveness to feedback
  - Uses coaching skills effectively to improve staff performance
  - Conducts effective and timely performance reviews
  - Recognizes excellent performance
  - Encourages staff to engage in learning and development opportunities
  
2. ***Leadership***
  - Builds commitment to mission and priorities of unit and university
  - Involves staff actively in planning and decision making
  - Ensures a focus on core performance competencies
  - Fosters a work environment characterized by mutual respect
  - Provides direction and defines priorities
  - Acts with integrity

Using the goals, principles and core competencies, the committee developed a model of performance management as an ongoing process to include four components:

1. Performance Planning: A dialogue between a supervisor and employee to establish clear, specific performance expectations at the beginning of the performance cycle.
2. Coaching: Two-way discussions which focus on recognizing employee excellence and areas for improvement and learning, as well as identifying barriers to performance.
3. Multiple Sources of Feedback: A process which provides employees with performance information to supplement supervisory feedback; may include feedback sources such as self, peers, constituents or direct reports.
4. Performance Review: A summative two-way discussion and written documentation focusing on employee performance: areas of excellence, goals for improvement and development needs.

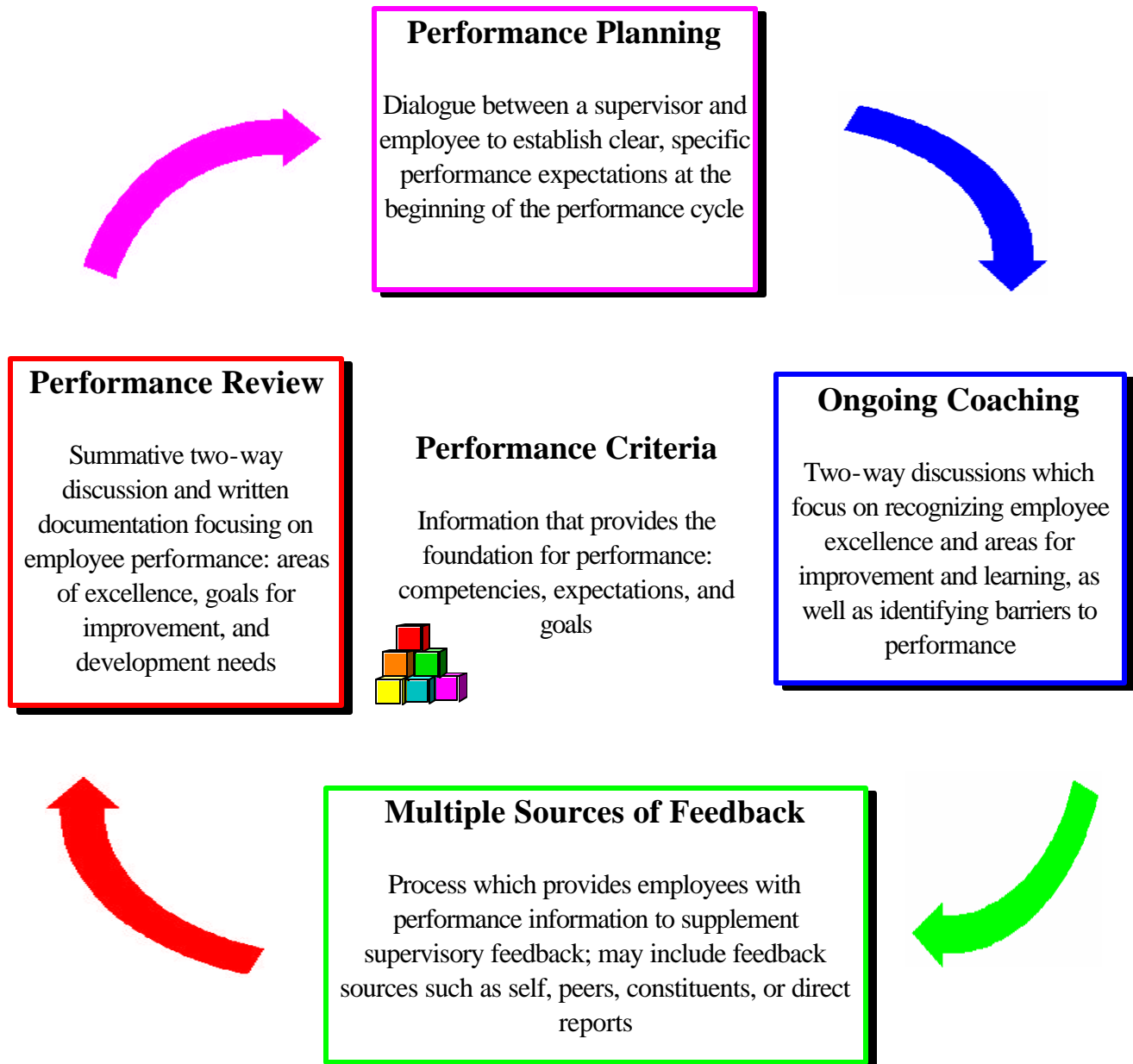
The Performance Management Model is included on the following page.



# Performance Management Model

## University Mission & Goals and College/Unit Mission & Goals

Context for performance management so that individual performance is aligned with the organization's mission and goals



## **Development of the Core Performance Management Process**

After its initial development, the Performance Management system was piloted and evaluated at two sites on campus. The pilot effort allowed the system to be refined and improved before being introduced into other units. For two years, the Office of Human Resources collaborated with units in a sequenced, rollout approach to develop customized performance management systems in their areas.

The approach has now been modified to allow units on campus who have not been involved in a customized process to begin improving their current system through the use of the Core Performance Management Process presented in this handbook. The Core Performance Management Process includes the goals, principles and core competencies presented in the preceding pages. In addition, it encompasses the Performance Management Model outlined on the previous page. The difference lies in the "minimum expectations" that have been set for each of the four components. Rather than defining these at the department level, as they would be in a customized approach, they are defined at a university level. The expectations are outlined below for each of the four components.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Minimum Expectation</b>
Performance Planning	Discuss the core competencies and how they relate to the employee's job	Planning discussion between supervisor and employee
Coaching	Encourage ongoing two-way communication during the performance cycle	As-needed feedback shared between supervisor and employee
Multiple Sources of Feedback	Provide employee with one additional source of feedback	Employee completes a self-evaluation prior to performance review
Performance Review	Evaluate performance based on the performance planning discussion	Written annual evaluation using university-approved form

## **For More Information**

### **Handbook**

This handbook was designed for those areas that want to improve their current performance management practices but have not engaged with the Office of Human Resources in the development of a customized system. It includes definitions of terms, outlines of supervisor and employee responsibilities, guidelines for discussions, worksheets and forms appropriate for each of the components of the Core Performance Management Process. Materials in this handbook may be reproduced in their current form or edited and re-formatted for use within a specific unit.

This handbook is not intended to be used as a policy manual. The information contained in this notebook is subject to change over time as the university revises its policies and practices. Should you have any questions about the Performance Management policy contained in this handbook, or other relevant policies, call the Office of Human Resources Consulting Services at 614-292-2800.

### **Consultation and Training**

The Office of Human Resources, Organization and Human Resource Development (OHRD) is available to consult with units on their specific needs and the use of this handbook. In addition, OHRD will provide overview training on the Core Performance Management Process as well as in-depth training on specific topics related to performance management.

Supervisory topics include, but are not limited to:

- conducting effective performance reviews
- analyzing performance problems
- motivating employees
- planning performance
- corrective action options
- coaching employees

Staff topics include, but are not limited to:

- participating in performance review
- getting the most out of coaching
- analyzing work processes
- motivating self

For information, please call OHRD at 614-292-4500.

### **World Wide Web**

A summary of the Core Performance Management Process and accompanying forms can be accessed through the Office of Human Resources homepage at: <http://hr.osu.edu>.

## **Performance Planning**

Dialogue between a supervisor and employee to establish clear, specific performance expectations at the beginning of the performance cycle

### **Definition and Expectations**

Performance Planning is the first step in the Performance Management process. It is a dialogue between a supervisor and an employee to:

- establish and agree upon performance expectations,
- clarify what the employee will be evaluated on, and
- set the stage for ongoing feedback and coaching throughout the year.

In the Core Performance Management Process, it is expected that the supervisor and employee will engage in a performance planning discussion at least once annually; ideally, performance planning should occur at any point in which performance expectations change. It is suggested that the supervisor document the agreed-upon expectations and make a copy for the employee. The Performance Planning Worksheet, presented on pages 11-14 of this handbook, is offered as a sample documentation tool. Units may use this specific tool or create their own, if they choose.

### **Supervisor Role**

- Have a thorough understanding of the work involved – the critical functions and key tasks
- Review the job description to ensure that information is accurate and up to date
- Know what constitutes “successful performance” in the core competencies and effectively communicate this
- Identify priority areas, if appropriate, among the core and job-specific competencies that will be emphasized in the evaluation
- Communicate how the results of the employee’s work contribute to the unit’s goals
- Ask the employee what information, resources, tools, training and supervision is needed

### **Employee Role**

- Have a thorough understanding of the work involved – the critical functions, key tasks
- Review the job description to ensure that information is accurate and up to date
- Understand what constitutes “successful performance” of the core competencies
- Understand how the results of this position contribute to the unit’s goals
- Communicate what information, resources, tools, training and supervision is needed
- Ask questions to clarify information

### **Guidelines for Performance Planning Meetings**

Performance planning establishes expectations for performance and is the foundation upon which the rest of Performance Management lies. The performance planning process may vary, depending on the length of the time the employee and supervisor have worked together, the degree of experience of both individuals, the quality of past performance, etc. Below is a sample agenda that includes several important issues to address during a performance planning session.

## Sample Agenda for a Planning Meeting

### ***Introduction***

The introduction sets the tone of the discussion and presents the focus of performance planning:

- establish and agree upon performance expectations,
- clarify what the employee will be evaluated on, and
- set the stage for ongoing feedback and coaching throughout the year.

### ***Review position description***

The performance planning meeting is a good opportunity to review the position description and determine if it is still accurate. Reviewing the position description:

- clarifies duties and responsibilities that are unclear to the employee;
- helps the supervisor know what the employee does on a daily basis; and
- highlights areas of the job that need special attention.

### ***Discuss competencies***

The supervisor and employee should discuss each of the core competencies (including the two supervisor competencies, if the employee is a supervisor). In some cases, the core competencies may not adequately cover the employee's responsibilities. It may be useful to add a new competency to target a *key area of responsibility* for an employee. If a competency is added, the employee and supervisor need to discuss and come to an understanding of the additional competency and the expectations associated with it.

### ***Establish performance standards***

Supervisor and employee should work together to create standards related to each competency. Standards take expectations to the behavioral level. To create standards, read the specific descriptors under each competency (found in this handbook). Identify those points which are key issues for your unit and think about the standards that are associated with each.

### ***Discuss preferences for feedback and coaching throughout the year***

Performance planning presents an opportunity for the supervisor and employee to discuss how they will communicate about performance:

- The supervisor and employee can discuss how the employee likes to be recognized for good performance and they prefer to receive feedback when there is a performance problem.
- Supervisors and employees can also discuss how the supervisor prefers to receive feedback from the employee.

### ***Discuss needed training and development necessary to attain the performance standards***

Identify what knowledge and skills the employee will need to learn or improve to meet performance standards.

### ***Closing***

Check in with each other about how the process went. Review any next steps that have been agreed upon (e.g., making sure employee and supervisor both have a copy of what has been agreed upon).

## Ongoing Coaching

Two-way discussions which focus on recognizing employee excellence and areas for improvement and learning, as well as identifying barriers to performance

### Definition and Expectations

Coaching is an ongoing process of communication between the supervisor and the employee focused on improving current performance and building capabilities for the future. It involves informal conversation or notes, as well as more formal coaching meetings and written documentation. Coaching includes a variety of activities, such as:

- observing performance
- providing instruction
- directing employee's efforts
- providing encouragement
- correcting poor performance
- recognizing excellent performance
- listening to employee concerns and ideas
- removing barriers to performance

In the Core Performance Management Process, it is expected that coaching will occur on an as-needed basis throughout the year and may be initiated by either the supervisor or the employee. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to document these discussions as appropriate. The Coaching Worksheet provides one model for recording coaching notes. Units may use this specific tool or create their own, if they choose.

### Supervisor Role

- Provide ongoing performance feedback to employees to recognize excellent performance
- Provide feedback to correct performance that does not meet established expectations
- Solicit ideas and suggestions from the employee for improving work processes
- Work with the employee to identify barriers to success and strategies for removing or minimizing the barriers
- Discuss employee's learning and professional development needs
- Solicit employee feedback on supervisory coaching effectiveness



## **Employee Role**

Staff members are encouraged to be active participants in their own coaching by:

- Asking their supervisors for coaching when they need it,
- Listening and responding to feedback from coaches, and
- Providing feedback to their coaches about what they need.

Questions for Employees:

1. Am I clear on what's expected of me?
2. In what areas do I believe that I am exceeding expectations? How do I want to share this with my supervisor? Are there examples of my successes that I want to share?
3. In what areas do I believe I am meeting expectations? Is there anything I need in order to do better in these areas, e.g. equipment, resources, training, etc.?
4. In what areas do I believe my performance is below expectations? Why am I not meeting expectations? What do I need to improve my performance?
5. Do I know the extent to which my supervisor is satisfied with my job performance?
6. How can I share with my supervisor what I am working on? Project updates?
7. How well am I meeting my goals? What help do I need to assure my goals are met?
8. Is there information I need to share with my supervisor about barriers to my job performance, such as:
  - inadequate information?
  - unclear directions?
  - inadequate supplies or equipment?
  - lack of skill or knowledge?
  - difficulty in meeting deadlines?
  - workload?
9. Is there training that would help me improve my performance?
10. Are there additional tasks or responsibilities that I would like to learn?
11. Do I have suggestions to improve the way my work is done? (e.g., better procedures, updated forms, etc.)
12. Is there anything I need from my supervisor to do a better job?
13. What feedback do I want to give my supervisor about his/her coaching?
14. Are there concerns that I have that I should share with my supervisor?

## **Multiple Sources of Feedback**

Process which provides employees with performance information to supplement supervisory feedback; may include feedback sources such as self, peers, constituents, or direct reports

### **Definition and Expectations**

Getting feedback from multiple sources helps staff know when they are doing something really well, and when it would be helpful to do something a little differently. "Multiple sources" could include one or more of the following:

- *Self evaluation*
- *Upward feedback (people who report to you)*
- *Peer feedback (people with whom you work)*
- *Customer feedback (people you serve both in and outside the unit)*

At Ohio State it is expected that every staff person will receive feedback from at least one other source of feedback in addition to their supervisor. In the Core Performance Management Process, staff will use self-evaluation as that source of feedback. At minimum, staff will complete a self-evaluation prior to their annual written performance review; ideally self-evaluations should be completed whenever the staff person and supervisor feel it would be beneficial. In addition, the use of other feedback sources is strongly encouraged.

Self-evaluation can be very helpful to employees, by encouraging them to reflect on their skills, areas of growth, and how their work contributes to the larger organization. Self-evaluation helps the employee prepare to actively engage in the performance review, and demonstrates that improving performance is a shared responsibility. Finally, self-evaluations that are shared with the supervisor prior to the performance review provide valuable data as input into that process.

### **Supervisor Role**

- Emphasize the importance of self evaluation as a method for both supervisor and employee to learn
- Prepare the employee for self evaluation by discussing it briefly in the performance planning discussion
- Give the employee a copy of the self evaluation form; compare it to the performance review form and discuss any differences
- Allow a reasonable amount of time for the employee to complete the self evaluation form prior to the annual performance review
- Read and reflect on the self evaluation the employee submits before the performance review; develop questions and comments in response
- Schedule time to discuss the self evaluation with the employee either prior to or during the performance review

### **Employee Role**

- Take adequate time to complete the self evaluation form in a thoughtful way, including comments as well as ratings for your performance
- Use the self evaluation to create information to share with and questions to ask your supervisor during the discussion
- Make a copy of the self evaluation and give it to your supervisor well ahead of your scheduled performance review

### **Self-Evaluation Form**

The Self-Evaluation Form, has been created for use by units who are not yet actively engaged in designing a performance management system. It encompasses the university's core competencies.

## **Performance Review**

Summative two-way discussion and written documentation focusing on employee performance: areas of excellence, goals for improvement, and development needs

### **Definition and Expectations**

Performance review is an extremely important component of the performance management process. It is the culminating discussion between the supervisor and staff member regarding:

- where performance exceeded, met, or fell below expectations,
- the learning and development needed and received,
- goals that were set and achieved by the staff member, and
- feedback from others affected by the staff member's performance.

Information from the performance review is critical not just for performance improvement, but for other human resource decisions, including compensation. Data from performance reviews can be used to help determine salary increases, if that is the compensation practice within the unit. Units that are interested in developing a compensation approach that includes performance information should first contact their college or VP office. The college or VP office can then partner with the Office of Human Resources Consulting Services by calling 614-292-2800.

In the Core Performance Management Process, it is an expectation that every staff member will receive, at minimum, an annual review that will be discussed, documented and filed within the unit.

### **Supervisor Role**

Before the performance review:

- Schedule ample time and a private place for the review discussion.
- Notify the employee in advance.
- Arrange for work coverage for your staff member; reviews should be conducted during regular business hours, *not* during break, lunch or after the workday is over.
- Review the employee's job description and the expectations that were set during the performance planning discussion.
- Review the employee's completed self evaluation.
- Review the documentation you have collected throughout the year (letters, files, etc.).
- Plan for two-way communication during the review meeting; think of questions that you can use to help your employee "open up."
- Remind your employee to bring appropriate materials (self-evaluation, copies of letters, etc.)

During the performance review:

- Provide specific feedback on the employee's performance, including priority areas targeted during Performance Planning. Include performance that exceeded, met or fell below expectations.
- Offer the employee an opportunity to share his/her self evaluation.
- Discuss learning and development needs of the employee.
- Set targets for improvement.
- Set learning and development goals (optional).
- Answer employee questions with regard to the performance review.
- Sign the performance review and obtain the employee's signature.

After the performance review:

- Make a copy of the review for the employee and yourself.
- Return the original to the appropriate individual in your unit for signature(s) and filing.

### **Employee Role**

Before the performance review:

- Confirm the meeting with your supervisor.
- Gather any documentation regarding your performance that you have collected throughout the year (letters, notes, etc.).
- Complete your self evaluation; make a copy and give it to your supervisor in advance of the meeting.
- Review your job description and expectations that were set during the performance planning discussion.
- Write down questions that you want to ask your supervisor.
- Be prepared to talk about your performance--what you do well, how you could improve, what you would like to learn.

During the performance review:

- Listening to feedback from the supervisor and asking questions to clarify information
- Sharing information from the self evaluation
- Offering suggestions and ideas for improving performance, if needed
- Identifying areas for learning and development
- Identifying obstacles to performance and suggesting solutions
- Signing the performance review form, attaching comments if desired.

After the performance review include:

- Keeping a copy of the performance review for future reference.
- Using the information gained in the performance review to build on strengths and improve areas for growth.

### **Guidelines for Conducting a Performance Review**

1. Make it “priority time.”
  - Create an agenda for the meeting
  - Minimize interruptions
2. Set a tone of collaboration.
  - Start the discussion on a positive note
  - Encourage your employee’s participation
3. Be clear about your purpose.
  - Reinforce that the discussion will address strengths and areas for improvement
4. Review performance expectations.
  - Discuss the job description, position objectives, goals, and critical job tasks
  - Be clear about performance standards within your unit
5. Discuss performance that is below, meets, and exceeds expectations.
  - Use language that is clear and specific; use examples
  - Describe performance, not personality
6. Ask your employee what he/she thinks.
  - Allow your employee to speak freely before responding to his/her comments
  - Actively listen to your employee
  - Clarify your employee’s concerns, then address them
7. Set goals to:
  - Improve performance in targeted areas
  - Build on strengths
  - Develop the employee’s knowledge, skills, and abilities
  - Align the employee’s work with the needs of the unit
8. Agree to follow up.
  - Schedule at least one interim check-in on performance during the year
  - Ask how your employee prefers to receive feedback (written, verbal)
  - Discuss how your employee likes to be recognized for good work
9. Close with encouragement.
  - Offer your help and support

- End on a positive note by summarizing employee strengths and contributions

### **Pitfalls to Avoid in Performance Review**

Halo error – Appraiser giving favorable ratings to all job duties based on impressive performance in just one job function.

Horns error – (Opposite of halo error) Downgrading an employee across all performance dimensions exclusively because of poor performance on one dimension

First impression error – Developing a negative or positive opinion of an employee early in the review period and allowing that to negatively or positively influence all later perceptions of performance.

Recency error – (The opposite of first impression error) Allowing performance, either good or bad, at the end of the review period to play too large a role in determining an employee's ratings for the entire period.

Leniency error – Consistently rating someone higher than is deserved.

Severity error – (Opposite of leniency error) Rating someone consistently lower than is deserved.

Central tendency error – Avoiding extremes in ratings across employees.

Clone error – Giving better ratings to individuals who are like the rater in behavior and/or personality.

Spillover error – Continuing to downgrade an employee for performance errors in prior rating periods.

To avoid these errors:

- Keep documentation (notes, e-mail, etc.) throughout the year, both on accomplishments and needs for improvement.
- Ask your employee to keep documentation, also.
- Allow enough time before the review meeting to think and reflect on the events of the past year.
- Ask others familiar with the person's work to add input (making sure your employee knows about this beforehand).
- Ask the employee to review his/her own performance as additional input to the discussion.

## RESOURCES

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### **Performance Management Policy and Procedure (Policy 5.25)**

All human resources-related policies and procedures are available on the Office of Human Resources Web site: <http://hr.osu.edu/policy/policyhome.htm>.

### **Records Retention**

Every unit must develop a Records Retention Schedule for their performance management records. This schedule should be included with other unit policies and procedures in such documents as the Pattern of Administration or Office Procedures Manual. For more information on the portability and archiving of performance management files, please contact your Office of Human Resources, Consulting Services consultant at 614-292-2800.

Below is a sample retention schedule. Please note that documents that are destroyed should be shredded or placed in the trash, not recycled.

**Sample Retention Schedule**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Retention and Disposal</b>
Goal and expectation setting documents completed during the performance planning and coaching processes.	Retain throughout the performance cycle. Integrate into or attach to the final written performance review document.
Feedback documents that are completed by customers, staff, or faculty, which are for the purpose of informing the individual about their performance and facilitating improvement.	Destroy after receipt and review by the individual or within three months of receipt whichever is sooner.
Feedback summaries, produced from feedback documents, which are for the purpose of informing the supervisor's final performance review document.	Destroy original "feeder" documents when summary is complete. Destroy summary when final review is complete for the specified performance cycle.
Self evaluation document, completed by the individual staff member as an evaluation of their performance.	Can be destroyed when performance review is completed. We recommend that it be clearly labeled "self-evaluation" and attached to the performance review form.
Final written performance review document, completed once per performance cycle.	Retain in the individual's personnel file. Must be kept for six years* after the individual is separated from the university.

\*This is a university requirement.

### **Performance Review Forms**

Several Performance Review Forms are available online for use by units who are not yet actively engaged in designing a performance management system. They encompass the university's core competencies and reflect the philosophy of performance management.

- Performance Planning Worksheet
- Coaching Worksheet
- Self-Evaluation Form
- Performance Review Form

Download these editable forms from the Office of Human Resources "Forms" Web page under the "Training and Development" section: <http://hr.osu.edu/hrpubs/forms.htm>.