Lewis & Clark College
Support Staff Performance Evaluation
Tip Sheet for Supervisors and Employees

Some people find performance evaluation time challenging. Supervisors who follow these simple tips can minimize stress and maximize the chances of a positive and productive evaluation and discussion.

Tip #1: Set up a meeting approximately two weeks before the actual performance evaluation discussion. Things to accomplish at that meeting are: 1) Discuss the process and choices outlined in the instruction page; 2) Discuss the ranking categories and how the supervisor interprets them; 3) Discuss what each person will do in advance of the meeting to contribute to the professional development/goal setting part of the discussion; 4) Select employees from whom you will seek feedback. This step is optional and can be accomplished by using the Annual Performance Review Questionnaire, email or just a discussion between the supervisor and the person providing feedback.

Tip #2: Make the process as collaborative as possible. Work together to come up with options that work best for your situation. Some options are listed in the instructions.

Tip #3: Pick a quiet, neutral location for the performance evaluation discussion. This means not conducting the evaluation in the supervisor's office. Turn off phones and pagers. Devote enough time to adequately cover everything. Take a few minutes at the start to get comfortable and settled in.

Tip #4: Do not get hung up on the rankings. The comments and the developmental plans for the future are much more important. However, each person may have a different interpretation of the rankings, which is why it is so important to complete step 2 in Tip #1. We encourage supervisors to use a variety of the rankings if appropriate. "Below Most Expectations" does not equate to failure. It means that for a particular category, there is room for growth and improvement.

Tip #5: Feedback and follow-up must be ongoing. Evaluating performance, reinforcing excellent behaviors and making corrections must not wait until evaluation time. Supervisors cannot include an issue in the evaluation that was not previously discussed with the employee. Point out performance successes and corrections when they happen. Please note that performance evaluations may not be used as disciplinary action.

Tip #6: This process is designed for flexibility and collaboration. Be honest and forthcoming. This is not the time to sugarcoat concerns. Supervisors, this is a good time to re-state performance expectations and discuss what they mean. Employees, this is a good time to tell your supervisor what support you need to meet these expectations. The more an employee participates in his or her own growth and development, the more likely it will happen. This process can help find an employee's hidden talents, untapped potential or training needs. This is also a great chance for a supervisor to hear more about how an employee thinks his or her job is going and ways it can be improved.

Goals and Expectations

The evaluation process has two parts. The first is to evaluate the performance against the job duties and expectations for the **entire** evaluation period (typically a year). The second is developmental and forward thinking. Discussing and setting goals and expectations is crucial for an employee's development and the success of the department.

Goals should be mutually discussed, but a supervisor may unilaterally set a goal or expectation that he or she believes is necessary for the department.
Goals should be SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, **T**imely.

Specific: Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help us to focus our efforts and clearly define what we are going to do. Specific is the what, why, and how of the SMART model.

Measurable: If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. There are usually several short-term or small measurements that can be built into the goal. Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set.

Attainable: People usually won't commit to goals that are too far out of reach. The goal should help the employee stretch enough that growth and success will be apparent.

Realistic: This is not a synonym for "easy." Realistic, in this case, means "do-able." It means that the learning curve is not a vertical slope; that the skills needed to do the work are available and the goal fits department strategy.

Timely: Set a timeframe for the goal. Putting an end point on your goal creates a clear target to work towards. If you don't set a time, the commitment is too vague. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now. Time must be measurable, attainable and realistic.

The best supervisors make their expectations around every task, assignment and instruction perfectly clear. Too often, we as supervisors expect employees to read our minds. Evaluation time is a good time to discuss ongoing expectations and describe new ones. Supervisors, be specific and elaborate enough to ensure the employee completely understands. Employees, if you are not sure about any part of a supervisor's expectation – ask. Call Human Resources for additional tips on setting and communicating expectations.