



Staff Performance Appraisal Guidelines and Instructions

I. GENERAL CONCEPTS

Rocky Mountain College utilizes one overall staff performance appraisal system with one appraisal format for all positions. The following concepts have been incorporated for all staff positions:

- A. Preparation of appraisal reports for each employee by the immediate superior once each year unless circumstances dictate more frequent or less frequent appraisals. Each appraisal report will measure performance during the period since the last appraisal.
- B. Formal performance appraisal completed on new employees after successful completion of their probationary period and annually thereafter.
- C. Review of the completed appraisal by the next higher level of management **before** the appraisal is discussed with the employee.
- D. Communication of the results of the performance appraisal to the individual being rated by a personal interview with the immediate superior, **after** the review by the next higher level of management.

II. PROCEDURES

A. General

1. It is the College's intention that performance appraisals be performed at least once each year for all employees unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
2. If appropriate, additional performance appraisals should be made during the year to document performance below the level expected of the individual or as a checkpoint against established goals and objectives.
3. Annual staff performance appraisals will be conducted campus-wide during the fall of each year, unless otherwise dictated by extenuating circumstances. If such circumstances exist, managers must receive approval from their division head or the President, whichever is applicable, prior to communication and implementation of a revised schedule. **Human Resources must be informed of any such approved schedule change.**
4. Managers are strongly encouraged to informally appraise performance on a continuing basis by reviewing and recording activity during the year. Periodic observations regarding the quantity and quality of work noted during the year can be of great assistance when it comes time for the actual review.

B. Specific

1. Each supervisor will be notified of their review schedule by Human Resources.
2. Prior to the beginning of the review process, supervisors will be furnished with instructions and blank appraisal forms. ***Each supervisor should ensure that a current job description exists for each employee reporting to him or her.***
3. The supervisor is to rate the employee using the Staff Performance Appraisal form, including any recommendations for action. The appraiser should then date and sign the form.
4. The completed form is then to be reviewed with and approved by the next higher level of management, dated, signed, and returned to the appraising supervisor. By signing the form, this level of management indicates concurrence with the content of the form and any recommended actions.
5. The supervisor, upon receipt of the approved appraisal form, schedules a private interview with the employee.
6. Once the appraisal has been discussed with the employee, the employee is to sign and date the form, which confirms that the appraisal has been discussed with him or her.
7. The original appraisal form is forwarded to Human Resources for check-off against the review schedule.
8. The original performance appraisal form will be made part of the employee's permanent personnel record. Managers may make and keep copies for their files and/or for the employee.

III. GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING APPRAISAL INTERVIEWS

A. Qualities of a Good Appraisal

It is **FACTUAL** - refers to specific performance and can be backed up with evidence, if necessary.

It is **FAIR** - shows a system of evaluation that the manager uses consistently in appraising employee performance.

It describes the **WHOLE PERIOD** - avoids focusing on just the most recent and most easily remembered times.

It describes the WHOLE JOB - avoids letting good or bad performance on some parts of the job prejudice evaluation of the other parts.

It has no SURPRISES for the employee - all issues were talked about at earlier times when they occurred.

B. Preparation

1. Observe, Collect, and Document Data

a. Sources of performance information

- (1) Personal observation
- (2) Reports, documentation, correspondence, etc.
- (3) Feedback (internal and external)
- (4) Periodic discussions with employee

NOTE: don't accept hearsay - such information should only be used as a tip-off that further data/observation may be needed.

b. Observation

- (1) Observe behavior on a regular basis; irregular observation may produce an unrepresentative sample of job behavior.
- (2) Observations should focus on typical behavior as well as exceptional behavior.
- (3) Observation should be a natural part of regular management activity. Natural observation will encourage employees to discuss their problems and progress, and will make them less suspicious of what you are doing. If you observe naturally, your employees will not think that you are looking only for poor behavior.
- (4) Consider an event in context, recognizing not only job-related behavior, but also the situations that influence it. This total picture allows you to evaluate events fairly.
- (5) Observations should deal with actual events that you saw or confirmed firsthand. Questionable behavior should be discussed at the earliest convenience directly with the employee so that they recognize that their

actions may be inappropriate and have a clear understanding of your expectations.

c. Documentation

- (1) Due to the length of time between appraisals, it is important to document your observations.
- (2) Use a "critical incident" notebook or file to note both positive and negative performance. Include:
 - (a) Date
 - (b) Brief description of behavior
 - (c) Effects or results
 - (d) Discussion with employee
 - (e) Action agreed on between supervisor and employee
- (3) Avoid "halo" and "pitchfork" effects of evaluating performance based on most recent observable behavior.

C. Preparing For The Performance Appraisal Interview

The appraisal interview is too important to be left to chance. The appraiser needs to be well prepared for the interview.

1. Review standards, documentation and job description as well as the appraisal form and various ratings.
2. Write the appraisal (See Section IV - Completing the Performance Appraisal Form).
3. Know the person's record thoroughly. It will seriously undermine the results of the interview for the appraiser to get into the interview and find that he or she lacks important information about the employee being appraised and his or her performance. Be prepared with specific information, not just a general overall evaluation. Prepare notes and use the completed performance appraisal form as a discussion guide so that each important topic will be covered. Be ready to answer questions employees may ask about why you appraised them as you did.
4. Prepare the employee in advance.

- a. Make an appointment for the interview well in advance and tell the person the purpose of the interview.
- b. Get them thinking about performance - perhaps provide a list of questions to use as a basis for discussion. Examples of such questions might include:
 - (1) What do you think you've done best during the appraisal period?
 - (2) What could you have done better?
 - (3) What overall rating would you give yourself?
 - (4) What rating do you think I will give you?
 - (5) Any suggestions for the department?
 - (6) What can I do to help make you more effective?
5. Arrange to hold the interview in a physical setting that will enhance the interviewing process. The basic requirement is a private room where the conversation cannot be overheard. There should be no distractions such as telephone calls or other outside distractions.
6. Allow adequate time so the interview will not have to be terminated in the middle of an important discussion.

D. Conducting the Interview

1. Establish a friendly, helpful, and purposeful tone at the outset of the discussion. Recognize that it is not unusual for you and your employee to be nervous about the discussion, and use suitable techniques to put you both more at ease.
2. Assure your employee that every Rocky Mountain College staff member is being evaluated so that opportunities for improvement and development will not be overlooked and each person's performance will be fully recognized.
3. Ask for the subordinate's opinion of his or her performance since the last appraisal.
4. Recognize the subordinate's accomplishments and contributions to the College.
5. Be ready to suggest specific developmental activities suitable to each employee's needs. When there are specific performance problems, remember to "attack the problem, not the person."

6. Make sure that the session is truly a discussion. Encourage employees to talk about how they feel they are doing on the job, how they might improve, and what developmental activities they might undertake. Often an employee's viewpoints on these matters will be quite close to your own. To facilitate an open discussion of the issues that have been raised, you might consider the following:
 - a. Listen actively. Show that you are interested in what the person has to say but most importantly, give him or her a chance to talk. Stifle yourself!!
 - b. Use the reflective summary. Every once in awhile you can summarize what you believe to be the other person's perception of a particular situation, i.e., "You're afraid you are falling behind technically?"
 - c. Use silence. There may be times when the employee appears reluctant to discuss a particular topic. If it is desirable that he or she talks more about it, silence may bring pressure on the employee to open up.
 - d. Be honest in your answers. If you are open, natural and honest, then this helps develop similar behavior in the employee being appraised.
 - e. Minimize criticism. Excessive criticism may evoke defensive behavior from the subordinate, which may lead to argument and disagreement. We're not suggesting, however, that criticism should be eliminated completely. The employee must know when the supervisor is not satisfied with progress, but too much criticism can be a threat to self-esteem and lead to lower performance.
7. List disagreements. If possible, disagreements should be resolved before the end of the interview. If a disagreement cannot be resolved, then perhaps the collection of more information on the issue may eventually lead to a resolution.
8. Make certain that your employees fully understand your appraisal of their performance. Sometimes it helps to have an employee orally summarize the appraisal as he or she understands it. If there are any misunderstandings, they can be cleared up on the spot. Ask questions to make sure you have been fully understood.
9. Discuss the future as well as the past. Plan with the employee specific changes in performance or specific developmental activities that will allow fuller use of potential. Ask what you can do to help. Unless a plan is developed, the time and energy expended on identifying problems is likely to be wasted.
10. End the discussion on a positive, future-improvement-oriented note. You and your employee are a team, working toward the development of everyone involved.

11. Document the conclusions. A good set of notes will be helpful in preparing for the next interview.

IV. COMPLETING THE STAFF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM

A. Fixed/historical information - page 1 (incumbent's name, position title, department, etc.)

1. Please *type* or *print* the information asked for in this section.
2. The appraisal period will typically be for a one-year period, i.e., from October 1, year to September 30, year. The appraisal period for employees who have been employed for less than one year and have completed their probationary period will be from their hire date to the date of the evaluation.

B. Definitions -page 1

1. The five ratings used in measuring performance are defined on the form itself. You are to check the appropriate box for each factor being evaluated.
2. The *Exceeds Expectations* and *Clearly Outstanding* ratings indicate exceptional performance that consistently exceeds the requirements of the position. If either of these ratings is used, there must be written support in the form of specific comments and references.
3. The *Needs Improvement* rating indicates performance that clearly needs improvement and, if used, must also be supported with specific comments and references.
4. The *Clearly Unsatisfactory* rating indicates performance that is clearly below an acceptable level. This rating must be supported with an action plan detailing expectations, time frame for improvement, and consequences for failure to improve performance to an acceptable level. Please consult with Human Resources prior to the appraisal interview when an employee's overall evaluation is at this level.

C. Position-Related Effectiveness -pages 1 and 2

1. Use this section to evaluate performance against key job responsibilities listed in the job descriptions for the position.
2. **Please *print* or *type* key responsibilities from the job description in the numbered spaces.** Don't feel that you must utilize all eight spaces provided or that you are limited to only eight. Each position is unique and the number of key responsibilities will vary. If you need more spaces, you should make copies of page two and renumber to fit your situation.

D. Position-Related Behavior - page 3

1. Use this section to evaluate important position-related behaviors as described in the 6 factors.
2. Be sure to support ratings in the comment section.

E. Overall Evaluation - page 4

The overall evaluation should *not* be an average of the position-related effectiveness and behavior ratings. The importance of each responsibility and behavior to the position being evaluated should be taken into consideration and weighted accordingly. Comments should reflect these considerations.

F. Manager's Comments - page 4

This section can be used to comment on how the appraisal was received, any perceived advancement opportunities, other job related thoughts, etc.

G. Guidelines for Improvement and Growth-page 4

1. This is an important section and may require additional sheets of paper.
2. Any overall evaluation of *Needs Improvement* or *Clearly Unsatisfactory* must be supported in this section with specific guidelines for improvement. These guidelines should, at a minimum, describe **what** needs to be done to reach an acceptable level of performance, **how** you and the employee will know it has been reached, by **when** improvement must be shown, and the **consequences** for failure to meet expectations. Contact Human Resources if you need assistance.

H. Signatures

1. Once you complete the form and **before** you conduct the appraisal session, sign and date the form and have your manager do the same. Having your manager review the appraisal before it is given to the employee will keep him or her informed regarding each of your staff as well as ensure agreement on various performance levels of staff.
2. Once the appraisal has been discussed with the employee, have him or her sign and date the form. The employee's signature does not necessarily indicate his or her agreement with the appraisal - it simply acknowledges that the appraisal has been discussed with the employee. If an employee refuses to sign the appraisal form, make a notation to that effect.

I. Employee's Comments

Be sure to offer the employee the opportunity to formally comment on the appraisal. This can be done on the form itself at the time the appraisal is given or you can give the employee a day or so to provide written comments on a separate sheet(s) of paper which can then be included as an addendum to the appraisal.

J. Final Disposition

1. Once the appraisal has been given, all signatures obtained, and any comments noted and included, the original should be sent to Human Resources for check-off and to become a part of the employee's personnel record.
2. If you would like a copy for your files and/or the employee would like one, please make copies before sending the original to Human Resources.