

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Human Resources
AREA: Compensation

Number 02.01.04

SUBJECT: Staff Performance Appraisals
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I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document sets forth uniform guidelines for evaluating the performance of regular University of Houston staff employees. This document is prepared in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and court rulings and with University of Houston System Administrative Memorandum 02.A.11. They apply to all regular staff employees, as defined in Section III below.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Houston recognizes the value of its employees and understands that the quality of university services depends upon the employees. It is the university's policy to maintain a regular and meaningful staff employee performance appraisal system/process. The primary goal of the appraisal is to encourage on-going, objective communication between the employee and supervisor focused directly on university and departmental objectives and on the employee's duties and performance; the secondary objective is then the continued improvement of every employee's job performance.

All regular staff employees of the University of Houston who have completed their probationary period shall receive a formal performance appraisal at least once a year. Performance appraisals shall include (1) a written appraisal of the employee's performance by the immediate supervisor and (2) a personal meeting between the employee and the supervisor to discuss the appraisal.

Performance appraisals shall be scheduled, conducted, and documented according to the provisions of this document. Performance appraisals shall be confidential.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. College/division administrator: The chief business manager within each college or division.
- B. Immediate supervisor: The individual who directly supervises the employee's day-to-day work activities and who is responsible for assigning and evaluating the employee's work.
- C. Performance appraisal: A formal appraisal by the immediate supervisor, using the university's official Staff Performance Appraisal form, of the employee's performance during a period of time.
- D. Performance probation: A probationary period for employees who are rated in the lowest performance category.
- E. Probationary employee: A probationary employee is a regular non-exempt staff employee with less than six months of continuous employment or re-employment following a break in service for any reason other than a recall to work after an approved reduction in force, or a regular exempt staff employee with less than 12 months of continuous employment or re-employment following a break in service for any reason other than a recall to work after an approved reduction in force.

- F. Regular staff employee: A university employee who is appointed for at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis for a period of at least four and one-half months, excluding students employed in positions for which student status is required as a condition of employment and those employees holding teaching and/or research positions classified as faculty.
- G. Reviewing official: The individual responsible for reviewing the validity and integrity of the immediate supervisor's evaluation of the employee's work performance. The reviewing official may be the next higher official over the employee's supervisor or may be a departmental or college/division administrator. Each college and division establishes the internal review process for its staff.

IV. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

- A. Performance appraisals provide a means of informing employees of the quality of their work and identifying areas of performance that may need improvement. Performance appraisals are to be used as a positive, constructive tool to measure an employee's performance. Performance appraisals help supervisors make the most effective use of their personnel resources and provide valuable feedback to employees concerning their job performance and the expectations of their supervisors.

Additionally, performance appraisals are a valuable management tool to assist in making personnel decisions related to promotions, reclassifications, merit increases, training needs, career development, and so forth.

Merit salary adjustments will not be approved unless a current performance appraisal indicating meritorious performance has been conducted and is on file in Human Resources.

- B. Among the objectives of the appraisal process are:
 - 1. To provide clearly defined performance standards based upon the employee's current job description to ensure that employees know what is expected of them
 - 2. To encourage supervisors and employees to have face-to-face discussions and provide employees feedback about their job performance
 - 3. To express appreciation for outstanding contributions and performance; conversely, to discuss performance areas where improvement is possible or needed and to outline plans for improving performance

V. REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

- A. Completed performance appraisal form: All performance appraisals for regular staff employees must be done on an official Staff Performance Appraisal Form provided by Human Resources unless an alternate form has been reviewed and approved in advance by Human Resources. These forms are available for downloading on the Human Resources web site at http://www.uh.edu/admin/hr/forms/_main.htm.
- B. Face-to-face meeting between the employee and supervisor to discuss the performance appraisal
- C. Signatures, approvals, and distribution as defined in this document
- D. Appeals process: Performance appraisals are not grievable in accordance with MAPP 02.04.01, Employee Grievances. However, if the employee disagrees with his/her performance appraisal, the employee has the option of filing a written rebuttal within five working days and discussing the appraisal with the reviewing official.

VI. RESPONSIBILITY AND MONITORING

- A. Human Resources is responsible for the administration of the university's performance appraisal system and will periodically provide divisions and colleges with automated reports to assist in monitoring the performance appraisal process. Human Resources will communicate any changes to policy, procedure or forms related to performance appraisal immediately to colleges and divisions.

College/division administrators will work with Human Resources to communicate the importance of the performance appraisal process, in distributing all required performance appraisal materials, and in ensuring that performance appraisals are completed in a timely manner.

- B. The immediate supervisor is responsible for conducting performance appraisals for all immediate subordinates in a timely manner. This responsibility includes not only completing the appraisal form and conducting the actual performance appraisal with the employee, but also ensuring that job descriptions are up-to-date, accurate, and available to the employee. If an employee's job duties and responsibilities change, the immediate supervisor shall notify the department manager so that the job description may be revised and submitted to Human Resources for inclusion in the employee's personnel file. Whenever a job description is revised, a copy should be given to the employee.
- C. In those cases where the employee has more than one supervisor, the supervisor who reviews most of the employee's work will usually complete the appraisal. However, the departmental manager or chair may require separate appraisals from each supervisor or may require that all supervisors provide input to develop a single appraisal. If a single appraisal is conducted, the immediate supervisor will seek written input from all other supervisors to coordinate a comprehensive review of the employee's work. Human Resources encourages the submission of one appraisal per employee.
- D. Department managers or chairs are responsible for ensuring that all supervisors conduct performance appraisals on all regular staff employees in their respective departments in a timely manner.

VII. SCHEDULE FOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

An effective performance appraisal process requires on-going communication between employee and supervisor to ensure that the employee has a clear understanding of the supervisor's expectations and continuous feedback about his or her job performance. There is a need, however, to periodically conduct formal performance appraisals as described below.

- A. Initial performance appraisal: Regular staff employees may receive a performance appraisal one month prior to completion of their probationary period. This appraisal not only will allow the supervisor the opportunity to discuss the employee's performance in the new job, it will also allow supervisor and subordinate to jointly establish future action plans and discuss employee development.
- B. Transfer or promotion to new positions: Regular staff employees who have completed the initial probationary period and are transferred or promoted to a new position may receive a performance appraisal during the sixth month in the new position. Two-way communication between supervisor and subordinate should take place regarding the employee's new job duties and responsibilities, performance level and future action plans.
- C. Annual performance appraisals: All regular staff employees shall receive performance appraisals during the last quarter of each calendar year. However, if an employee has received a performance appraisal during the preceding six months, that appraisal will serve as the annual performance

appraisal. Thereafter, the employee's appraisal will occur during the scheduled annual appraisal period.

- D. Performance probation appraisal: Regular staff employees who are placed on probation as a result of a low performance appraisal (see Section X) must receive a new performance appraisal at the end of the probationary period.
- E. Unscheduled performance appraisals: Unscheduled performance appraisals may be conducted at any time, if deemed necessary by college or division management and with prior review of the situation and circumstances by Human Resources.

VIII. THE FORMAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS

- A. All regular staff employees shall be evaluated using an official form developed and maintained by Human Resources. Any changes to the form or the procedure for completing it will be communicated immediately to the colleges and divisions.
- B. Human Resources will provide the colleges and divisions with Staff Performance Appraisal forms or make the form available to them at a central location. Human Resources will also provide instructions for completing the form and for conducting the performance appraisal meeting. Additionally, Human Resources will conduct supervisory training sessions regarding performance appraisals, normally during the last quarter of each calendar year and at other times during the year as necessary.

Human Resources will notify the college /division administrators of the need for annual performance appraisals prior to the last quarter of the calendar year.

- C. College/division administrators are responsible for ensuring that all regular staff employees in their college or division are evaluated in accordance with this document. Toward that end, administrators are responsible for distributing all necessary materials and forms to supervisors and for communicating to them the importance of the performance appraisal process.

In addition to ensuring that annual performance appraisals are conducted according to the schedule provided by Human Resources, college/division administrators are responsible for ensuring that initial performance appraisals and those others on individualized time schedules are performed according to the time frames required.

College/division administrators are also responsible for forwarding completed performance appraisals to Human Resources.

- D. Human Resources will monitor the process to ensure that all required evaluations are completed. Human Resources representatives will contact college/division administrators when it is noted that staff performance evaluations have not been forwarded for inclusion in the official personnel files. If the completed evaluations are then not provided by an established date, the appropriate Dean or Vice President will be notified.

IX. CONDUCTING THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

- A. The immediate supervisor is responsible for formally evaluating the performance of subordinates using one of the university's official Staff Performance Appraisal Forms. These forms are available for downloading on the Human Resources web site at http://www.uh.edu/admin/hr/forms/_main.htm.
- B. The performance appraisal form must be completed and signed by the immediate supervisor in accordance with procedures established by Human Resources.

- C. It is recommended that the immediate supervisor forward the performance appraisal to the reviewing official for his/her review and signature and discuss the appraisal with the reviewing official **prior** to it being discussed with the employee. The reviewing official has the discretion as to whether he/she elects to review and approve the performance appraisal before or after it is discussed with the employee. However, the approval of the reviewing official is required before the performance appraisal is forwarded to Human Resources.
- D. The immediate supervisor will conduct an interview with the employee to discuss his/her performance appraisal. The appraisal interview shall be scheduled in advance and with only the supervisor and the employee in attendance.
- E. After the performance appraisal interview has been conducted, the employee shall sign the appraisal form acknowledging that he or she:
- had the opportunity to comment and discuss the appraisal;
 - has the option of filing a written rebuttal to the appraisal within five working days of receiving it; and
 - has the opportunity to discuss the appraisal with the reviewing official.

The employee shall be provided a copy of the appraisal.

The signature of acknowledgment indicates only that the employee read the appraisal and understands the rights outlined in Section D above; it does not necessarily indicate agreement with the appraisal itself.

- F. If the employee refuses to sign the appraisal, the supervisor conducting the evaluation shall so indicate by noting, "employee refused to sign" and by initialing the refusal date.
- G. Completed appraisals shall be forwarded to Human Resources for filing in the employee's official personnel file. The originating department should maintain a copy for their records.

X. PERFORMANCE PROBATION

- A. Regular staff employees who are rated in the lowest performance-rating category shall be placed on performance probation for a period of 90 calendar days. With prior review of Human Resources, the probationary period may be extended for not more than 90 calendar days. The probationary period is not a guarantee of continued employment with the university.
- B. Employees shall be given written notice of performance probation, citing the specific dates covered, along with a copy of the completed performance appraisal form and a written performance improvement plan. The purpose of a performance improvement plan is to ensure that the employee is fully aware of performance deficiencies that exist and to provide the employee with reasonable direction with which to improve such deficiencies. The performance improvement plan should include, but is not limited to, a detailed listing of performance expectations and a defined time frame in which these improvements will occur.
- C. A copy of the written notice of performance probation must be provided to the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources for inclusion in the employee's official personnel file. Performance probation appraisals that are under appeal shall not become a part of the employee's official personnel file until such time as the appeal process has been completed.
- D. During the performance probation period, the employee's supervisor must conduct periodic meetings with the employee to review and, if necessary, revise the performance improvement plan.

- E. A new performance appraisal form must be completed by the employee’s supervisor at the end of the probationary period and discussed with the employee. If the employee’s performance has improved to a satisfactory level, the employee will be notified in writing that the performance probation period has been successfully completed. The written notice may be made by notation on the new performance appraisal or by separate memorandum.
- F. If the employee’s performance continues to be rated in the lowest category, or if the specific insufficiency that caused the performance probation has not improved, the employee may be terminated from the university. Decisions to dismiss an employee must be reviewed by Human Resources prior to taking any action.
- G. If an employee is terminated as a result of performance probation, the employee may appeal the termination in accordance with MAPP 02.04.01, Employee Grievances.

XI. APPEALS PROCESS

- A. An employee who disagrees with his/her performance appraisal may file a written rebuttal to the appraisal within five working days of receiving it. The rebuttal should be directed to the reviewing official. As a general rule, the rebuttal should include an itemized list of the employee’s objections to the appraisal, which he/she believes warrants further consideration. The employee has the option of requesting a meeting with the reviewing official to discuss his/her objections to the appraisal.
- B. The reviewing official has five working days to review and respond to the employee’s objections to his /her performance appraisal. The reviewing official should contact the immediate supervisor for clarification. The response shall be in writing and directed to the employee. If a meeting has been requested, the reviewing official will schedule and meet with the employee within the five working days.
- C. The reviewing official will make a determination whether to amend the performance appraisal or uphold the original appraisal. The employee’s written rebuttal, reviewing official’s written response and amended performance appraisal, if applicable, shall be included in the employee’s personnel file.

XII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
Review: Every three years, on or before September 1

XIII. APPROVAL

Randy J. Harris

Vice President for Administration and Finance

Arthur K. Smith

President

Date of President's Approval: 02/09/01

XIV. REFERENCES

UH System Administrative Memorandum 02.A.11
MAPP 02.04.01 - Employee Grievances

Index Terms: Job description
 Performance appraisal
 Performance probation
 Probationary employee
 Staff performance appraisal