

Performance Reviews

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are annual performance reviews required for all employees?

Yes. It is important all regular staff receive annual performance reviews. Questions about faculty, student, term and probationary employee reviews should be directed to campus and institute Human Resources offices.

Performance reviews provide an opportunity to receive written feedback, assess training and development needs, clarify expectations, discuss progress toward previously determined goals and set new goals for the next review period.

The review process can help improve efficiency and effectiveness and contribute to personal growth and job satisfaction.

2. How are employee ratings on performance reviews used by supervisors and Human Resources officers?

Ratings on performance reviews are indicators of overall performance and may, when applicable, be used to determine across-the-board and merit increases.

3. What aspects of performance are covered by the review?

The key elements of the **Performance Review Summary Form** ([PDF](#)) ([Word](#)) include:

- Accomplishments
- Service and relationships
- Accountability and dependability
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Decision making and problem solving

Staff also are evaluated on how well previously set goals were met, and new goals should be discussed and recorded for the upcoming period.

The performance review summary form and accompanying instructions are available at: http://humanresources.tennessee.edu/employeerelations/performance_review/index.html.

4. What is the process for conducting a performance review?

While all supervisors do not conduct reviews the same, Human Resources suggests the following process:

- Supervisors should ask employees to complete a self-evaluation of the employee's performance. Forms are available at the above-referenced website.

- The supervisor completes a written performance review, which may be a letter, a department-specific form or the standard Performance Review Summary Form available on the Human Resources website. Evaluation of performance should be based on the employee's performance during the review period, which is the previous calendar year. The review may include feedback and information in addition to what is specifically included on any performance review form the supervisor may use.
- To ensure consistency and accuracy, the supervisor discusses the performance review with his/her immediate supervisor. (This provision does not apply to the President, Vice Presidents and other executive-level supervisors who report directly to the President, Chancellors, and Vice Chancellors.)
- The supervisor schedules a meeting with the employee to discuss the written performance review and provides the employee with a copy of the performance review prior to the meeting.
- The supervisor and employee meet to discuss the employee's performance during the previous calendar year, job duties, performance expectations, any specific objectives to be achieved and professional development goals for the employee.
- Following the meeting, the supervisor makes any necessary adjustments to the written performance review, signs the performance review and presents it to the employee for signature. After the employee has signed the performance review, the supervisor submits it to the supervisor's immediate supervisor for signature (except as provided in item 3 above). After obtaining all required signatures, the supervisor provides a copy of the fully signed performance review to the employee and submits the original to Human Resources for review and entry in IRIS and for retention in the employee's personnel file. Human Resources will return to the department any performance review without all required signatures.

5. Are additional forms/tools available to help supervisors conduct reviews?

Optional tools are available to help supervisors make informed decisions about performance. The optional tools can be used at supervisors' discretion to help in completing the performance review summary form.

The **Optional Administrator, Supervisor or Peer Review Form** ([PDF](#)) ([Word](#)) allows supervisors to collect feedback about an employee's performance from those who work with the employee. The form should be completed at the supervisor's request and returned to the supervisor.

The **Optional Review Form for Employees with Supervisory Responsibilities** ([PDF](#)) ([Word](#)) allows supervisors to evaluate an employee's ability to lead others and/or manage a department.

Additional forms or other supporting documentation may be used as indicated by campus and institute Human Resources offices.

6. When should reviews be conducted?

All campuses and institutes evaluate performance based on the calendar year (January through December) and conduct and submit reviews between January and March for the previous year.

Supervisors are encouraged to monitor performance, provide feedback, reward and recognize excellent performance, discuss goals and communicate about issues throughout the year. Employees also are encouraged to initiate conversations with supervisors as often as needed.

7. If a staff member transfers to a new University department in between reviews, are both supervisors required to conduct a review?

Only one performance review can be submitted per staff member. The person who supervised the employee for the greatest period during the year should complete a review. If this is not possible, the new supervisor can complete the review, focusing on the employee's work to date.

8. What if an employee multiple supervisors/reviewers in their current department?

Only one performance review can be submitted per staff member. If an employee is evaluated by more than one supervisor, the supervisors must come to agreement on one overall score.

9. If a supervisor is new to a department or supervisory role in the department and has little experience working with existing staff members, how should the review process be handled?

The new supervisor should work with his/her senior staff in determining a review process for these individuals.

10. What is the process for submitting reviews to Human Resources?

After the employee has signed the performance review, the supervisor submits it to the supervisor's immediate supervisor for signature. After obtaining all required signatures, the supervisor provides a copy of the fully signed performance review to the employee and submits the original to Human Resources for review and entry in IRIS and for retention in the employee's personnel file. Human Resources will return to the department any performance review without all required signatures. This provision does

not apply to the President, Vice Presidents and other executive-level supervisors who report directly to the President, Chancellors, and Vice Chancellors.

11. Is training available for supervisors?

Yes. All supervisors should attend training on how to properly conduct a performance review. Training is provided at each campus and institute and information about the sessions will be shared by Human Resources officers.

An online training tool is available at:

http://humanresources.tennessee.edu/employeerelations/performance_review/index.html.

Some basic tips for preparation include:

1. Tracking employee performance throughout the review period by keeping notes on accomplishments, issues and training
2. Updating job descriptions
3. Looking at attendance records

12. What if a staff member disagrees with or does not understand ratings given by his/her supervisor?

The employee should first speak with his/her supervisor for clarification. If an understanding is not reached, the employee may submit a written rebuttal to Human Resources for inclusion in his/her personnel file. Some campuses also require supervisors be notified of the rebuttal.

If an employee refuses to sign the review, the supervisor should document this on the performance review form, sign and return it human resources.

13. Who should staff members call with questions about the performance review process?

Campus and institute Human Resources officers are available to answer questions about the process. Contact information is available at:

http://humanresources.tennessee.edu/employeerelations/performance_review/index.html.

14. How should employees prepare to participate in a review?

Some basic tips for preparation include:

1. Keeping notes on accomplishments, feedback, training and issues throughout the review period
2. Completing a self-evaluative summary form to reflect on the prior year's work
3. Preparing discussion points for the review

15. What can staff who receive a low overall performance rating do to improve the next year?

Above all, staff members need to understand why they received a low rating for the prior year's performance and what they can do to improve. First, staff members should talk with their supervisor to be clear of his/her perspective and to set goals for the next year. Second, staff members might want to consider requesting a Performance Improvement Plan so they can focus on the areas needing improvement.

16. What happens if a staff member receives a rating of 9 and below on the overall performance review summary form?

Overall performance ratings of 9 and below are considered unsatisfactory and mean work performance for the previous year fell far below expectations. Staff members receiving unsatisfactory overall performance ratings of 9 and below are ineligible for across-the-board pay increases.

If an across-the-board increase has been denied because of disciplinary action and the supervisor determines that the disciplinary issue has been resolved and/or the employee's performance has improved sufficiently, and if funding is available, then a non-retroactive across-the-board increase can be given at any time within one year following the effective date of the across-the-board increase.