

Performance Management

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Some tips to make the ride easier

How does it work?

According to legislation, all public sector agencies must have a performance management system that meets certain 'essential elements' set by the Public Service Commissioner, which may be summarised as follows:

SET AND CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

This includes employees understanding public sector values, codes of conduct, policies, and procedures etc., the capabilities required of them and the deliverables for which they are accountable. Refer to the NSW Government's capability framework:

<http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/workforce-management/capability-framework>

MONITOR

All employees have regular formal and informal opportunities to discuss their work with their manager and receive feedback on their performance

PLAN AND REVIEW

All employees have an annual formal performance agreement with their manager that sets out individual performance objectives linked to corporate objectives and the capabilities for their role.

All employees have a formal performance review at least once a year.

Formal performance reviews are to inform all assessments for incremental salary progression.

DEVELOP

Development plans are based on the capabilities required in the role, the employee's existing capabilities, and his/her performance objectives and/or career goals.

RECOGNISE

Agencies have guidelines in place to help managers appropriately recognise employees at the local level.

RESOLVE UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

Managers promptly work with the employee to understand and resolve instances or patterns of unsatisfactory performance.

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Agencies should have a specific Performance Management Policy which outlines the details of the process. Some agencies use on-line performance management applications. Performance ratings are often given in reviews e.g. 'superior', 'performing to expectations' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Some tips

- Make sure you have a **role description** which specifies the capabilities for the role before you establish a performance agreement – this provides a clear basis for what can be expected of you.
- Try to establish **realistic goals or targets** with your manager (both outputs and timing should be sensible). Make sure it is clear that targets can be altered if agency priorities change. Discuss any barriers to achieving targets and how these might be managed.
- Make sure the Performance Plan includes **training and development plans** such as formal courses, mentoring, acting up opportunities and new work experiences etc.
- At the performance review (which may be 6 or 12 months after the performance agreement is set) **come prepared with key examples of what you have achieved** – you may need to write these down.
- Ask your manager for **specific feedback on the things you did well and any areas for improvement**. Make sure your manager has specific strategies to help you meet his or her expectations.
- **Performance reviews can be stressful!** You may want to seek advice from your PSA delegate or colleagues on managing the review. Consider some different ways of looking at a stressful situation: <http://psychcentral.com/lib/4-tips-to-change-the-way-you-deal-with-stress/>
- Be aware that **poor performance can trigger a performance improvement plan** and other action to manage performance in line with Section 68 of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013.
- If you feel that you have been **treated unfairly** in the performance management process you might consider **talking to your PSA delegate** or raising it with the agency HR manager. You can also contact the **PSA's Member Support Centre** for advice:

