

PSA comments on Treasury Internal Policy and Procedure Documents (TIPPD)
2.08a Managing Performance and 2.08b Managing Unsatisfactory Work
Performance

Overall comments

Union members would like to reiterate that the principles underlying Treasury's performance management system should be the following:

- A performance development plan (PDP) should be a continuous, two-way dialogue between staff and their line manager with goals jointly set based on the Division's and Treasury's business plans but also reflective of the Public Service Commission framework.
- Measurement of achievement of specified goals in a PDP should be consistently, equitably and transparently applied.
- Further measurement should be open and transparent against specified objectives and capabilities with staff able to understand why a rating has been given.
- Feedback throughout the year needs to be on a clear and timely basis to ensure that there are "no surprises".
- The PSA rejects the Department's use of the so-called executive calibration process for determining performance outcomes. The process is opaque, causes uncertainty with staff, it permits an unwarranted level of management discretion which is neither transparent nor accountable, and it has the potential to lead to unjust performance outcomes and allows for targeting of individuals on factors not related to performance.
- The PSA calls on the department to abandon the executive calibration process.
- All elements of the performance cycle need to be visible and to be clearly understood by staff and management.
- In line with transparency and procedural fairness there needs to be included as part of the PDP process, an ability for a staff member to sign off his/her PDP and to also respond to any issues in the PDP prior to its completion and final sign off.
- Further as part of procedural fairness, where there are disagreements between the management and staff over a rating or comments in the PDP there should be a clear process for staff to take action if they disagree with the rating. This process needs to be accessible to staff at all points of the performance cycle during the year.
- Employees cannot be placed on performance improvement plans (PIPs) without warning or for no clear reason. Performance needs to be measured against the initial goals set.
- Performance management for employees in a position for less than six months should be based on developing in that role.

Note these points align with the spirit of the Public Service Commission's Performance Development framework and associated documents.

Proposed way forward

Given the above, the PSA suggests that management agree to a consultative forum in which both parties seek to develop performance development plan policies based on best practice. The PSA strives for such policies to reflect the above principles. It is requested that said forum begins shortly.

- The TIPPDs as noted in the name should be both a policy and procedure document, as it is currently merely a document vaguely referencing parts of policies with no specific procedures outlined
- The updated TIPPDs should not be released until a tool kit to assist staff and managers is developed. Until then the existing TPDDs should apply.
- All elements of the performance cycle need to be documented in the TIPPDs and/or tool kit to assist staff and management.
- Training for all Treasury (staff and management) on both managing performance including the Performance Development Plan and Managing Unsatisfactory Performance needs to be provided. Training should be mandatory.
- Any calibration process that is outside the line manager/staff relationship needs to be abandoned and no longer used as part of the performance cycle.
- There should be a clear and documented process for staff to take action if they disagree with the final rating or are concerned with the performance management discussions with their manager. This process needs to be accessible to staff at all points of the performance cycle during the year.
- The PDP form on the intranet needs to be amended to enable all staff members to sign off on their PDPs and also to allow a staff member to respond to any issues in the PDP prior to completion.
- Staff and/or management need to be advised by email when the log for their PDP on the intranet is updated.
- Administrative and other changes to the PDP on the intranet need to be documented and supported by version control. Currently management have absolute discretion in altering the PDP form and guidelines– this process needs to be transparent. These changes should be consulted on with the union.
- In line with best practice administrative or other changes to the PDP format or structure on the intranet need to be advised to all staff by email. Staff must be given the opportunity to read and respond prior to said document being changed and formalised.
- There should a verbal warning to staff and coaching provided prior to moving to a formal managing unsatisfactory performance process.
- Staff should be provided with adequate warning of any meeting (1 to 2 days) to discuss performance and be allowed a support person.
- Performance Improvement Plans need to identify two or three issues for improvement against set goals and be achievable in the time frame set.