



Performance Review
Pre-work Materials for Manager/Leadership
Positions

Performance & Progress Conversation - Reference Materials for Manager/Leadership Positions

What are Performance Reviews?

Performance Reviews are structured discussions between employees and their supervisors that are designed to support employee success through reflection, planning, problem solving, and honest and constructive feedback. Performance Reviews are when employees reflect on significant accomplishments, key strengths, and plans for the future.

What is the value of honest, direct, and regular feedback?

- Better performance and higher productivity
- Stronger teams and work groups
- Enhanced trust
- Greater job satisfaction
- Early alerts about performance concerns

We do our best work and are most engaged when we are encouraged to use our individual strengths. Conversations about strengths may provide employees and supervisors with the opportunity to offer or modify responsibilities in alignment with interests and areas of mastery.

The Strengths Examples (Appendix 1) included in this guide may help employees think about the strengths they bring to their roles.

What if a supervisor disagrees with the key work objectives, accomplishments, strengths, areas for improvement, or plans for the future an employee has reported?

We encourage supervisors to be honest and share their perspective. Supervisor may note these disagreements in writing or invite the employee to revise their content based on the Performance Review.

What if an employee disagrees with the supervisor's comments?

We appreciate it can be difficult to express disagreement with a supervisor, but honest conversations make for better working relationships. If the supervisor chooses not to change the comments, the employee may document the disagreement on the Performance Review form.

Should Performance Reviews be used to document unsatisfactory performance?

Performance Reviews may provide an opportunity to reiterate performance expectations or highlight concerns about the future but supervisors are strongly encouraged not to delay conversations about the need for performance improvement. Addressing performance concerns with an employee as soon as they emerge and developing an improvement plan prevents problems from escalating.

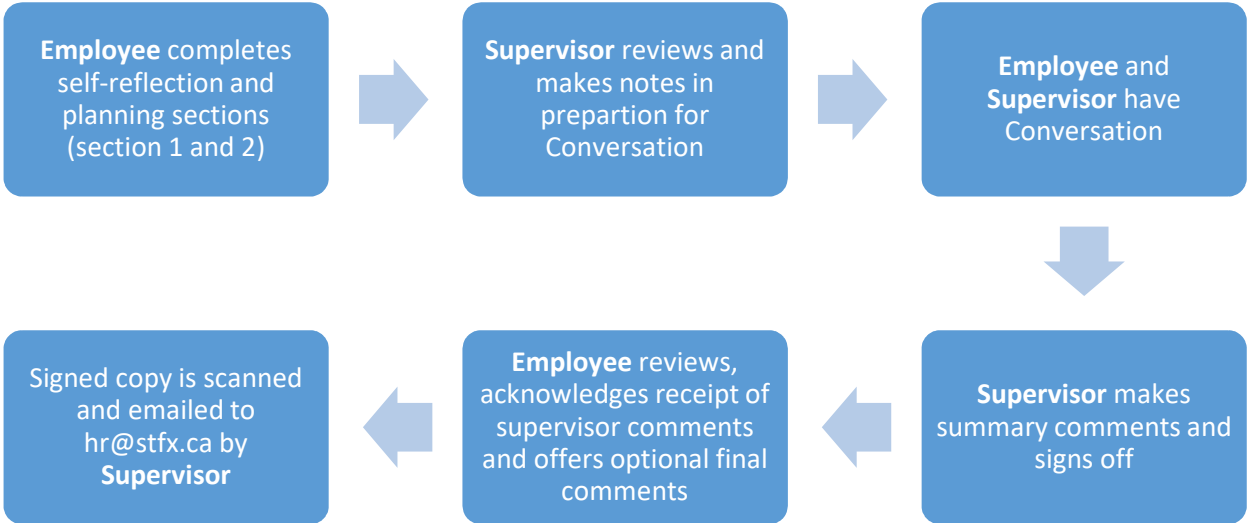
How do Performance Reviews work?

1. **Employee** completes pre-work and planning sections based on agreements made during the previous performance conversation or review.
2. **Supervisor** schedules a time for a performance review and in preparation for the conversation, reviews the employee's pre-work and planning sections and makes discussion notes.
3. **Employee and Supervisor** have conversation.
4. **Supervisor** makes summary comments and signs off on the performance conversation document.
5. **Employee** reviews, acknowledges receipt of supervisor comments, and offers optional final comments.
6. **Both Employee and Supervisor** use completed performance reviews for periodic and informal check ins.

How often should Performance Reviews occur?

Performance reviews should be conducted on a regular basis and documented in writing at least twice a year.

Performance & Progress Conversations - Process Model



Resources for Section 1: Objectives/Goal Setting

Note: Please review current job description with employee. If changes are made, please forward an electronic copy of the updated job description to HR, with changes indicated in RED.

Guidelines for setting key work objectives:

Key work objectives are specific work outcomes that an employee is expected to achieve during this fiscal year. It is not a list of all the activities or responsibilities of the role. There is a direct link between the employee objectives, the department's operational plan and [StFX's strategic priorities](#).

All objectives should:

- Begin with a verb that best describes how the objective will be demonstrated (action verb).
- State what an employee is expected to be able to do and/or produce as a result of engaging in their key work tasks or working towards career goals (the what).
- Describe under what conditions the performance is to occur (the how).
- Define the timeframe in which this development in performance is to be achieved (the when).

Key work objective example:

Implement (action verb) a performance management objective measurement process (what) through consultation (how) by December 2017 (when).

Objectives should follow the **SMART** format:

Specific

- Is it clear and well defined?
- Is it clear to anyone that has a basic knowledge of the work area?

Measurable

- Know if the goal is obtainable and how far away completion is.
- Know when it has been achieved.

Achievable

- Agreement with all the stakeholders what the goals should be.
- Is there a realistic path to achievement?

Realistic

- Within the availability of resources, knowledge and time.

Timely

- Enough time to achieve the goal, is there a time limit?
- Not too much time, which can affect work performance.

Resources for Section 2:

Strengths Examples (for completing your own review)

This table lists some of the types of strengths that might be noted in a performance conversation. We encourage employees and supervisors to be creative when considering strengths. This list is for example purposes only.

Accuracy	Produces work products that are correct, factual, and free of errors
Analysis	Is able to make sense of information to support projects and planning
Communication	Is able to convey information effectively through writing, presentations or speaking
Compassion	Demonstrates an understanding of another person's situation and the desire to alleviate concern or distress
Coaching/developing others	Supports the success of others by sharing knowledge and advice and connecting them to supportive resources
Courage	Faces difficulty, adversity, risk or danger with confidence
Creativity	Uses imagination or artistic abilities to develop original content or ideas
Decision Making	Gathers necessary information, weighs alternatives, and engages
Environmental scanning	Constantly monitors the internal and external environment to identify trends, opportunities, and threats to the institution
Flexibility	Is able and willing to shift activities, priorities, and approaches based on new demands
Initiative	Proactively takes steps to make the organization stronger by providing ideas, developing solutions, and offering suggestions for improvements
Integrity	Honors commitments, maintains confidences, follows policies and procedures, considers the needs of others, and does not take advantage of negative opportunities
Interpersonal communication	Listens well, demonstrates empathy for the other person's perspective or situation, and is able to establish common ground in order to resolve tension or conflict
Planning and Organizing	Prioritizes work, manages resources and information effectively, and uses time wisely to accomplish tasks and goals.
Problem Solving	Identifies and defines problems, considers multiple solutions, and makes considered judgments about the best approach forward
Reliability	Consistently produces accurate, high quality work with established deadlines
Relationship building	Is able to forge mutually beneficial partnerships with others
Researching	Systematically inquires or investigates in order to discover new knowledge or revise facts or theories
Results oriented	Sets or accepts ambitious goals and consistently moves work and projects forward to completion
Strategic	Uses data, ideas, relationships, and resources to achieve goals
Subject matter expertise	Demonstrates special knowledge of a field, process, or profession
Teaching	Effectively conveys information in order to help others learn or understand information and concepts
Team Work	Works effectively in a team setting. Listens well, considers diverse opinions, and contributes fully to the team's success
Tenacity	Demonstrates determination and persistence.

Resources for Section 3: Competencies & Behaviors (Leadership/Management) for completing your own Self-Reflection

This list of competencies is a reference guide to support discussions around employee development plans

<p>One on One Coaching – influencing an individual’s actions. Whether direct report, client or internal customer. Involves awareness, accountability and support. Comes from the belief that processes, people, and client relationships can always be improving.</p>
a) Pinpoints a Problem, Challenge or Opportunity (PCO) using quantitative, fact based inputs.
b) Articulates employee behaviors (what they are doing or saying, that is measurable, observable, specific) vs speaking to personalities or vague judgements.
c) Connects individual behavior to a business goal and describes how the behavior is impacting that goal.
d) Able to identify a specific future behavior that would improve results.
e) Explores the cause of the behavior. Able to determine if a limiting behavior is a result of a lack of skill (can s/he) or willingness (will s/he).
f) Through open and respectful dialogue with the employee, uncovers activators (things that trigger a behavior) and consequences (things that reinforce).
g) Able to ask open ended questions to involve and engage. Creating ownership in the employee’s own development.
h) Able to create an agreed upon coaching/ action plan to improve a limiting behavior, with timelines and tasks.
i) Able to monitor improvement (behavior) and provide fact based feedback in regular coaching sessions (weekly/ bi-weekly/ monthly).
j) Gives timely corrective feedback explaining What (Behavior), Why (Impact) and How (To do differently).
k) Able to gauge the quality of the relationship (Emotional Bank Account) and how it is impacting performance. Takes purposeful action to improve relationship quality.
l) Able to communicate in a way that decreases defensiveness and increases motivation. Listens until the other person feels understood. Uses “I”, “We” and “Our” language.
<p>Team Facilitation – influencing team actions</p>
a) Takes into account own and others personal beliefs, tendencies and personality when making decisions and communicating.
b) Target – The purpose, getting team member’s focused and motivated. Connect that purpose to a meaningful goal or KPI (Key Performance Indicators). Communicate (company, divisional, dept goals) to direct reports in easy to understand language.
c) Can craft and deliver a compelling “opening statement” to capture team member’s attention, focusing people’s hearts and minds on why they are there.

d) Engage – involve the team in idea generation, evaluation and selection.
e) Able to solicit and manage differing views.
f) Able to assemble a plan of action. Asks refocusing questions to get groups back on track, and heading in same direction. Ensures individuals are assigned to specific actions, establishes follow-up dates, and clarifies expectations.
g) Able to create, or select an existing way to capture accountabilities and monitor results.
h) Manage the boundary, the inputs (data and info) and outputs (results) not the throughputs (hands-on work). Give people accountability and authority over tasks. Stay focused on managing outcomes and providing support. Allow them to innovate and find their own way, within set parameters.
i) Able to listen actively. Focusing on the speaker, using verbal and non-verbal attends, asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing and reflecting back both the intended message and the associated emotions.
j) End every meeting on a positive note reminding people of actions and decisions, and how they will positively impact the business.
Problem Solving/ Decision Making – asking the right questions before acting, using knowledge and experience of self and/ or others.
a) Monitors work environment to identify issues that require priority action.
b) Define the problem or opportunity by looking at the big picture. Using tools such as; process map, value stream map, flow chart, swim-lane, stakeholder analysis, SWOT, Voice of Customer, etc.
c) Analyze. Search for the root cause of problem or key lever for the opportunity vs focusing on symptoms. Uses exploring tools such as 5 Why's, cause and effect diagrams (fish bone), affinity mapping, etc.
d) Generate solutions based on a variety of inputs.
e) Test solutions using benchmarking, impact/ effort matrix, pilot testing, developing evaluation criteria, risk assessments, etc.
f) Create contingency plans to minimize risk associated with implementation.
g) Decide. Makes decisions and acts. Follows-up and adapts as new information becomes available.
Operations – gets work done using best practices and focusing on the university/ department/ team's goals.
a) Can describe departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).
b) Can describe key processes or methodologies followed to get results.
c) Can describe Best Practices as it relates to their role.
d) Able to plan, organize and manage resources to gain optimal performance from them (equipment, people, time, etc.)
e) Able to prioritize activities and tasks based on understanding of organization and departmental goals.

Communication – influencing others by sharing information in writing, verbally and non-verbally.
a) Transactional communication: details, facts, logistics are sent and received. Clearly stating key points and asking for confirmation of understanding.
b) Written documents make use of standard rules of writing (proper grammar and etiquette).
c) Ensures understanding by using comparisons, building context, summarizing key points.
d) Transformational communication (changing perspectives) – makes use of non-verbal effective body language, eye contact, facial expressions, etc.
e) Uses different intonations (tone of voice) to convey different points.
f) Uses active listening for shared understanding.
g) Assertively states needs and takes ownership of their part in the communication process.
Financial Acumen – interpreting how actions impact financial health
a) Aligns strategic goals to the budget.
b) Uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities.
c) Identifies cost effective approaches to getting work done.
d) Prepares, justifies and/ or administers the budget for the dept/ university.
e) Monitors performance and adjusts allocation of finances based on progress against goals.
f) Regularly communicates how goals, plans, decisions, behaviors impact financials.
Strategic Leadership – influencing an organization’s actions
a) Current state. Ability to articulate current state of the industry/ operation.
b) Assesses Environment. Collects data to better understand future state (political, industry, market, etc.).
c) Inspires. Can craft and deliver a compelling vision, to capture team member’s attention, focusing people’s hearts and minds on why they are there.
d) Systems & Processes. Understands systems thinking. Can see the entire map of the university, and how functions interact to deliver effective and efficient products to consumers.
e) Values Driven. Understands the organization’s values and how to leverage them to create a strong culture.
f) Focuses and Motivates. Ensures that the organizational structure allows a clear line of site from Vision, Goals, Processes, and Behaviors. Makes it easy for people to see how their day-to-day work impacts organizational objectives.
g) Information sharing and transparency. Involves employees in developing and managing the Vision, Strategic Goals, Processes, and Behaviors needed to drive desired results.
h) Value Creation. Understands the end-to-end system of value creation the business offers to the marketplace, and spends the majority of their time ensuring that future value gets delivered.
i) Future focused. Capitalizes on future opportunities in the marketplace and inside the business, using their unique “big picture” perspective.

General Resources:

Performance Conversation “Do’s and Don’ts”

DO

- ✓ Use the term ‘development areas’ when providing constructive feedback.
- ✓ Be positive and empathetic.
- ✓ Provide examples specific to the area being discussed: “Sally, I thought the way you managed this was innovative and professional. I particularly liked the way you...”
- ✓ Be encouraging: “Overall, your analytical skills have improved since our last performance meeting. Let’s talk about some opportunities to develop this skill further.”
- ✓ Focus on behaviors, not personality traits.
- ✓ Solicit questions and comments: Two-way dialogue.
- ✓ End on a positive, call-to-action note and discuss next steps.

DON’T

- ✗ Use the words ‘weaknesses’ and ‘poor performance’.
- ✗ Employ extreme words, such as ‘always’ and ‘never’.
- ✗ Include labels, such as ‘irresponsible’, ‘careless’ and ‘awful’.
- ✗ Make value judgments, such as ‘best’, ‘bad’, ‘incompetent’.
- ✗ Compare peers: “You are better than John at process management.”
- ✗ Apologize after delivering constructive feedback
- ✗ Let biases or recent events overshadow an objective performance assessment.

Suggested Readings

- *Analyzing Performance Problems or You Really Oughta Wanna*, second edition by Robert F. Mager and Peter Pipe. Published by Pittman Management and Training of Belmont, CA in 1984.
- *The Business of Listening* by Diane Bone. Published by Crisp Publications of Los Altos, CA in 1988.
- *Coaching and Counseling* by Marianne Minor. Published by Crisp Publications of Los Altos, CA in 1989.
- *The Empowered Manager* by Peter Block. Published by Jossey-Bass Publishers in San Francisco in 1987.
- *First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* by Marcus Buckingham, Curt Coffman. Published by Simon and Schuster of New York in 1999.
- *Giving and Receiving Criticism* by Patti Hathaway. Published by Crisp Publications of Los Altos, CA in 1990.
- *Masterful Coaching* by Robert Hargrove. Published by Jossey-Bass/pfeiffer of San Francisco in 2002.
- *Maximum Performance Management: How to manage and compensate people to meet world competition* 2nd ed. by Joseph H. Boyett, Ph.D. et al. Published by Glenbridge Publishing Ltd. of Lakewood, Colorado in 1993.
- *Measurement of Work Performance: Methods, Theory and Application* by Frank J. Landy and James L. Farr. Published by Academic Press of New York in 1983.
- *Perfect Phrases for Performance Reviews: Hundreds of Ready-to-Use Phrases That Describe Your Employees' Performance* by Douglas Max, Robert Bacal. Published by McGraw-Hill in 2002.
- *A Supervisor's Guide for Performance Management* by the U.S. Department of Labor. Published by U.S. Department of Labor of Washington, D.C. in 1989
- *Strengths Finder 2.0* by Tom Rath, published by Gallup Press in 2007
- *Difficult Conversations* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen. Published by Penguin Books in 2010