Performance Review

Pre-work Materials for Employee

Performance & Progress Conversation – Pre-work for Employee

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, with 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 expertise.

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 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 Reviews.

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.
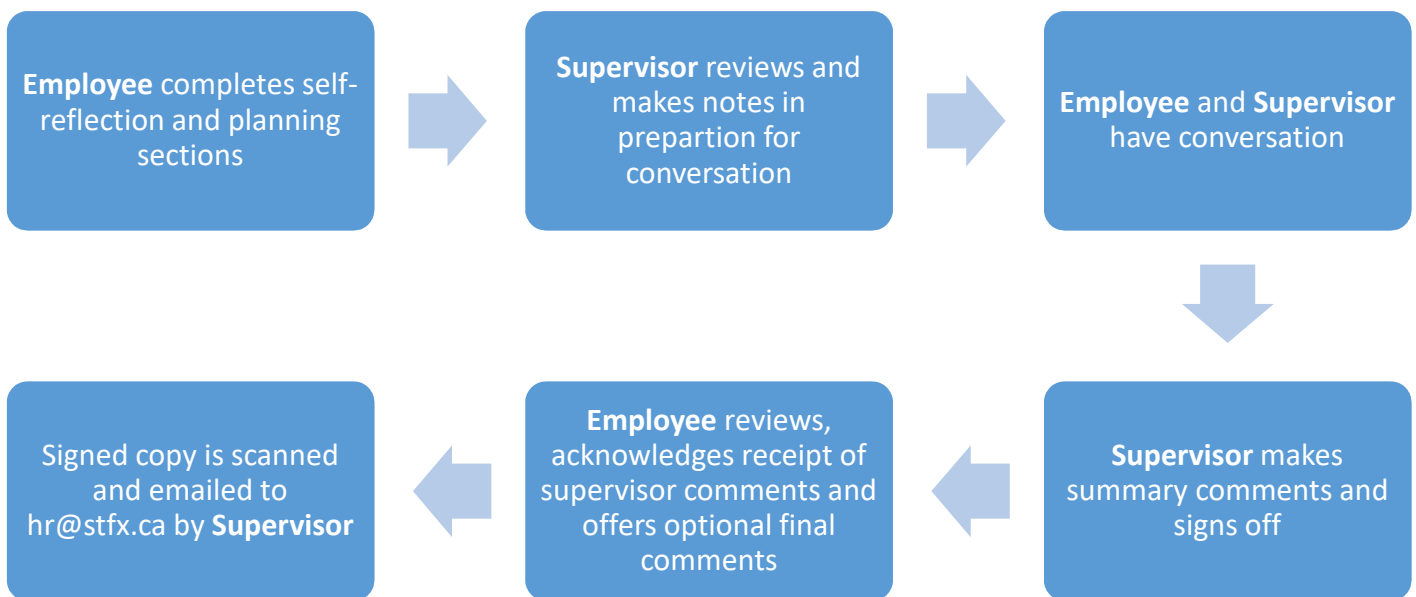
How do Performance Reviews work?
1. **Employee** completes pre-work and planning sections based on agreements made during the previous performance conversation or review.
2. **Supervisor** schedules a time for a performance review and in preparation for the conversation, reviews the employee's pre-work and planning sections and makes discussion notes.
3. **Employee and Supervisor** have conversation.
4. **Supervisor** makes summary comments and signs off on the performance review 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 Review - Process Model

Employee completes self-reflection and planning sections

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Supervisor reviews and makes notes in prepartion for conversation

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Employee and **Supervisor** have conversation

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Signed copy is scanned and emailed to hr@stfx.ca by **Supervisor**

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Employee reviews, acknowledges receipt of supervisor comments and offers optional final comments

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Supervisor makes summary comments and signs off

Resources for Section 1: Objectives/Goal Setting

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 2018 (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: A Planning Tool for Employees

Use these questions to reflect on progress made to date and progress still to be made.

Reflective Questions for Completing Self Evaluation:

- How is my performance contributing to my department's goals?
- Can I connect my contributions to organizational success?
- What specific progress have I made toward accomplishing my goals?
- What have I done to further my competencies?
- Progress made on my development plan? Specific knowledge, skills, abilities that were acquired?
- Did anything get in the way of my success in certain areas? How did I deal with the challenges?
- What were some significant accomplishments or 'wins' that I had?
- What specific plans do I have to improve my performance during the next six months?

Even though your supervisor calls the performance review meeting, you have a considerable role to play in ensuring the dialogue is both two-way and productive.

Questions to trigger thoughts for 1:1 meeting:

- What are your objectives for the 1:1 meeting?
- How can your supervisor help you improve and in what areas?
- Consider your wins and challenges.
- Even if outcomes were not as planned, can you identify some benefits?
- What would you do differently to ensure better outcomes?
- What are your strongest talents and skills? How can your supervisor help you put them to better use?
- Consider feedback to give to your supervisor. Something like: "It's important for me to hear from you periodically so that I know if I'm on track or otherwise." Or, "it would be helpful if you could give me a sense of the priorities of my projects."
- Take notes so that you can refer back to key points discussed/agreed-upon.

Strengths Examples:

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.

We encourage employees to read *StrengthsFinder 2.0* by Tom Rath to help identify your strengths.

Resources for Section 3: Competencies & Behaviors

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

Analytical Thinking – Breaking down a situation into smaller parts in order to understand it; taking a situation and what it affects then outlining it piece by piece. This encompasses organizing the aspects of problems and/or situations, doing it in a systematic way and then making relevant comparisons of its features and creating priorities through proper analysis done with rational thinking.
a) Analyzes and processes information – Deconstructs the problem into a set of simple tasks or activities. Seeks out appropriate resources and gets their input. Solidly identifies the connection between situation and information.
b) Identifies relationships – identifies patterns and trends in the gathered information. Realizes what these trends or patterns may affect. Comes to logical conclusions and offers recommendations. Properly anticipates potential roadblocks.
c) Relationally analyses those complex relationships – approaches the problem with a systematic approach and breaks the complex problem into smaller components. Utilizes more than one technique to reach a solution. Identifies and assesses multiple causal factors or ways to interpret the available information. Is able to identify trends and patterns between situations that are not blatantly obvious.
d) Utilizes broad analysis – Takes information from multiple diverse sources and implements them. This often requires the integration of abundant amounts of relevant information. Able to stay ahead of the problem and identify the best course of action by anticipating likely outcomes and choosing the most beneficial one.
e) Uses a systematic perspective to assess the entirety of the situation. Is able to identify multiple relationships and disconnects between the processes in order to reach a conclusion or potential options. Utilizes a broad perspective that analyzes a large amount of diversified information. Uses foresight to analyze the trends and patterns to not only see the impact it has on the organization, but also in the future. Is able to properly balance a variety of perspectives when setting goals.
Communication – Effective and relevant exchange of information that is respectful to the diversity, geography and working environment of the employees. It involves retaining information, active listening, understanding, and thoughtful response. This is done through open and effective interactions with peers. When communication occurs, the information is then used to act in a relevant manner.
a) Listens and cohesively presents information – Is available and encourages others to communicate. Actively listens and does not interrupt the speaker. Is attentive, takes notes when necessary and delivers information to intended recipients with accuracy.
b) Creates two-way communication – Actively ensures that messages are understood, useful and relevant. Capable of picking up non-verbal cues. Is receptive and responds positively in ways that foster clear communication and understanding.
c) Is adaptive in their approach to communicating with different individuals – Is able to alter the content, style, tone and method of communication to ensure the intended audience will be able to understand the information and its delivery. Creates clear lines of communication, remains consistent in communicating with their peers. Is able to persuade peers through thoughtful presentation of useful and rational debate, and uses this to create a course of action that is progressive and positive.
d) Communicates complicated messages efficiently – Confidently address complex questions that occur. Is clear when communicating complex issues and does so with credibility. Modifies the style, tone and message of the information

based on the target audience and the issues/needs being discussed. Actively encourages the expression of ideas and opinions.

e) Strategically presents information in an effective manner - Utilizes a strategic approach to communicating in order to achieve clearly defined and specific objectives. Has a variety of communication methods at their disposal and uses them effectively to foster dialogue, shared understanding and the capability of achieving a consensus.

Decision Making – The ability to make decisions that involve different levels of risk and ambiguity.

a) Makes decisions solely on rules – Follows policies and procedures. Makes straightforward decisions based on minimum information.   Uses clearly defined rules to make their decision. When making decisions it involves little risk, low consequences and low chance of error.

b) Interprets rules and makes a decision through that process – Uses policies and procedures to base their decisions but uses some interpretation. Makes straightforward decisions based on a bit more than the minimum amount of relevant information. Makes decisions of minor consequences and chance of error. Seeks guidance from a seasoned employee when confronted with a vague situation.

c) Makes decision in ambiguous situations – Uses guidelines and procedures that are open to interpretation. Formulates an opinion then makes their decision by weighing several factors and opinions. When needed, the individual seeks a seasoned employee to aid in the decision making process.

d) Makes complicated decision in vague situations – Makes complicated decisions with no precedent to base their decisions from. Considers a multitude of related factors where there is inconclusive and contradictory information. Balances clashing priorities when reaching an ultimate decision.

e) Makes high risk decisions in complicated situations – Makes high risk decisions that have significant consequences and possibility of error. Uses the core principles and values of the organization and individual, along with sound business knowledge to make an informed decision. Provides advise for senior management to make decisions that best represent the needs of the organization.

Networking & Relationship Building – Creating and maintaining strong work relationships and/or networks with relevant contacts that aid the organization in achieving its goals.

a) Utilizes known sources of information – Seeks out information from colleagues. Maintains contacts in other departments who are capable of providing information relevant to their particular line of work. Builds rapport through initiating casual contacts at work with colleagues.

b) Builds personal contacts – Explores the landscape for the expertise of others and develops rapport with experts and other relevant sources of information. Nurtures and develops key organizational contacts and sources of information. Actively participates in networking and social events that are both internal and external to StFX.

c) Seeks out new opportunities for networking, both for the individual and for others – Explores opportunities to partner and transfer knowledge. Maintains and develops personal networks in different areas of the university and is effective in utilizing those contacts to obtain results.

d) Uses strategy to expand networks -Builds networks with parties that are capable of helping the university achieve aspects of their overall strategy. Brings together or creates information teams of experts and uses these to explore issues, needs, and to share relevant information and resolve conflict as required.

e) Creates fruitful opportunities for relevant networking – Creates forums to develop new allegiances and networks. Identifies areas of the university that need to build strategic partnerships and relationships. Contacts integral individuals to identify areas of potential, long-term and mutual growth/success.

Organization & Planning – The effective management and organization of one's time to set and achieve goals, prioritize tasks, allocate time and resources properly to ensure completion of pertinent tasks, manage multiple tasks and projects while allocating time properly.

a) Uses formal /informal methods to achieve objectives – Recognizes requirements and uses available resources to meet objectives. Plans and organizes their own work. Monitors their own objectives and quality of work.
b) Successfully completes activities and delivers work in a timely manner – Maximizes available resources in order to complete tasks, create their own action plan, and is able to set realistic time expectations for tasks. Identifies the importance of tasks and is able to logically prioritize them and their time to complete these tasks within the established time frame and uses resources to keep themselves organized.
c) Develops plans for their team – Considers a variety of factors while planning. Identifies and plans activities that will result in improvement to services and tasks.
d) Effectively organizes others – Creates alternative methods and actions, organizes the people in their team, prioritizes their activities in a way that helps them obtain results more effectively and efficiently. Evaluates the process frequently, as well as the results in order to make the proper adjustments to the established plan.   Sets, monitors, and communicates the priorities for job tasks amongst the team.
e) Plans and organizes at a strategic level – Plans work and resources to deliver proper results to the university. Allocates project resources in line with the clearly established strategic plan.   Communicates priorities across the university. Ensures that there are sufficient resources available to obtain the desired results.