



**LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY**  
**PERFORMANCE EVALUATION RESOURCES**  
**FOR EMPLOYEES**



**LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY**  
APPLETON, WISCONSIN

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## Annual Performance Evaluation Process Summary

### Why do performance evaluations?

Lawrence University's mission states that the university is "*committed to the development of intellect and talent, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, the cultivation of sound judgment, and respect for the perspectives of others... we actively foster a transformative process that emphasizes engaged learning, supported by an environment of rich educational opportunities.*" This focus on learning extends to how we develop our faculty and staff, in addition to our students. Annual evaluations and regular feedback on performance are the cornerstones for effective, engaged employees. In addition to supporting our mission as a learning institution, performance evaluations have the following benefits:

- Better leverages employees' strengths and addresses gaps in performance
- Assesses progress against annual objectives; encourages discussion on goals for the upcoming year
- Informs and supports discussions around merit increases
- Provides supervisors with feedback from their employees around their work and goals

### What is the process for performance evaluations?

There are different processes for faculty and staff. Faculty follow a process of Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion. Staff members are required to have a yearly performance evaluation, along with regular feedback throughout the year. The annual performance assessment process is as follows:



The performance evaluation should outline what an employee does well and what they need to improve, and importantly, set up discussion for ongoing feedback throughout the year. By providing constructive feedback on a regular basis, the supervisor is giving the employee information about work performance and, if needed, allowing time to make corrections in performance and/or behavior. Regular feedback avoids "blindsiding" the employee at evaluation time with an unsatisfactory review.

### When do we do annual performance evaluations?

Annual staff performance evaluations occur in late fall/early winter. This enables faculty feedback, if appropriate, to be integrated into the evaluation process. It also allows for a less rushed process, providing higher quality evaluations for employees. The late fall/early winter timing also aligns with labor budget discussions in the spring.

### **Implications of not doing annual performance evaluations**

There are several negative implications of not doing annual performance evaluations. First, and most important, it reduces the effectiveness of the individual and the team. By not having regular and annual discussions around performance, there is no reinforcement of strengths and their role in accomplishing the team's objectives, and discussion of opportunity areas for improvement. Second, it is a missed opportunity for an employee and supervisor to have a discussion around annual objectives and performance. Finally, it will reflect poorly on the supervisor as "Managing Performance of Others", including providing timely, constructive and balanced feedback and completing performance evaluations and discussions are key competencies for supervisors.

### **How do I prepare for an annual performance evaluation?**

To facilitate communication, it is important that supervisors and employees prepare for the performance evaluation meeting. There should be a clear understanding of the employee's responsibilities. The job description, which interfaces with the evaluation form, should accurately reflect these responsibilities. The supervisor should review the employee's job description for accuracy. Job descriptions can be requested from Human Resources.

Next, we strongly suggest supervisors ask employees to complete and return a self-assessment in advance of the annual performance evaluation. The self-assessment can be completed using the performance evaluation form. The feedback from employees helps supervisors understand the employee's perception of their position and performance, and provides employee insight into performance objectives and opportunities for training and development.

The supervisor may also consult others who also have knowledge of the employee's job performance because of interaction and collaboration. If the employee works closely with students, it would be appropriate to get student feedback on the employee. Likewise, if the employee is a supervisor, getting feedback from some of the employee's deputies will help inform the assessment of the supervisor key competencies. Peer staff members or external constituents with whom the employee works closely are also appropriate for soliciting feedback.

Ideally, the supervisor will have the employee's self-assessment, peer feedback, and supervisor evaluations (if appropriate) before they begin to write the annual performance evaluation. We recommend starting to prepare 3-4 weeks ahead of the evaluation to enable time for thoughtful responses.

## Instructions for Completing Performance Evaluation

The Staff Performance Evaluation form [Staff Performance Evaluation](#) includes several elements deemed critical to evaluating performance at Lawrence. The goal is to help supervisors coach and develop employees; recognize strengths, accomplishments and developmental areas; and plan for the year ahead. The supervisor completes the performance evaluation form after they receive the employee's self-assessment and any peer/deputy feedback. The evaluation form is intended to facilitate and memorialize the annual performance discussion. While the form is designed to be user-friendly with little instruction necessary, this section provides a brief overview of the different sections and components. The evaluation should be able to be written in 1-2 hours. You may contact Human Resources with any additional questions about this process.

### Section 1: Position Specific Competencies & Accountabilities

Section 1 allows the supervisor to customize the performance evaluation with position specific competencies and accountabilities. The supervisor should assess the top 3-5 key competencies for the employee's position, pulling from the employee's position description, and can include other key objectives or initiatives as assigned. The employee and supervisor should confirm these items ahead of the assessment to ensure both are reviewing the same criteria.

### Section 2: Supervisor Competencies

Section 2 is completed only for employees with direct reports. It includes competencies that are critical for supervisors including Managing Performance and Providing Leadership and Strategy. Direct reports could include other Lawrence employees, student employees, or interns. Again, getting feedback from 2-3 of the supervisor's direct reports will help inform the supervisor's assessment in this area.

### Section 3: Lawrence University Core Competencies

Section 3 covers Lawrence University's core competencies. Core competencies are often described as "how" one does a job, as opposed to "what" someone does. The core competencies are expected of all Lawrence employees and reflect upon our institutional values. For each competency, the supervisor should write a brief description of how the employee has demonstrated (or did not demonstrate) the competency. Specific examples from the supervisor's observation, the employee's self-assessment, or their peer feedback are helpful in making the evaluation less subjective. Where deemed important by the supervisor, they should also fill in the third column, indicating how the employee can continue to develop this competency in the coming year - attending a seminar, gaining a new experience, working on a task force, etc. Commentary on each competency and accountability is not required, but the supervisor should use their judgment on addressing those most critical for their area.

### Section 4: Additional Feedback/Overall Summary

In Section 4, the supervisor should provide an overall assessment of the employee's performance for the evaluation period, including successes in the past year, as well as areas for growth or development in the year ahead. It can also include additional feedback regarding an employee's job performance or goals not cited elsewhere in the evaluation. This is also a good point to provide commentary regarding professional development for the upcoming year. Are there skills the employee needs to improve? Are there new skills the employee needs to learn?

While it is important to discuss past performance, significant time should be spent discussing the future – more effective ways to accomplish essential job functions and goals, and continued professional development. If the evaluation form is to provide an accurate record of accomplishment of employee performance, changes in performance must be noted.

#### Section 5: Employee Comments

Section 5 provides optional space for an employee to include comments on their performance evaluation. Employees may wish to add comments to the form, may ask for their self-assessment (if completed separately) to be included with the final evaluation form, may attach a separate document with their comments, or may choose not to comment. Supervisors should provide employees with a reasonable amount of time to review and provide comments on the evaluation before being asked to sign it.

#### Section 6: Acknowledgements

Section 6 is where the employee and supervisor sign and date the evaluation, indicating that the performance evaluation discussion has taken place. By signing the evaluation form, the employee acknowledges having read and discussed the report with the supervisor. *It does not necessarily imply agreement with the supervisor's evaluation of the employee.* If an employee does not agree with any portion of the evaluation form, as completed by the supervisor, the employee may respond in Section 5. Should an employee refuse to sign the performance evaluation, the supervisor must document that fact on the evaluation before submitting to Human Resources.

### How to prepare a Self-Evaluation

During the annual performance evaluation process, each employee is asked to submit a self-evaluation. The self-evaluation has two parts: an assessment of how the employee did against their annual objectives, including key accomplishments, and examples of how the employee demonstrated the core and position specific competencies. We suggest using the [Performance Evaluation Form](#) for the self-assessment as well.

Each employee should have a set of 3-5 personal annual objectives for the year. These are different from the position description. The position description provides the day-to-day activities or accountabilities associated with the job, regardless of who is in the role. Annual objectives are specific activities that pertain to a particular person in the role and/or a particular point in time. Annual objectives can be recorded in Section 1 of the Performance Evaluation form. Here are some examples:

**Position Description**



Job Responsibilities/Accountabilities		Annual or Single Year Objectives
Conduct research and analyze data.	➔	Create and execute a Campus Climate Survey by May 1 <sup>st</sup> . Analyze results of the Campus Climate Survey and present findings and recommendations by September 1 <sup>st</sup> .
Track expenses and update the budget.	➔	Recommend an approach for reducing the budget by 5% by Jan. 1
Conduct new hire orientations.	➔	Hire three new custodians by September 1 <sup>st</sup> .

Ideally, annual objectives for the upcoming year are discussed at the annual performance evaluation discussion in late fall/early winter and finalized in January. In preparation for the annual performance evaluation, an employee should provide a brief update on how they either achieved or did not achieve the objective and brief rationale. Here are some examples:

Annual Objectives	Annual Objective Assessment
Draft the Life after Lawrence Final Report by May 1 <sup>st</sup> .	Final Report was completed by May 1 <sup>st</sup> and endorsed by Board of Trustees on June 1 <sup>st</sup> .
Recommend an approach for reducing the budget by 5% by Jan. 1	Identified cost savings of 10% by January 1 <sup>st</sup> of which 5% were ultimately taken during the budget process.
Hire three new custodians by September 1 <sup>st</sup> .	Due to unanticipated employee retirement, four new custodians were hired by September 1 <sup>st</sup> .

Sometimes annual objectives are deprioritized by a supervisor, or modified or adjusted. It is appropriate to mention that in the self-assessment. This is also the place to highlight any additional accomplishments during the evaluation period. The difference between an accomplishment and an objective is that objectives are typically planned, and may or may not have been accomplished. An accomplishment may be the completion of a specific objective, but may also be an achievement that

arose out of unexpected circumstances. The key here is to include milestones or specific one-time achievements, rather than a listing of day-to-day activities normally expected of the position.

The second part of the self-assessment is a brief assessment of how you feel you have demonstrated the core and position specific competencies. These are located in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Performance Evaluation form and should be aligned with your position description and be known to you up front at the beginning of the year. The key here is to provide a brief example or two of how you have demonstrated the competency. Here are some examples:

<b>Core or Job-Specific Competency</b>	<b>Self-Assessment</b>
Anticipates needs of constituent groups.	I identified the likelihood that snow removal would be necessary the morning of the Admissions event and secured extra custodial help for that morning.
Strives for continuous cultural learning through any available opportunity.	I attended all Diversity & Inclusion campus-wide training events and Cabaret.
Budget management	I reviewed the revenues and expenses on a monthly basis and ensured unanticipated expenses could be covered, resulting in the department coming in at budget.

With both the annual objective assessment and competency assessment, it is important to keep your comments brief and concise. The self-assessment should be a summary of your key accomplishments and skills from the past year. It should not be a lengthy list of every responsibility and task. Ideally, it should take no more than 1-2 hours to complete your self-assessment for the year.

### **Providing Supervisor Feedback**

The annual performance evaluation process is also an important time for employees to provide feedback on their supervisor. Each staff supervisor is assessed on a set of competencies that Lawrence has deemed important for strong employee management and development. When assessing the performance of your direct supervisor, please speak to your experiences and perspectives. Areas in which commentary could be provided, but is not limited to, include:

- Provides timely, constructive, and balanced feedback
- Holds staff members accountable
- Completes performance evaluations and discussions with honest and fair assessment
- Helps staff members to prioritize and manage workload
- Provides positive leadership, support, and direction
- Plans, controls, and delegates effectively
- Motivates others to perform at the highest level
- Sets a positive example for the team
- Identifies training and development opportunities

Similar to your own self-assessment, please keep comments specific and brief. Feedback can be provided via the [Supervisor Evaluation Form](#) or emailed to Human Resources. Results will be collected and provided to the supervisor's manager in a confidential format.

*Resources on the following pages are for those employees who manage people*

## Conducting the Annual Performance Evaluation

When the supervisor schedules the performance discussion with the employee to review the contents of the evaluation form, adequate meeting time (with privacy and without interruptions) should be planned. At the meeting, the supervisor will go over each section of the evaluation form, explaining the content described within the form in an effort to increase understanding between the supervisor and the employee regarding job performance. Performance evaluations are often one-sided, with the supervisor telling the employee what he/she thinks of the employees work. However, this process should be an exchange of information. Give the employee a chance to discuss issues of concern. Allow the employee to state his or her side of a situation by remaining objective and listening carefully to the employee's statements to determine validity without becoming defensive.

Performance discussions often provide excellent opportunities to discuss procedural and organizational issues that may affect employee performance. If improvement is needed in the employee's performance, be sure to explain to the employee what requirements are not being met, and remedial steps that need to be taken for improvement, and the consequences if he/she fails to improve. It may be helpful to provide the performance evaluation a couple days in advance of the meeting, so they have time to read and absorb it before the discussion.

Balancing the demands between work and home has become a juggling act for many employees. Some problems are small and easy to resolve and others just seem too overwhelming to handle alone. Sometimes those problems and concerns begin to affect other aspects of the employee's life; for example, jobs, family, or relationships. If an employee's work performance is declining or is not meeting expectations, referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may be appropriate. The EAP can assist the employee with a variety of issues, including stress management, parenting skills, traits of a healthy family, coping with grief and loss and balancing the demands of work and home. Employees can contact the EAP at 800-222-8590. No one outside the EAP will know they are using the service unless they tell someone. Anything they discuss will remain confidential.

The employee and supervisor must sign and date the performance evaluation completed by the supervisor. By signing the evaluation form, the employee acknowledges having read and discussed the report with the supervisor. *It does not necessarily imply agreement with the supervisor's evaluation of the employee.* If an employee does not agree with any portion of the evaluation form, as completed by the supervisor, the employee may respond in the comments section. Should an employee refuse to sign the performance evaluation, the supervisor must document that fact on the evaluation. The original, signed evaluation form should be submitted to Human Resources. A copy should be provided to the employee evaluated and the supervisor should retain a copy.

### Other Ways to Reward Employees besides Compensation

While most employees appreciate monetary incentives (merit increases, raises, etc.), there are many ways to reward employees that can be equally if not more impactful. Here are a few ideas for rewarding your employees outside of higher compensation:

- **Help them learn** – providing time off of work or monetary support to attend a seminar, conference or workshop can be motivating to employees who want to keep learning. You could also accomplish this by providing access to more senior employees for mentoring and job shadowing. Finally, providing an opportunity to lead an initiative or supervise student workers can help build leadership and supervisory skills.
- **Say thank you** – people want to know that their efforts and accomplishments are appreciated. The simple act of saying thank you or public recognition through awards and acknowledgement will make them feel like a valuable member of the team. This can be accomplished by a simple verbal conversation, an email, or recognition at the beginning of a staff meeting.
- **Empower them** – achievers want responsibility. Providing accountability for a new program or initiative, or even giving them the responsibility to make the decision on an important project can be very motivating.
- **Encourage fun** – everyone enjoys working in an environment that is lively, energetic and fun. Finding opportunities to celebrate accomplishments, or even birthdays or major life milestones, will help remove any drudgery associated with work. It can also help build team dynamics.
- **Help them grow** – does one of your employees have a career goal of moving to a new discipline? Or rising up in the current department? Help them build the skills and get the experiences they need to take the next step whether that be leading an initiative or serving on a task force.

## Under-performing employees

Managing an employee who is under-performing is one of the most difficult, but important, situations for a manager. Under-performing employees not only jeopardize their own security in the role, but also can have detrimental effects on the motivation of the rest of the organization. An under-performing employee will make it more difficult for an organization to achieve its objectives, requiring more time of the supervisor and other employees, and contributing to lower productivity. For these reasons, it is important to address under-performing employees in a fair, equitable, and timely manner. There are key steps to take when faced with an under-performing employee.

### **1. Ensure that the employee has a clear job description and annual objectives**

The first step in addressing an employee who is under-performing is to ensure they are clear on their day-to-day responsibilities and their annual objectives. A well-written, signed job description and annual objectives ensure that the employee is clear on what it is they are supposed to be doing.

### **2. Provide ongoing feedback**

Once the employee is in the role, it is important to provide ongoing feedback. For the under-performing employee, document any constructive feedback that you are providing. Documentation can simply be a word document including the date of the discussion and what was discussed. Be clear about the skills and competencies where you feel the employee is under-performing, and be open to unique ways for helping the employee improve (mentoring, training, seminars, etc.)

### **3. Complete Performance Evaluation**

If after a period of time (3-6 months), and after having been provided regular feedback, an employee is not demonstrating progress or improvement against the identified opportunity areas, a formal performance evaluation should be completed, outlining the key areas of under-performance. At this point, a supervisor can choose to go one of two paths:

- a. Performance Improvement Plan
- b. Continue Ongoing Feedback

If the supervisor deems that continued ongoing feedback is most appropriate, operating in that manner can continue until the employee either improves or more formal action is required. If more formal action is appropriate, the supervisor should develop a Performance Improvement Plan.

### **4. Performance Improvement Plan**

A Performance Improvement Plan is a formal document outlining the key areas that an employee is underperforming. It states the nature of the underperformance, the key actions required of the employee to improve their performance, and the frequency at which the employee and supervisor will meet to review progress. Additionally, it states what will happen if an employee does not improve their performance by a certain time, typically 30-90 days depending upon the severity of the under-performance and the importance of the position to the organization.

If you feel a Performance Improvement Plan is warranted, please contact your HR representative.

## Providing ongoing feedback to employees

Talking about performance throughout the year is a key step in managing employees effectively. It involves providing ongoing feedback and coaching by openly discussing an employee's strengths and weaknesses on a regular basis. If done correctly, nothing in the annual evaluation should be a surprise. It is a summation of what the employee has been hearing all along. Ongoing feedback works best when it is regular, specific, and provided in a non-judgmental fashion.

### Regular "In the moment"

Employees respond best to feedback when the feedback is provided in close time proximity to the behavior observed. Said another way, if you observe a positive or negative behavior by your deputy during a meeting, do not wait until next month to praise or provide constructive feedback. Find a private time after the meeting or the next day to share your feedback with the employee.

### Specific

Feedback should be specific to a behavior you have observed by the employee, and the employee's behavior should be linked to an outcome.

<b>INSTEAD OF</b>	<b>TRY</b>
<i>You have good communication skills.</i>	<i>Your strong listening skills really helped that angry student to calm down.</i>
<i>Do not shout at the students!</i>	<i>When you raised your voice at the student in the meeting yesterday, I felt that they began to close down.</i>
<i>You are a good supervisor.</i>	<i>I overheard you congratulating Bob on a good meeting. I think that recognition meant a lot to him.</i>

Providing specific feedback will help the employee link their behaviors to positive (or negative) outcomes and make it more likely they will repeat the positive behaviors and not repeat the negative behaviors. Look for positive outcomes and reinforce those. We learn most when someone pays attention to what is working within us and asks us to cultivate it intelligently.

### Non-judgmental

To make constructive feedback less personal, tell the employee how their behavior affected you, versus implying your judgment on the behavior. Examples:

- *"This is how that came across to me"*
- *"That is what that made me think"*
- *"Did you see what you did there?"*

The following chart lists recommended ways of providing feedback in a non-judgmental fashion.

## The Right Way to Help Colleagues Excel\*

INSTEAD OF	TRY
Can I give you some feedback?	Here is my reaction.
Good job!	Here are three things that really worked for me. What was going through your mind when you did them?
Here is what you should do.	Here is what I would do.
Here is where you need to improve.	Here is what worked best for me, and here is why.
That did not really work.	When you did x, I felt y or I did not get that.
You need to improve your communication skills.	Here is exactly where you started to lose me.
You need to be more responsive.	When I don't hear from you, I worry that we're not on the same page.
You lack strategic thinking.	I'm struggling to understand your plan.
You should do x [in response to a request for advice].	What do you feel you're struggling with, and what have you done in the past that's worked in a similar situation?

\*Harvard Business Review March-April 2019

### Introducing Change

Sometimes, in ongoing feedback discussions, you will need to communicate a need for change - a change in behavior, change in objectives, or change in organization. Change at work is often difficult for employees to manage as they tend to focus on what they are losing versus the new opportunities that change creates. To effectively execute change, you need to ensure that employees 1. Know what they have to do and 2. Are motivated to do the new work. To help address these two issues, there are four key questions to discuss:

1. What will the employee be doing?
2. What will the employee *not* be doing?
3. Whom will the employee be working with to get the job done?
4. How will the employee be measured?

Clarifying what the employee will be doing helps them to focus on the new priorities. Ensure any major new responsibilities are included in either the job description and/or annual performance objectives. It is equally important to discuss what the employee will not need to do anymore. This will help them understand how they will fit the new activities into their daily workload. If the employee will not be losing any responsibilities, ensure they understand the priority of the new responsibility relative to other job responsibilities. Additionally, it is helpful to clarify if there are any new people they will need to work with to accomplish the new responsibility. Finally, clarify how the employee will be measured relative to the new responsibility. Is it part of their new day-to-day job description and/or annual performance objectives that will be assessed as part of the annual performance evaluation? Is it a special one-time project that will have other recognition or remuneration? Measures are an important communication tool as they communicate to employees what is important. When employees understand what is important, it helps to drive motivation and engagement.

### Handling Disagreements

Sometimes during ongoing feedback discussions, an employee will disagree with a supervisor's assessment of *what* they have accomplished (or not accomplished) and/or *how* they have accomplished it (or not accomplished it). Having clear annual objectives, with measurement agreed upon beforehand, helps remove any subjectivity of measurables. Both you and the employee must feel that the data is objective and accurate. If there is a disagreement during the feedback discussion on the measurable goals, circle back to the annual objectives to understand what was unclear and work through the issue with the employee in a positive and productive manner.

If the disagreement is over a behavior, it is helpful to have examples of the behavior, and the implications of that behavior. As we've mentioned, keep the feedback focused on the employee's performance, and not the employee as a person. You are not evaluating the person but his or her performance in a fair and dispassionate way. The discussion should be future-oriented, focusing on plans for improvement. Expression of concern with past performance should be balanced with recognition of achievement, if overall performance is satisfactory.