

## SHRA Performance Appraisal Policy

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### GENERAL POLICY QUESTIONS

##### What are the most significant changes to the policy?

**Annual Cycle:** The start date of the annual performance cycle has moved to April 1 through March 31. This will be the same for all UNC institutions. Previously, each campus determined its own cycle.

**Performance plan (work plan):** The performance plan for each employee will have three to five individual goals defined by the supervisor and five institutional goals (plus one for supervisors) defined by the University.

**Rating Scales:** Goals on the annual performance appraisal and the final overall rating will move from a five-point scale to a three-point scale (Not Meeting, Meeting, and Exceeding Expectations).

**Written Comments:** The annual performance appraisal only requires an overall comment section rather than a separate comment section for each performance plan item. However, individual campuses may choose to require comments for each individual item.

**New Forms:** A new performance plan and appraisal form will be used for all SHRA employees. There are also optional EHRA non-faculty annual appraisals that mirror the content of the SHRA form. Campuses using an electronic format (e.g., PeopleAdmin) will have an equivalent format.

**Probationary Employees:** To align with State policy, probationary employees must receive quarterly performance reviews (recommended: July, October, January, April) in addition to the standard annual performance appraisal for the cycle ending March 31. These reviews do not require individual or overall ratings, just brief written comments.

##### Why are you changing the policy?

The State updated its policy for SHRA employees effective July 1, 2015. The University was allowed to modify the agency policy and to have a later implementation date for the program.

The new program is designed to:

- *Increase efficiency* by simplifying the form and standardizing language for evaluation criteria.

- *Increase consistency* by standardizing performance categories to be evaluated across all positions and helping supervisory teams be consistent in setting expectations and ratings.
- *Reset definition of Good level of work (Meets Business Needs)* campus-wide by standardizing expectations.
- *Align performance plans and position descriptions* by clarifying the purpose of each document and how they connect.
- *Promote honest and clear communication throughout* the process by providing campus-wide training and web-based help documents.

##### When is the effective date of the new policy?

The effective date is April 1, 2016, but the implementation schedule may vary across institutions. Some campuses will begin moving to the new structure this summer, other campuses may have a later start date. Most training opportunities on the new program for both supervisors and other employees will occur over the summer/fall months of 2016 for those campuses beginning with the April 2016 – March 2017 cycle.

For those campuses implementing in this performance cycle, employees may continue to function under the expectations in their existing work plans. New performance plans should be available to employees by October 1, 2016 and be in place for the last six months of the current performance cycle. Supervisors will evaluate employees on their work across the full performance cycle (April 1 to March 31).

##### Does this change affect EHRA non-faculty employees, too?

No, the policy change only applies to SHRA employees.

UNC General Administration does require a particular format for EHRA non-faculty annual performance reviews. Some campuses may have their own required or preferred format. UNC General Administration has provided optional EHRA non-faculty performance review forms that mirror the new SHRA form, and campuses may choose to use these if they wish.

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#### What training and resources are available to help me understand the policy and policy changes?

Training opportunities will begin at some UNC institutions over the summer months of 2016. The HR Office on your campus will provide additional information on training schedules.

Additional web-based resources, including short training modules and sample documents will be posted to the UNC General Administration website.

#### Is there anything I'm supposed to do differently right now?

Nothing else is required until your HR Office begins campus training. It is recommended that supervisors and other employees review the institutional goals included on the performance plan and discuss with their supervisor how these values interconnect with the job duties in their position descriptions. Supervisors also have been asked to review each employee's position description for accuracy during the 2016-2017 performance cycle.

#### What is the role in this process for an employee's second-level supervisor?

The second-level supervisor is expected to provide quality control to ensure that goals are being assigned appropriately, that performance expectations are consistent across employees, and that ratings are being assigned accurately and consistently across work units and across supervisors within the same organization.

The second-level supervisor is expected to review both the performance plan and the annual appraisal of each employee in their work unit before these documents are issued to employees.

#### Will this process be online?

Some campuses are developing or updating an online performance management program; others will continue to use a paper process with a new form. UNC General Administration is reviewing long-term options for a consistent electronic process across all UNC institutions.

#### PERFORMANCE PLAN & POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

#### What's the difference among job duties, job guides, institutional goals, individual goals, and development goals?

The **position description** defines what tasks (job duties) are included in the position. The supervisor writes the position description with consultation from Human Resources.

**Job guides** are policies, procedures and other resources that give guidance to employees on how to do perform their assigned duties.

The **performance plan** defines how well the employee needs to perform job duties on the position description in order to meet performance expectations. It also includes targeted individual goals for the employee.

The **institutional goals** in the performance plan define campus-wide performance expectations for all SHRA employees. These goals address a wide range of performance expectations found in all aspects of employee work product (quality, accuracy, timeliness, manner of delivery, policy compliance, etc.) as well as standard expectations for employee behavior and conduct. UNC General Administration sets the institutional goals for all SHRA employees.

The **individual goals** in the performance plan define the level of performance required for three to five critical job duties for the performance cycle. These goals may be specific to an individual employee or may be shared across employees in the work unit or broader organization. Goals may be based on recurring job duties or may be assignments unique to the current performance cycle. Individual goals should align with the overall mission and goals of the University and work unit. The supervisor sets the individual goals for each of their employees.

The **talent development goals** in the performance plan define activities for employee growth and/or define corrective actions for performance deficiencies. Development goals include training programs, committee work, conference presentations or attendance, or related activities that maintain, develop or broaden employee skills relevant to their current position, to their career path, or to their role in service to the work unit or the broader University community. The supervisor

sets the development goals in discussion with the employee.

#### **Should I be reviewing my employees' position descriptions?**

We are asking that supervisors review the current position descriptions of their employees during this performance cycle to ensure that the position description is consistent with the current job duties in each position. Supervisors should work with their HR Representatives to submit any update of duties or reclassification requests, as applicable. It is recommended that supervisors review position descriptions annually to ensure that they are accurate.

#### **Where do I get a copy of my employees' position descriptions?**

Supervisors should check with their department HR Representative to locate the current position description. Employees can request a copy of their position description through their supervisor.

#### **I used to have performance expectations that were connected to my position description – what happened to those? They aren't on the new performance plan.**

The job duty based work plans have been replaced with individual goals and institutional goals on the performance plan.

The campus-wide institutional goals are included in all employee performance plans to provide a common set of performance expectations for SHRA employees throughout the University. All of the job duties on the position description are rated using the institutional goals. However, instead of ratings being assigned by each job duty, the ratings are given to performance aspects across all job duties (for example, a rating for accountability across all job duties, a rating for policy compliance across all job duties, etc.).

Supervisors are also required to set three to five individual goals for each employee. The individual goals are key expectations based on the critical business needs of each position this performance cycle. They are not meant to cover the totality of the work that the employee performs but may cover some of the job duties on the position description.

Some items on old performance plans might be revised into individual goals or may already be consistent with some of the institutional goals on new performance plans. Other information on old performance plans can be converted to procedural documents or other job guides to provide employees additional clarification on performance expectations.

#### **I have a lot of useful information already in my performance plans for my employees. Am I supposed to throw this information away?**

No. There is no need to throw away useful information. Although many items from old performance plans may not show up on the new performance plans, the existing information can be used as a job guide to supplement to the performance plan, along with other resources that provide performance expectations, such as department policies and procedures (e.g., a department leave request procedure or attendance policy), research protocols, manuals, or other similar documents.

Throughout the performance cycle, the supervisor should provide additional clarification about performance expectations and record these, for example, through email or by adding the information to existing guides.

#### **If it isn't in my performance plan, can my supervisor require me to do it?**

Yes. The "Team-Oriented" institutional goal on the performance plan sets a standard expectation that all employees perform "additional duties when team members are absent, during times of increased workload, or as otherwise requested by management to meet business needs."

The performance plan has never been expected to include every possible performance expectation for employees. It would be impossible to spell out every aspect of performance (quality, quantity, timeliness, delivery, compliance, etc.) for each task performed by the employee.

The individual goals section of the performance plan defines only the most significant job expectations for the current performance cycle. The institutional goals section provides performance expectations

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required campus-wide for all aspects of an employee's work.

Most position descriptions include language that other duties may be assigned as needed, and supervisors are encouraged to include that language in each position description.

#### TYPES OF GOALS

##### What are institutional goals?

The University has established five institutional goals that appear in the performance plans of every SHRA employee. There is an additional institutional goal for supervisors regarding their supervisory responsibilities.

- *Expertise*
- *Accountability*
- *Customer-Oriented*
- *Team-Oriented*
- *Compliance & Integrity*
- *Supervision (for SHRA supervisors only)*

The supervisor will rate the employee's overall work product using the expectations listed for each of these goals.

##### How do institutional goals relate to job duties?

The institutional goals create University standards for work in all SHRA positions and provide the supervisor and employee a way to discuss performance expectations for all of the work included in the job duties.

Each job duty in the position description comes with performance expectations that are described in the institutional goals (for example, level of accuracy, quality of analysis, efficiency of process management, the impact of absenteeism, how interactions with others affect the work produced, adherence to policy and procedure, etc.). However, instead of ratings being given for each job duty, the ratings are given for each institutional goal across all job duties.

So, instead of receiving one rating for all aspects of Job Duty #1 (accuracy, efficiency, compliance and customer service) or each other job duty, employees are rated on their expertise (quality of work) for all

duties, then rated for their accountability (meeting deadlines, etc.) for all job duties, and so on.

##### What are individual goals?

The supervisor sets 3 to 5 individual goals for each employee for the performance cycle. These goals are not meant to address every aspect of the employee's work. Instead, these goals are meant to focus on 3 to 5 work assignments that are particularly important for this performance cycle.

Individual goals may be *critical-function* goals that highlight some of the most critical work needs in the employee's position. These are usually compliance-related (for example, annual research or budget reports).

Individual goals may be *project-oriented* goals that may be regular or one-time work that is particularly significant during this performance cycle to meet specific business needs (for example, implementing new software, completing a phase of a research project, reaching a fundraising goal, etc.).

Most individual goals should be *forward-focused* or *stretch* goals. That means that they should align with both the work unit's and the University's strategic goals and mission, if possible. For example, if the Chancellor sets an initiative for increased policy compliance on the campus, then supervisors might develop individual goals toward increasing policy knowledge and awareness in the work unit or goals to ensure that the work unit is in compliance, such as revising procedure guides or audits of files. If the individual goal is accomplished, then it should help the organization move forward in some way to make things more understandable, more efficient, less hectic, etc. to improve the work environment for employees, supervisors, and customers.

At the beginning of the performance cycle, supervisory teams will meet to discuss goal-setting for the new cycle. In some cases, all employees in a work unit or all employees in a particular position type may have the same individual goals.

For examples of individual goals, go to the online training site.

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#### **What happens if an individual goal is established for me at the beginning of the cycle but then goes away. Will I still be evaluated on it? Will it negatively affect my rating?**

It depends. Some individual goals may not be established until later into the cycle. Some may be for projects with a shorter timeframe rather than for the entire cycle.

An individual goal may end if: the work unit's priorities have shifted, so the goal is no longer required or critical; the work duties associated with the goal operationally have been assigned to another person or group; or, the employee's work performance is not meeting expectations, so the work has been assigned to another person.

If the reason for the goal ending is primarily the fault of the employee, then the goal should still be reflected in the employee's performance appraisal. If the reason for the goal ending was not primarily the fault of the employee, then the supervisor can choose either not to rate the goal or remove it (provided the employee has at least three rated goals remaining), replace it with a new goal, or rate only the work product that the employee was able to complete prior to the goal ending.

#### **What happens if I change jobs?**

When an employee changes job positions, the ending supervisor completes an off-cycle review and forwards it, along with all current performance management documents, to the new supervisor. The new supervisor can factor in the current progress of the employee during the performance cycle into the final overall rating.

If the supervisor changes during the cycle, the ending supervisor should complete an off-cycle review for the employee to provide to the new supervisor if it has been more than 60 days since the last evaluation of the employee.

#### **Are development goals required?**

It depends. The University recommends that each employee have at least one development goal each performance cycle. Each UNC campus may choose to require development activities each year for all of its employees. The supervisor determines with each

employee the appropriate development goal(s) for the cycle. Some departments or institutions may set development goal requirements for their employees.

However, supervisors are expected to set development goals to address performance deficiencies for employees who received any rating of Not Meeting Expectations on their performance appraisal.

### PERFORMANCE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

#### **When is the performance appraisal due?**

The annual performance appraisal is due within the first 60 calendar days following the end of the performance cycle. The end of the cycle is March 31, so annual appraisals must be signed and entered into the human resources system between April 1 and May 30.

#### **What are off-cycle reviews?**

Off-cycle reviews are documented check-ins between supervisors and employees that happen during the performance cycle. Supervisors also can conduct off-cycle reviews as often as they find necessary. There are several types of off-cycle reviews.

- *Interim reviews are completed near the middle of the cycle (October).*
- *Probationary reviews are completed quarterly (recommended July, October, January, April).*
- *Transfer reviews are completed at the time a supervisor/employee transfers to another position.*
- *Employee-requested reviews can be completed anytime during the cycle.*

The supervisor is expected to meet with the employee, review the employee's progress on the individual goals on the performance plan, and discuss how well the employee is meeting the expectations in the institutional goals. The supervisor documents the conversation (at least a paragraph summarizing the employee's performance so far in the cycle) on the SHRA appraisal form (or its electronic equivalent), and both the supervisor and employee initial the review (or its electronic equivalent).



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#### Do I have to do an interim review?

It depends on the situation. The supervisor must hold an interim review (generally in October) with employees who received any rating of Not Meeting Expectations on their last annual performance appraisal or if the employee has an active disciplinary action. Brief written comments are required on off-cycle reviews, but ratings are not.

Although interim reviews are not required for any other employees, supervisors can choose to hold interim reviews for other employees. In addition, the Chancellors of each UNC Institution (or the Chancellor's designee) may choose to require interim reviews for all of their employees.

#### Why do we have to do quarterly reviews with probationary employees?

State policy requires that quarterly reviews occur for all probationary employees. Supervisors use the off-cycle review section of the performance appraisal document (or its electronic equivalent) to complete probationary reviews.

The supervisor is not required to complete a full performance appraisal for these quarterly reviews, but is required to provide a brief summary of the status of the employee's performance. For consistency, it is recommended that supervisors perform these quarterly reviews in the same months each year (April, July, October, January) regardless of the actual start date of the employee. Shifting the quarterly review date does not change the actual 12-month expiration date of the probationary period.

The supervisor completes an annual performance appraisal for probationary employees, with an overall rating and written comments, in the same way as with SHRA career status employees.

#### I'd like more feedback from my supervisor. Can I request an interim or other off-cycle review?

Yes. Employees can request one off-cycle review per performance cycle. If it has been more than 60 days since the employee's last evaluation, then the supervisor must honor the request. Supervisors are encouraged to have regular individual check-in meetings with employees to discuss work issues and

to give other informal feedback to employees throughout the performance cycle.

#### I've done everything as required on my performance plan, so why am I not getting "Exceeding Expectations" on my performance ratings?

Individual goals and institutional goals are written at the "Meeting Expectations" level of performance. If employees perform their work most consistently at that level, then their ratings would be "Meeting Expectations."

Employees should discuss with their supervisors what level of performance would warrant a rating of "Exceeding Expectations." Employees can also review the "3-column" institutional goals document (available on the HR website) that describes institutional goals at the Not Meeting, Meeting, and Exceeding levels of performance.

**Example.** "Completing work by established deadlines" is considered meeting expectations. Exceeding expectations would mean that the employee is consistently completing assignments earlier than the deadline, usually at least several days or weeks earlier, depending on the job duty.

Employees should discuss with their supervisors what level of performance would result in ratings of *Exceeding Expectations* (or *Not Meeting Expectations*) so that they have some markers for achievement.

#### My supervisor said that they are not allowed to give out Exceeding Expectations, or at least, not as many anymore. Is that true?

No. Supervisors are charged with providing accurate and honest assessments of employee performance. The University does not have a quota system for the number of ratings allowed at each level.

Performance expectations may "get out of whack" over time due to changes in the job (budget, systems, technology, procedures, staffing levels, etc.) that in turn may change the level of performance required to meet the business need. What may have been a sufficient level of work previously may no longer be sufficient given the current business needs.

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At the beginning of each performance cycle, supervisory teams are expected to meet to discuss performance expectations based on current business needs to see if performance expectations have shifted over time. If so, supervisors should discuss with their employees early in the cycle what level of performance would result in meeting, exceeding or not meeting expectations for this cycle so that employees have time during the rest of the cycle to adjust to any new expectations.

At the end of each performance cycle, supervisory teams are expected to meet to discuss performance ratings to make sure that they are making consistent decisions on ratings.

An overall rating of Exceeding Expectations means that the employee is consistently exceeding performance expectations in most every aspect of their work.

Ratings for employees may change (higher or lower) from previous evaluations due to many factors:

- *The new individual goals and institutional goals may change how the supervisor views the employee performance or change how the supervisor is able to describe performance.*
- *The new individual goals and institutional goals may include aspects of employee work that had not been rated or emphasized previously.*
- *The supervisor may reassess the current business needs, which could result in shifts in performance expectations and possibly ratings.*

### **Do I have to sign the performance appraisal?**

Yes. Employees are required to sign the performance appraisal (or electronic equivalent) at the completion of the performance review session with their supervisor. If any changes to the appraisal result from the performance review session with the employee, then employees are required to sign the revised performance appraisal (or electronic equivalent) once it is provided to them.

The employee signature line on the performance appraisal includes a statement indicating: "I acknowledge that I have received this performance appraisal. I understand that my signature below does not necessarily imply agreement with the

ratings given or the comments included, and that if I choose, I may write a response to include with this appraisal document."

### **What are my options if I don't agree with the ratings I received on my evaluation?**

Employees are encouraged to discuss the ratings and comments with their supervisor either during the performance review session or shortly thereafter. The employee can make suggestions for changes and provide additional information that may be useful to the supervisor in deciding if any changes should be made.

Employees can attach a response to the appraisal document providing additional information that they believe is important to include with the appraisal in their personnel file. There is a box on the form (or electronic equivalent) to show that the employee is adding comments. There is no deadline for attaching a response, but normally, this should be completed within two weeks of the review session.

Employees should contact their campus HR office to discuss what other specific options are available.

The performance plan, off-cycle reviews, individual goal ratings, and written comments on the appraisal are not grievable.

Employees can file a grievance for a final overall rating of "Not Meeting Expectations" on the annual performance appraisal. See the University System SHRA Employee Grievance Policy for more information.

### **What if I do not receive a performance plan or annual appraisal?**

Employees who do not receive a performance plan or annual appraisal should first speak with their supervisor to resolve the issue. If this is unsuccessful, then the employee should contact their campus HR office for assistance.

Both the annual appraisal for the ending cycle and the performance plan for the new cycle are due each year between April 1 and May 30.