

**Guide to Effective  
Management Personnel Plan (MPP)  
Performance Evaluations**



**Compiled by Human Resources  
Siemens Hall, Room 211**

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## **MPP Performance Evaluation – Overview**

This guide was designed to assist evaluators of Management Personnel Plan (MPP) employees' performance. For management employees in particular, performance evaluations provide an opportunity to both illustrate and demonstrate how individual efforts contribute toward the accomplishment of programmatic and/or organizational goals and objectives. They also provide a framework for professional development and recognition of the quality and quantity of progress made toward the achievement of and overall commitment to the mission and goals of the University.

### **Successful Performance Management**

- Is an ongoing and continuous process involving interactive and open communication between the MPP evaluator and the MPP employee whose performance is being evaluated
- Fosters individual accountability for results and encourages increasingly higher levels of individual performance
- Provides benchmarks by which evaluators and MPP employees can measure accomplishments throughout the year
- Serves as a mechanism for ensuring the accomplishment of goals that are tied to the mission and success of our University

### **Well Written Performance Evaluations**

- Provide a focal point to measure individual progress and a tool for motivating achievement
- Are a tool for developing and communicating goals for the upcoming year and a framework for communicating and understanding changing expectations
- Provide recognition for work performance and individual accomplishments
- May be used as the basis for merit - based salary increases when these are available
- Provide an opportunity for the evaluator to mentor and coach an MPP employee to recognize opportunities for improvement and enhancing effectiveness

### **Frequency of Evaluation**

ALL MPP's must be evaluated at six months of service, one year of service and, thereafter, at least once a year as part of the annual evaluation process. (Section 42722 of Article 2.2 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations)

## MPP Performance Evaluation Process Steps

The following are the general steps in conducting evaluations. Please be careful to follow any specific timelines, guidelines and/or processes that apply within your Division.

- Step 1 Solicit input from the employee, by requesting the employee do a self-assessment, if desired. Provide the employee adequate time to prepare the input.
- Step 2 If requested, consider the input provided by the employee in preparing the performance evaluation. Additional information can be gathered from other employees on campus regarding the performance of an MPP employee and considered in preparing the performance evaluation.
- Step 3 Once a “draft” evaluation has been prepared using the *Management Personnel Plan Employee Performance Evaluation* form available on line, discuss it with the next higher level of management (if appropriate) and then make any changes as necessary.
- Step 4 Schedule a time to meet with the employee to discuss the evaluation.
- Step 5 Meet with the employee and discuss the evaluation. If discussion, results in any additional changes in the evaluation, make the agreed upon changes. When the evaluation is final, ask the employee to sign the evaluation. If an employee declines to sign the form, inform the employee that his/her signature does not indicate agreement with the content of the performance evaluation, only that he/she has received the evaluation. If the MPP employee still refuses to sign, indicate this to be the case in the section designated for the employee’s signature by writing “Employee reviewed the evaluation and refused to sign”. This statement should be initialed and dated by the evaluator.
- Step 8 Route the evaluation to the Vice President’s office for final review and signature.
- Step 9 When the final evaluation is received from the Vice President’s office; provide the employee with a copy of the final, signed evaluation.
- Step 10 Forward the original of the final evaluation to Human Resources to be placed in the employee’s official personnel file.

## Tips for Preparing Evaluations

During the year and prior to the performance evaluation meeting, the evaluator should Communicate, Document and Share, Review, and Solicit information concerning the employee's performance as described below:

**Communicate** - Regular communication, coaching, and feedback during the year will reduce or eliminate tension and anxiety about the performance evaluation on the part of both the evaluator and the MPP employee. Positive and negative feedback is much more effective when given in a timely manner. A MPP employee should not be surprised by any of the information contained in the performance evaluation since the evaluator should have previously discussed all performance related issues throughout the year.

**Document and Share** - During the review period, the evaluator should collect and record significant, job-related incidents that pertain to each MPP performance factor (See the *MPP Employee Performance* form) or performance goal and share these with the MPP employee at the time they occur. This provides an objective and timely basis for ongoing assessment. Documentation gathered should be accurate and specific, both positive and negative, including the context in which they occurred as well as the date they occurred. It may be helpful to distinguish between *events* and *perceptions*, each of which may be a helpful resource in understanding, improving, and recognizing the quality of an individual's performance. Events are behaviors and/ or results and are described through things that have been directly observed by you or are otherwise known to you. Perceptions may be your own or come to you from others in the workplace and may be evidenced in the form of written and/or verbal customer feedback. An example of an Event would be, "I observed you making an extra effort to make graduation go smoothly by encouraging your employees to participate and providing clear expectations of what they could do to present the best possible image of the University to parents and other visitors." An example of a Perception would be, "I have heard from some of the customers that you are not always as responsive in following-up with them as you could be – the perception is that you would rather focus on your own priorities rather than those of your customers."

**Review** - Periodic review of the position description and revision, as necessary, can help to eliminate misunderstandings between the evaluator and the MPP employee regarding job responsibilities and expectations. Position requirements and assignments should be clear to the MPP employee, and they may change. It is important that these changes are discussed with the employee and are documented on the Position Description form and provided to the employee for review and signature.

**Solicit** – To help reduce anxiety and create a positive environment for enhancing performance, the evaluator may ask the MPP employee to submit written input regarding his/her performance, including accomplishments relating to goals from the previous year and possible goals for the upcoming year. The MPP employee should be assured they are not being asked to write their own performance evaluation, rather they are simply being asked to provide their perspective and an opportunity to illustrate what progress was made toward the goals that were established at the beginning of the evaluation period.

## Common Rating Problems

The following common pitfalls in evaluating the performance of others have been identified:

**Lack of Clarity and Agreement in Standards** - The Position Description and the performance criteria should be available and clearly understood by the evaluator and the employee. Periodic review and discussion will overcome this issue.

**Insufficient Evidence** - It is nearly impossible to recall an entire year's worth of performance in several criteria for several employees from memory alone. Recording significant and critical incidents of both a positive and negative nature will provide the information needed to communicate the rationale for the rating(s).

**Excessive Strictness or Leniency** - The tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic may influence the incidents documented and the emphasis placed on them. Some evaluators say that "no one is perfect" and deliver very tough, strict evaluations. Others fear offending employees or feel that high ratings will motivate the employee and are overly positive in the review. A wide variety of documented incidents across all the criteria should provide an excellent base for ratings that are specific for each criterion.

**Halo Effect** - It is easy to allow the stellar performance in one or more criteria to influence the ratings in the other criteria. Evaluators should review each criterion on its own merit and have documentation to support each rating, to avoid this rating error.

**Horns Effect** - The opposite of Halo Effect, where an evaluator allows poor performance in one or more criteria to influence the ratings in the other criteria.

**Central Tendency** - Playing it safe and giving everyone a middle of the road rating also does everyone a disservice. Careful reading and consistent application of the criteria language and comparison to documented behaviors will help in giving objective ratings.

**Contrast** - Comparing one employee's performance to that of another instead of using objective performance standards and evaluating accomplishments in relation to the individual challenges and requirements of a particular position.

**Similar to Me** - Evaluators may tend to give employees who are perceived to be like them higher ratings than those who are not. Diversity factors come into play, such as age, sex, culture, and educational level. Evaluators should be aware of this possibility and focus on actual job performance and visible results.

**Recent Effect** - The performance evaluation rating should reflect the entire review period. A recent positive or negative event should not color the entire rating.

## Tips for Creating Goals

For management employees, it is especially important that goals be linked to the accomplishment of department/division goals and the overall mission and goals of the University. Ideally, the organizational planning, goal setting, and assessment that began at the highest levels of the organization permeate through divisional/departamental goals to become individual goals. In this way, every manager's performance is linked to the University's goals and successes.

- Established goals may be used as a benchmark to rate the employee's overall performance and performance on the performance factors that have been established for management employees as listed on the *MPP Employee Performance Evaluation* form.
- The number of goals established should be realistic for the period covered.
- Goals should be stated in such a way that progress toward their completion is measurable.
- Established goals should be relevant to the work performed and to the short-term and long-term priorities of the organization and should be the focal point of regular progress discussions during the upcoming review period.

The *SMART* model can be used to develop *SMART* goals. *SMART* goals are:

**S**pecific statements that allow a way to

**M**easure progress toward the goal. *SMART* goals are

**A**ggressive and are also realistically **A**chievable. *SMART* goals are linked to

and

**R**elevant to the work of the position, to department/ division & University goals. They are

**T**ime-bound, with dates set for achievement of the goals or progress toward the goals.

Example of a *SMART* goal:

“Develop and implement campus-wide procedures for the processing of requests. Finalize written procedures by May and provide training sessions June 1-August 30.”  
In addition to following the *SMART* model, effective goals focus on outcomes and results and may be used to measure performance on established MPP Performance Factors.

The following is an example relating to the *SMART* goal above:

<b>MPP Performance Factor</b>	<b>Possible Outcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conceptual Skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provided a comprehensive briefing on the purpose for and use of the new request process</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interpersonal Skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worked effectively with managers across campus to implement the new request process</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technical Skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Performed analysis and trouble shooting to implement the new request process</li></ul>

## Tips for Discussing Performance Evaluations

Being involved in performance discussions can be both a nervous and rewarding experience. Evaluators will want to provide encouragement and guidance, as well as clarify expectations for the coming year. It is important to be clear about the purpose of the discussion before beginning the conversation. The following tips may helpful:

**Utilize the Written Form as a Guide** - The evaluator should discuss areas in which the management employee has performed well along with areas in which improved performance may be possible. It is important to ensure the employee takes ownership of his/her performance and is committed to goals for the coming year. Similarly, the evaluator should be clear regarding what support he/she will provide to ensure the employee's success.

**Be Prepared** - It is important to schedule the time and place of the discussion well in advance of the discussion so that you will have ample opportunity to prepare. It is especially important to schedule adequate meeting time, to allow ample time for discussion without interruption. It is also important to conduct the discussions in a private setting where you will be able to talk openly without concern of being overheard. It is important to think about what you wish to discuss in advance so your discussion will stay on track. You may want to make a few notes before your meeting.

**Be Open and Receptive** - One of the goals of performance evaluation is to align goals and expectations with actual performance. For this to occur, it is important for the evaluator to communicate what is expected of the employee. This includes how accomplishments will be measured (i.e. quality, quantity, timeliness) and what factors have influenced performance (i.e. unexpected staffing decreases, new regulatory requirements). The annual evaluation is a global discussion of overall performance as it was evidenced during the year. Although there may have been specific areas of concern, generally conduct related issues such as a failure to follow a workplace rule (whether written or unwritten) would have been dealt with in the form of an individual communication that specifically addresses that particular incidence or problem behavior.

**Demonstrate Respect and Dignity** - It is important to demonstrate respect and dignity through maintaining confidentiality, by not sharing what you have discussed with others who do not have a need to know. Listening carefully, being careful to be perceptive beyond what is said, and seeking clarification, will demonstrate your interest in understanding what the other person is saying and how it can help you in your role as a supervisor and your role as an evaluator. Avoiding argument and recognizing individual perceptions and opinions will likely lead to a more productive discussion. It can be difficult to ascertain what is behind a particular reaction or perception if the individual is not provided the opportunity to formulate and express their thoughts openly. Sometimes an individual's resistance to assimilate constructive criticism can be due to his or her deep desire to do well and be recognized for what has been accomplished. It may be helpful to recognize the mutual goals of improving performance and focusing on opportunities for professional development. Be careful not to concentrate too closely on minor issues or to become too highly critical on any particular item unless that item is essential to the successful performance of the job.

## Tips for Providing Constructive Feedback

No matter how much preparation, documentation, and communication the evaluator has done, the performance evaluation discussion can be stressful. We tend to hear and remember negative statements, even if the overall rating is excellent. Thoughtful preparation for the conversation will help avoid dissatisfaction. Here are some guidelines to giving feedback that will help during the entire review period and especially during the discussion of the annual evaluation.

- Be honest. Demonstrate respect for the person without glossing over negative feedback or being vague.
- Prepare, even practice, difficult statements ahead of time.
- Make comments as descriptive as possible, not purely evaluative. For example, “I’ve observed you several times working with the clerical staff members and have noticed that you do not always take the time to understand and fully answer their concerns. It is important to treat all members of the university community with respect and understand and support their roles in accomplishing our mission” would be more effective than, “You don’t treat clerical staff members with respect.”
- Describe behaviors and actions, rather than global impressions. *Be specific.* Rather than, “I’m not very happy with the quality of your work” say, “We discussed revising the format and content of the quarterly activity report last June, yet the reports continue to be much the same.”
- Make specific suggestions, not general ones. Include both positive and negative observations, giving positive ones first. Frame negative observations as areas for improvement rather than criticisms. For example, instead of “You need to treat the staff members with more respect, you often treat them like they are just getting in the way” say, “I know that you are very committed to staying on task. This quality allows you to get a lot done during the day. However, I have noticed that the staff have questions and concerns that arise throughout the day and you are not always available to them. I’d like you to improve your skills as a manager in this regard. For instance, if you are not fully able to address a staff member’s concerns as they arise, let the person know that you are interested in fully understanding the issue but that you are not able to discuss it at that moment. Let them know when you will be available and schedule a firm to time to meet with them as soon as possible. You might also think about having a special staff meeting to address these kinds of situations so everyone will be clear on what to expect from each other. I would like you be as available to your staff as I am to you. Please come to me if you would like me to coach you in how to better address your staff’s concerns.”
- Maintain a pleasant expression and/eye contact with the employee. Avoiding eye contact could indicate discomfort, and be perceived as a sign of dishonesty, and distress. Appropriate amounts of direct eye contact convey confidence and sincerity.

- Maintain an open, somewhat informal posture; pay attention to body language, and send a nonverbal message of approachability.
- Beware of your own personal biases, attitudes, and beliefs. For example, an employee's personal appearance or ideologies may not be consistent the tastes or ideologies of the evaluator, but if they are completely unrelated to the employee's performance, these differences should not affect the evaluator's feedback on the position criteria.
- Be considerate of the receiver's feelings, readiness, trust level, tolerance limits, and self-esteem. Don't press on if emotions are strong. In difficult evaluation discussions or when ratings need improvement, it may be necessary to stop the discussion and reschedule it to clear the air and allow time for emotions to subside.