Kenyon College

Employee Performance Program

Guide for Supervisors

Introduction

The purpose of the Kenyon *Employee Performance Program* is to develop and sustain a strong employee community by providing professional development opportunities; a transparent and competitive compensation system; effective and meaningful review processes; and recognition of employee excellence and achievement. Performance management is ongoing and requires much more than one conversation each year. In order to facilitate the sharing of regular feedback, Kenyon provides an online method using Google Shared folders where supervisors and employees may record their work performance discussions on at least a quarterly basis. These conversations will provide the basis for a more robust review to occur every three years. The *Employee Performance Program* is intended to facilitate open channels of communication, and promote trust and cooperation in the workplace.

Check-In Conversations (Quarterly)

Check-In Conversations are an important way to confirm that regular feedback is being shared between the supervisor and employee. The Check-In Conversation should occur on at least a quarterly basis and the record of this conversation will be saved in the Google Shared folder. The Check-In Conversation form is designed to be user-friendly and record the frequent two-way conversations that take place between employees and supervisors. The record of these conversations does not have to follow any particular format. However, if the supervisor and the employee would prefer their Check-In Conversations to be structured, the Core Competencies, position-specific Essential Functions, and professional development suggestions from the Triennial Employee Performance Review form may be used to guide the Check-In Conversation. Please note the Check-In Conversation form saves automatically each time it's updated in the Google Shared folder. Accordingly, the history of these conversations is always accessible to the employee and the supervisor. An example of the Check-In Conversation form may be reviewed here: Check-In Conversation Form (Example).

Triennial Employee Performance Review (Every Three Years)

The Triennial Employee Performance Review will take place every three years and provides an opportunity for employees and supervisors to take a step away from the day-to-day work demands and have a focused discussion about the employee's performance, position, and role in the department. It is also another opportunity for the supervisor to hear valuable feedback from the employee. The Triennial Employee Performance Review form is intended to facilitate and document this discussion.

The Triennial Employee Performance Review form includes elements that are essential to reviewing performance at Kenyon. This process also helps supervisors to coach and develop employees, and plan for the years ahead in a way that is consistent with departmental priorities. Although the Employee Preparation for Triennial Review form is not mandatory, supervisors and employees may find it to be a useful tool in guiding Triennial Review conversations. Supervisors who find this form to be helpful in understanding the employee's perception of their position and performance should let the employee know their preference regarding the use of this form.

Prior to the Triennial Review meeting, Supervisors will complete the Triennial Review form. The completed form will be presented and discussed at the Triennial Review meeting. The supervisor will upload the final signed copy to the Google Shared folder. See EPP Google Shared Drive Instructions for help.

Employees will be eligible to earn a bonus or salary increase based on an examination of the quarterly Check-In conversations and completed Triennial Review by the supervisor and division head (Non-exempt employees are only eligible for a salary increase due to wage and hour regulations). Please refer to Appendix D at the end of this document for more information on the process for considering a bonus or salary increase after the Triennial Review.

The Office of Human Resources will send quarterly Check-In reminders as well as a notice to the supervisor when the Triennial Review is due for each employee. Triennial Reviews will begin with the 2020-2021 academic year. Triennial Reviews are scheduled according to the hire date of the employee. Please see this schedule to determine the Triennial Review year: Triennial Review Schedule Matrix.

The following provides a brief overview of the different sections and components of the Triennial Review form.

Triennial Employee Performance Review Form Components

1) Core Competencies

2) Position-Specific Essential Functions

3) Specific Objectives/Accomplishments/Goals/Overall Comments

4) Employee Comments

5) Signatures

Section 1: Core Competencies

Core competencies apply to every position at Kenyon College. Competencies are often described as "how" one does a job, as opposed to "what" someone does, although there may be some overlap. By way of example, being an effective communicator is a job requirement for the position of Writer, but we all are expected to communicate effectively and professionally in some way within our positions, whether it is with our colleagues; faculty, staff, or students we serve; our supervisors and direct reports; or the general public. Accordingly, effective communication is a Core Competency and is expected of Kenyon employees.

If the employee supervises other employees, please complete the Supervising Performance of Others section.

Section 2: Position-Specific Essential Functions

Position-specific essential functions are typically drawn from the employee position description. If the position description on file is not up to date and/or does not fully describe the current duties, an updated position description should be completed using the Kenyon College [Position Description Template](). For example, a position-specific essential function might be demonstrating technical knowledge in a particular field, decision making and judgment, organizational skills, attention to detail, strategic thinking and planning, etc.

The key to this section is for supervisors to have the main focus be on the top three to five areas that are critical for the position. Additional narrative may be provided in this section to address other functions of the position as necessary. Supervisors should be balanced and include critical position elements that employees are performing well, as well as including critical areas employees might need to improve or enhance.

Section 3: Specific Accomplishments; Goals; Professional Development; Overall Comments

Specific Goals, Accomplishments: This section is designed to capture and recognize specific accomplishments during the review period, as well as to note new goals or progress on any goals that were set/met/modified or adjusted in the three-year period. The key here is to include goals or specific one-time accomplishments rather than listing day-to-day activities normally expected of a position. For example, "overseeing and reconciling budget expenditures" is likely in the realm of day-to-day activities. Creating a new process for managing this activity is an example of an accomplishment.

Performance goals should be included as appropriate for the position. This may include a project to be accomplished within a specific timeframe that will advance departmental goals, such as a project to redesign a particular way something is done, or obtaining training and knowledge on a new software program the department is implementing. Use the ***SMART*** model for setting goals: goals should be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Based.** For additional help in this section, please refer to the Appendices A, B and C at the end of this document.

Professional Development: It is helpful to speak with the employee in advance of completing this section or, examine the Employee Preparation for Triennial Performance Review form if you’ve asked them to complete it. You should identify training and development opportunities or recommendations that will help the employee meet performance goals or that will enhance the employee's skills and competencies. Be sure to consider training and workshops that will benefit an employee as a member of the broader Kenyon community, such as seminars or workshops about diversity and inclusion and appreciating and valuing difference. Consider training that will help the employee explore other areas of professional development beyond the confines of the position description and that might help the employee advance their career at Kenyon. Consider also training and workshops that help with team building and personal effectiveness, including workshops that encourage work/life balance. The Office of Human Resources provides a list of training resources including courses in our learning management system which may be assigned online; as well as local and national seminars and workshops. These professional development resources are updated each week on the Office of Human Resources website Professional Development Opportunities. If you need additional assistance with locating a specific type of training, please contact the Office of Human Resources. Each division has financial resources designated for employee training purposes. If you are unsure about how much can be spent for training or professional development for your employee(s), please contact your division head for assistance.

Section 4: Employee Comments

The employee comment section is optional for the employee. Employees may wish to add comments to the form; may ask for their self-assessment or responses to the Employee Preparation for Triennial Performance Review form to be included with the final review form; may attach a separate document with their comments, or may choose not to comment.

Section 5: Signatures

The original copy of the Triennial Employee Performance Review form should be signed by the employee and supervisor; the department head, and the VP; then saved as a .PDF file and uploaded to the Google Shared folder. As the form notes, the employee's signature indicates only that it has been reviewed with the employee, and does not necessarily indicate their agreement with the review. Despite this assurance, there may be occasions where an employee will not sign the review. Should that occur, ask the employee to review the language below the signature line and give the employee time to rethink the decision not to sign. If the employee ultimately declines to sign the review, it should be noted on the form that the review was presented and discussed with the employee and the employee declined to sign.

Additional Resources for Supervisors

Appendix A: Common Rater Errors

Appendix B: Things to Consider when Setting Performance Goals

Appendix C: Tips for Giving and Receiving Feedback

Appendix D: Recommending a Bonus or Salary Increase after the Triennial Employee Performance Review

Forms

Check-In Conversation form (Example only. See individual employee/supervisor Google Shared folder for actual form to be used.)

Employee Preparation for Triennial Review

Position Description Template

Triennial Employee Performance Review form

Appendix A: Common Rater Errors

Rater errors are errors in judgment that occur in a systematic manner when an individual observes and evaluates or reviews another.

Personal perceptions and biases may influence how we review an individual's performance. What makes these errors so difficult to correct is that the observer is usually unaware that they are making them.

Key

When we understand the errors and how they occur, we are able to take steps to minimize them.

Consistency Errors

• Halo Effect – The tendency to make inappropriate generalizations from one aspect of a person's job performance. This is due to being influenced by one or more outstanding characteristics, either positive or negative.

• Leniency – The tendency to review all people as outstanding and to give inflated ratings rather than true assessments of performance.

• Central Tendency – The tendency to review every person as average regardless of differences in performance.

• Strictness – The tendency to rate all people at the low end of the scale and are overly critical of performance.

• Contrast Effect – The tendency for a rater to review a person relative to other individuals rather than on-the-job requirements.

• First Impression Error – The tendency for a supervisor to make an initial favorable or unfavorable judgment about someone, and then ignore subsequent information that does not support this impression.

• Similar-to-Me Effect – The tendency to more favorably judge those people perceived as similar to the leader.

Minimizing Rater Errors

Since rater errors can seriously undermine the value of the elements of the Employee Performance Program, it is important to work on avoiding them.

<u>Questions to Ask Yourself to Avoid Rater Errors:</u>

• Am I basing my rating on documentation of my observations of the employee's behavior, or am I making judgments based on my perceptions?

• Am I looking at each of this employee's competencies separately, or have I generalized about their performance?

• Have I looked at this employee's competencies over time, or have I generalized according to my initial perceptions of them?

• Have I recognized any biases I may have so I do not let them influence my judgments?

• Have I rated this employee on their actual behavior or have I rated them compared to other individuals?

Appendix B: Things to Consider when Setting Performance Goals

Performance goals enable employees to plan and organize their work in accordance with achieving predetermined results or outcomes. By setting and completing effective performance goals, employees are better able to:

- Develop job knowledge and skills that help them thrive in their work, take on additional responsibilities, or pursue their career aspirations;
- Support or advance the organization's vision, mission, values, principles, strategies, and goals;
- Meet core competencies expected of Kenyon employees;
- Successfully perform essential functions of position;
- Collaborate with colleagues with transparency and mutual understanding;
- Plan and implement successful projects and initiatives; and
- Remain resilient when roadblocks arise and learn from setbacks.

In the absence of clear performance goals, employees may experience difficulty in prioritizing their work and become less engaged. Teams or departments can face misunderstandings and conflict when goals are not clear. For both individuals and teams, the lack of effective goal setting may reduce productivity.

Goal-setting really pays off when employees discuss the status of goals with their supervisor on an ongoing and regular basis, and propose and make adjustments to remain on track toward completion. The quarterly Check-In process is an excellent time to discuss and record progress and/or adjustments of goals.

Effective goal-setting starts with an analysis of all aspects of the goal, including:

- Reasons for pursuing the goal;
- Intended results or outcomes and measures of success;
- Alignment with the organization's vision, mission, values, principles, strategies, and goals;
- Potential stakeholders or others that may be impacted;
- Resources or capabilities needed, wanted, and available; and
- Possible roadblocks that may arise along the way.

The following list of questions will help employees and supervisors conduct a thorough analysis of a goal being considered:

- What are the reasons for pursuing this goal now and why do these reasons matter?
- What specific results or outcomes are intended? What benefits are expected from achieving this goal and what are the potential consequences or costs of not doing so?
- How will success be determined? How will others know what has been accomplished?
- How does this goal align with, support, or advance the team, department, and/or institutional vision, mission, values, principles, strategies, and goals?
- When will the goal be achieved? Are there milestones that need to be met along the way?

- What resources are needed to accomplish this goal? What additional resources may be helpful? Are these resources available and at what cost? If any resources are not available, are there viable alternatives or will the goal need to be changed?
- What possible roadblocks could arise while pursuing this goal? What can be done now to prevent those roadblocks or address them if and when they arise?

The SMART model is a popular tool to assist with setting goals. As an acronym, it is easy to remember. Each letter in the word "SMART" represents a key element of a complete and actionable goal:

S – Specific: Is the goal explained with enough detail that it can be well understood by those involved in its completion and by any stakeholders?
M – Measurable: How will those involved in completing the goal know it has been accomplished and how will stakeholders determine its success?
A – Attainable: Is the goal attainable or feasible given the resources available?
R – Relevant: Does the goal align with, support, or advance the organization's vision, mission, values, principles, and strategies?
T – Time bound: Does the goal have a target date for completion?

To record and track the status of goals, we recommend employees and supervisors consider using the Development Planner and Tracker.

Dealing with Goal Roadblocks

Answering the following questions may help employees and supervisors work through goal roadblocks should they arise:

- What is the roadblock and how did it happen?
- What have you done already to overcome the roadblock? What have you not done?
- What can you realistically control or change?
- Do you need to adjust your goal?
- What additional resources or support will you need?
- If you are unable to make the progress you anticipated, what are the consequences and how do you know these consequences will actually happen?
- What have you decided to do next and when will you do it?

Appendix C: Tips for Giving and Receiving Feedback

Giving and receiving constructive feedback is a key management skill. The information provided below looks at how to commend and critique effectively.

What is feedback?

Feedback is an objective message about behavior or an activity, recognizing and reinforcing something well done or offering suggestions about how to do something better. It is not necessarily negative and is not always one way. It should never be an opportunity for a personal attack on someone’s character or personality.

It can be given:

- by supervisors to their direct reports
- by you to your own supervisor
- by you to your peers

It can help to improve:

- relationships
- work processes
- results
- awareness of the impact of your behavior on others.

It can be undertaken in a **formal** setting (Check-In Conversations or the Triennial Employee Performance Review) or **informal** setting (immediately following an activity or task completion.)

Tips for giving feedback

- Offer positive feedback (praise) in public and negative (corrective) feedback in private
- Unless it is informal feedback – usually when praising after an event - preparation is the key to effective feedback. See below.
- Feedback should be focused on:

    - **behavior** NOT personality
    - **evidence** NOT assumption
    - **description** NOT value judgments
    - **specifics** NOT generalities
    - **discussion** NOT telling
    - **information** NOT gossip

Preparing to give feedback

- **Gather evidence**: the facts and evidence to provide you with an objective view. Only use evidence that you know firsthand to be accurate, not something someone said about the person’s actions. Gather specific evidence based on 'who, what, how, where and when'.

- **Understand the effect** of the behavior or activity.

- **Focus on the behavior**, skills/knowledge or job performance – not on someone's personality.

- **Understand the big picture**: Do you know what is happening elsewhere (at work or home) for this person?

- **Anticipate the person's response.**

- **Consider what you wish to achieve**: Think about the short and long term.

- **Review after offering feedback**: What went well, what might you do differently next time, what did you learn from this? Did you agree on an action plan or goals? What was the impact of your feedback on the recipient?

Tools for giving and receiving constructive feedback

It may be helpful to think of the acronym **EEC** when giving feedback:

E = Evidence, example about the person's BEHAVIOR or ACTIONS not about their PERSONALITY

E = Effect of the behavior where you describe in non-emotional terms what specific effect the person's action had on you, people or a situation.

C = Change – where you help the person decide on the required changes. When the cause of negative feedback is inappropriate behavior, the person must want and learn how to change it. At this stage you should encourage them to generate their own solutions. Offer guidance and discuss options, but don't impose your ideas.

Two examples of negative and positive feedback using "EEC"

Giving negative feedback: corrective

EXAMPLE: "John, on the last two mornings you have arrived 15 minutes late for work."

EFFECT: "This has led to me and the rest of the team having to delay our early morning meeting and has thrown off our schedule for the rest of the day. I am extremely annoyed about this."

CHANGE NEEDED: "We need to discuss ways to ensure you will arrive at work on time in the future. What ideas do you have?"

Giving positive feedback: praise

EXAMPLE: "John, since I last spoke to you about your timekeeping, you have consistently arrived on time for work."

EFFECT: "This has meant that we have been able to start our meetings on time. I am very pleased about this. Keep it up." **NO CHANGE NEEDED**.

Receiving feedback

Everyone receives feedback from others from time to time. It is a key opportunity to learn from earlier events and actions - what went well or not so well - and is an important part of our development and an opportunity to learn.

Some tips on how to receive feedback:

- **Listen carefully** to what the other person is saying and to what they are NOT saying (their body language, the tone of their voice, the words they are using).
- **Repeat** back what the other person said to confirm you heard correctly.
- **Probe and clarify** what is said so that you are clear about what the other person really means.
- **Ask questions** to pin down specifics.
- **Try not to be defensive** – you can always question the basis of the evidence of what has been said and move the discussion back onto the objective rather than subjective matters.
- **Acknowledge the feedback** and thank the person. This does not mean that you are agreeing with it but that you are recognizing that the person has taken the time to give it to you.

It is easy to be defensive when someone gives you negative feedback, when someone complains or challenges you.

Rather than pausing to let the feedback or message sink in, people often rush in to contradict the speaker or justify your position. This reaction can weaken your ability to listen and can change a conversation into a conflict.

It may be helpful to think of the acronym **PAC** when receiving feedback:

P = demonstrate **patience**, pause

A = ask at least one question to clarify the situation

C = confirm that you have understood the speaker accurately

… then respond.

Using 'PAC' gives you time to understand what the issue is, to reflect on the feedback and to think through your response.

There are many training courses available on giving and receiving feedback. Please consult Development Opportunities section of the Human Resources website for more information.

Appendix D: Recommending a Bonus or Salary Increase after the Triennial Employee Performance Review

There will now be an opportunity for exempt employees to earn a bonus or salary increase after the Triennial Employee Performance Review. Non-exempt employees are only eligible for a salary increase due to wage and hour regulations. Supervisors will consider the performance of each employee over the preceding three years and discuss any recommendation for a bonus or salary increase with their division head. The recommendation should be based on objective performance-based criteria as much as possible; however, subjective judgments will also have to be made.

In general, a recommendation for a bonus or salary adjustment for employees would be based on the following or similar criteria:

- Rewarding the achievement of an objective in support of a strategic goal
- Rewarding extraordinarily meritorious service displayed by an employee
- Rewarding the successful completion of a special project directly related to the College's operational or strategic goals

The awarding of a bonus or salary increase after the Triennial Review is not an entitlement and is solely based on extraordinary performance during the preceding three-year period. The awarding of a bonus or salary increase should not be used for equity or market pay adjustments; is subject to the availability of funds and is determined at the sole discretion of the College. Such determinations will not be eligible for dispute resolution under the Complaint Resolution Process in the Staff Handbook.

Final bonus or salary increase decisions will be made by the division head and reviewed by Human Resources and Senior Staff prior to implementation.

Supervisors should not discuss bonus or salary increase recommendations with the employee during the Triennial Review. No discussion or notification to the employee should occur until after the supervisor has been informed by their division head that the recommendation has been approved.

Performance bonuses or salary increases awarded after the Triennial Review are separate from standard, across the board pay increases generally given to Kenyon employees each year.