



UW System Human Resources Employee Tips for Better Performance Conversations

Performance reviews are necessary to manage the organization's resources, improve employee engagement and achieve the organization's goals. When done right, your review can be a valuable tool for receiving constructive feedback and taking your career to the next level.

It's up to you to make the most of this evaluation. Here are some tips to help you optimize your review and get you on the right foot.

1. Familiarize yourself with the process.

Check with your supervisor to find out if anything has changed about the process since last year. If you're new to UWSA, speak to your supervisor or UW System HR to learn more about what is expected of you.

2. Conduct a self-assessment.

Set aside time to honestly evaluate your performance for the past year. Which goals did you meet, exceed or fall a little short on (and why)? Even top performers have room for improvement. What areas would you like to improve in the coming year? Be specific.

3. Document your achievements.

Where have you excelled? What challenges have you overcome? Have you taken on more responsibility or bigger projects during the last review period? Pull out your "me file" and review your list of contributions and accomplishments for the past year. If you haven't updated this document in a while, now is the time to do so.

4. Review last year's evaluation.

What has changed since the last time you were evaluated? Has your job, level of responsibility significantly changed? Do you have a new supervisor? Did you focus on building or improving a skill over the course of the year? Read through your previous evaluation and pay special attention to the comments left by your manager. How has this feedback influenced your work over the past year?

5. What are your career, learning and professional development objectives?

Where and what would you like to go/do/learn next in your career? Which skills do you need to build or experience do you need to gain to achieve those goals? How does your current position tie into these long-term plans? Use this information to guide the conversation around your professional development objectives for the next year.

6. Set goals for the discussion.

What are you looking to get out of this conversation? This is your opportunity to ask for direct feedback. If your focus has been on improving a particular skill, find out if your hard work is paying off.

7. Be prepared to initiate topics.

Don't expect your supervisor to do all the work. Bring a list of questions or topics you'd like to cover during the review meeting. Bring your "me file" to the review and be prepared to discuss how you've provided value to the organization throughout the year.

8. Prepare to hear some hard truths.

Enter this discussion with an open mind. Remember, constructive feedback is one of the greatest gifts your supervisor can ever provide – if you're willing to listen. You can't improve your performance if you don't know where you're currently falling short. Work with your manager to identify your performance goals and build a development plan.

9. Follow up.

Don't leave the meeting until you and your supervisor have discussed some actionable next steps. If you're assigned any follow-up items, make sure you understand what is due, by when and then complete them in a timely manner.

Source: Excerpted from "Ace your next performance review with these top tips by Amanda Augustine. The Ladders.com (2014)