

# Annual Employee Assessments



## Annual Employee Assessments at Pepperdine

- All employees will receive at least one performance assessment each year, per University policy.
- Annual employee assessments are due to Human Resources by July 31 each year.
- Supervisors are welcome to use any method of assessment for their employees.
- Feedback should be provided regularly to employees, and simply summarized on the annual assessment form.
- Both positive and negative feedback should have already been discussed with employees prior to reviewing the annual assessment.

## Purposes of Evaluation

<i>Development</i>	Evaluations may help determine which employees need more training, help the employee-supervisor counseling relationship, and encourage supervisors to observe behavior to help employees and organization.
<i>Motivation</i>	Evaluations may encourage initiative, develop a sense of responsibility, and stimulate efforts to perform better.
<i>Communications</i>	Evaluations may serve as a basis for ongoing discussion about job-related matters, as well as improve a supervisor-employee relationship.
<i>Legal Compliance</i>	Evaluations may serve as a legally defensible reason for promotions, transfers, rewards, and discharges.
<i>Fulfills a Promise</i>	Each staff member deserves regular, candid feedback towards growth and development.

## The Dirty Dozen

Be aware of potential issues when conducting performance assessments:

1. *Late Evaluation*: Late assessments can damage your credibility as a supervisor. Make evaluations a priority – set a deadline for completion and stick to it.
2. *Over-Evaluation*: Avoid inflating employees' performance or rating it too high. If an employee is truly a standard performer, do not describe the performance as "Meet Expectations."
3. *Timing Issues*: Addressing performance from prior years is counterproductive. Only assess a prior deficiency in performance if it remains a problem. Stay current.
4. *Inconsistency*: Make sure that assessment scores comport with comments and merit increases. Avoid mixed messages.
5. *"Like Me" Bias*: Avoid the human tendency to favor employees who are "like you." Embrace the diversity of your staff.
6. *Stereotyping*: Steer clear of making assumptions about staff based on perceptions of their abilities – even with good intentions.
7. *Labels*: Avoid generic labels and focus on specific areas of improvement. Rather than labeling an employee as having a "bad attitude", illustrate the problem and provide suggestions for change.
8. *Absolutes*: No one is "always" bad and "never" good. Provide feedback that reflects balance.
9. *Evaluating Intent*: Rather than assuming employees "don't try" or "don't care", focus on the results of their efforts.
10. *Referencing Protected Absences*: Make no comment about staff participation in legally protected activities.
11. *One-Sided Narrative*: The assessment meeting should be a conversation – not a monologue for the supervisor.
12. *Absence of Goals*: Set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) goals for the upcoming year.

# Feedback



## The Importance of Feedback

Part of the supervisor role is to provide continuous feedback to employees.

Feedback should be given regularly and summarized on the employee's annual performance assessment. Some of the many benefits to providing regular feedback include:

- Further develops outstanding performers
- Strengthens team effectiveness
- Mitigates employee relations issues
- Increases morale

## Tips for Providing Effective Feedback

1. *Choose the right moment.* Feedback generally is most useful when the person is ready to hear it, and as soon as possible after the event that triggers the feedback.
2. *Choose the right place.* A useful, though not universal, rule of thumb is to praise in public and criticize in private.
3. *Choose an appropriate communication style.* Know your own communication style, as well as that of the receiver. Determine what is most appropriate for the situation.
4. *State the purpose of the feedback and where it fits into the broader organizational goals.* Convey how the feedback (whether positive or negative) is related to the success of department or University goals.
5. *Focus on key performance issues, behavior the receiver can do something about, and only one or two issues at a time.* Frustration may be increased when the receiver is faced with too much or irrelevant information over which there is no control.
6. *Be specific rather than general.* Provide observable, recent examples of behavior, and avoid generalizations (such as "always" and "never").
7. *Be descriptive rather than evaluative.* Present data graphically if possible, and avoid evaluative language such as "bad" or "worse" that can create defensiveness.
8. *Provide positive feedback, not just criticism.* In the words of Spencer Johnson and Ken Blanchard, "Catch people doing something right."
9. *Describe your feelings, if appropriate.* It may be appropriate to share your feelings regarding the situation that demands feedback.
10. *Check that the receiver has understood the feedback as intended.* Ask the receiver to rephrase what he or she heard you say.
11. *Encourage a response.* Ask open-ended questions such as, "What do you think is going on?" or "How can I help?"
12. *Give time to react.* You may learn something new and be able to help the person find effective solutions.
13. *End on an encouraging note.* Discuss how the organization will benefit from efforts to change; show confidence in the receiver's abilities; and let the employee know you are available for questions and to discuss necessary resources.
14. *Follow-up on the feedback session.* Remember to notice and acknowledge an employee's change in behavior. Avoid holding onto previous perceptions of the employee after behavior has changed.

## References and Resources

Caproni, P. *Management Skills for Everyday Life: The Practical Coach*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 2005.  
Ivancevich, J. *Human Resource Management*. McGraw-Hill: Boston, 2007.

*Contact Human Resources for questions regarding feedback or performance assessments.*