

Performance Evaluation System Guide

Michigan State University Extension
helps people improve their lives
through an educational process that
applies knowledge to critical issues,
needs and opportunities.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Table of Contents

A Note about This Guide	2
Philosophy & Goals	2
Performance Planning	3
Reflections/Progress	3
Performance Review	4
Steps of the Performance Evaluation	5
Additional steps for “Partially Meets” or Does Not Meet” Expectations.....	7
Feedback of Supervisor’s Performance.....	10
Appeals Process.....	10

Performance Evaluation System for Academic Staff Members

A Note about This Guide

This publication is a guide. The Performance Evaluation System for Academic Staff Members is a tool that can be effective only when people communicate with one another to establish positive working relationships. This guide can help users focus on performance, but it cannot replace honesty, integrity and sincerity. These attributes come into play when Extension employees and supervisors communicate effectively with one another. This guide is intended to facilitate that interaction.

Philosophy & Goals of the Performance Development System

People are an organization's most important resource. For an organization to accomplish its mission, its employees must have a clear understanding of their roles, know how well they are performing those roles and be given opportunities to develop. These factors lead to positive outcomes for individuals, teams and the organization. Thus, it is important for an organization to have an effective system for assessing employee performance, communicating performance information to employees and providing on-going support.

The MSU Extension performance evaluation system assesses performance and fosters growth among MSU Extension employees. The appraisal itself is based on the goals established between the academic staff member and his/her Institute Director, and documented in the Michigan Planning and Reporting System (MiPRS). It also includes consideration of core competencies and performance behaviors. It is characterized by and its success depends on the principles of empowerment, professional development, interpersonal communication and teamwork, and the use of modern technology. Thus, the performance evaluation system serves both performance assessment and developmental purposes.

The performance evaluation system is an important tool in reaching Extension goals for human resource and organizational development. The system offers a framework for Extension employees and their supervisors to participate in open and on-going communication for individual employee assessment, planning, recognition and development. At the same time, it takes into account the broader concerns of developing educational programs, achieving effective group processes and enhancing team-building. Observation of staff members is one factor that allows supervisors to assist Extension employees in their professional development.

Because the continuous development of Extension employees to meet current and future clientele needs is critical to the health of Extension as an organization, this performance evaluation system cannot conclude with merely evaluating the employee's performance once each year. It is also not solely the task of the supervisor but a coordinated effort between employee and supervisor. This system relies on three steps: planning, reflection/progress and evaluation/review. By their very nature, they connote collegiality, collaboration and support. This is essential because the end product of the system is feedback that reinforces positive performance and supplies meaningful assistance when improvement is needed. When utilized properly, the performance evaluation system will naturally facilitate employee growth and development.

Performance Planning

Extension employees are integrally involved in developing plans for their work through team and individual planning. During the planning phase, supervisors and Extension employees agree on both team and individual performance efforts.

These team and individual work efforts are expressed in the MiPRS as part of the planning process. The basic elements of this plan include:

- proposed delivery methods,
- diversity efforts,
- planned evaluation processes

For those with supervisory responsibilities, additional, related initiatives should be incorporated into the work plan.

A draft of the employee's MiPRS plan is reviewed by the supervisor so the supervisor and employee can come to agreement about the plan and expectations. Expectations describe desired behaviors relevant to effectively accomplishing the objectives of MSU Extension.

Affirmative action and diversity efforts should be noted in objectives and methods. Purposeful efforts to promote diversity and pluralism should be evident throughout most elements of the plan and, in particular, within major initiatives.

The documentation of an employee's programmatic plan in MiPRS is important for several reasons:

- It represents an outline of the professional Extension employee's planned allocation of time and program resources.
- It provides a means to communicate with others about what the educator is doing. It may be a tool to inform advisory committees and Extension councils.
- It serves as a quarterly reference for the Extension employee and the supervisor to communicate regarding planned goals.
- It provides a record and benchmark for building on important educational programming and professional development goals.
- It reflects the Extension employee's commitment to diversity in all factors of educational programs.

The Extension employee consults with the supervisor to discuss carrying out the educational initiatives plan. The net product is a cooperatively designed package of significant educational programs and other programming efforts.

Reflections/Progress

The reflection/progress phase consists of ongoing documentation by the employee in MiPRS and seeking input from the Institute Director and District Coordinator to assess progress and give/receive coaching and feedback.

These interactions/discussions focus on the employee's progress in implementing the plan, support the supervisor can provide, changes needed and reinforcement for work activities done well.

Reporting in MiPRS is critical to the review by the Institute Director. Staff are expected to maintain accurate, timely reporting on a monthly basis. Institute Directors will provide guidance around changes or redirection that should be made to an individual's plan.

Performance Review

Early in the calendar year, the performance development summary for the previous calendar year is held. The end of the year MiPRS reporting is completed prior to this meeting.

As part of the annual evaluation, extension employees will consider and respond to key questions about their performance during the review period (self-evaluation). The Institute Directors and District Coordinators will independently review documentation in MiPRS as part of the overall evaluation process. The employee, Institute Director and District Coordinator will meet to discuss the employee's performance and record feedback on the evaluation form. Development opportunities are also documented at that time as "Opportunities for Development."

During the review phase, the supervisor and employee will complete the respective portions of the performance evaluation document. The form reflects the supervisor's judgment of the extent to which the employee met the goals set forth in the plan. A performance development plan is then established by the Extension employee and supervisor to address those items in the employee's performance that would benefit by further development and/or improvement.

The supervisor also determines whether the employee met work goals at one of the following levels:

- **Exceeds expectations**
Job effectiveness regularly exceeds performance expectations during the review period. Employee achieves results well beyond established criteria for work performance. The employee uses sound process in carrying out job functions and errors are rare or non-existent. Employee demonstrates exceptional performance in quantity and/or quality of work.
- **Meets expectations**
Job effectiveness meets and at times exceeds performance expectations during the review period. Generally, the employee achieves the expected results relative to the established criteria of work performance. Employee uses sound process in carrying out job functions. Occasions when expected results are not achieved are infrequent and utilized as learning experiences. Employee gives focused attention to suggestions for improvement in quantity and or quality of work.
- **Partially meets expectations**
Job effectiveness is uneven and generally below performance expectations during the review period. Employee produces some results that meet the stated criteria of work performance and some results are below performance expectations for the review period. Errors are occasional and sometimes repeated. Improvement in the quality and/or quantity of work in multiple areas of performance is necessary. A written performance plan to improve process and/or results is required.
- **Does not meet expectations**
Job effectiveness is consistently below performance expectations for the review period. Employee fails to produce results consistent with the established criteria for work performance. Process is flawed in carrying out job functions. One or all of these characteristics are present in performance. Substantial improvement is required in quantity and/or quality of work. A written performance plan to improve process and/or results is required.

Steps of the Performance Evaluation

1. Employee completes the “self-evaluation” questions and submits this to the Institute Director and District Coordinator by a given deadline.
2. The Institute Director and District Coordinator discuss the overall goals and objectives and the employee’s contribution at the local and organizational level. Written feedback is provided to the employee no less than one week prior to the performance review meeting. Specific methods to address developmental opportunities are jointly discussed and documented. When possible, a timeline will also be incorporated.

Changes may be made to the form based on the discussion and as agreed to by the Institute Director.

3. Signatures indicate that the appraisal meeting has been completed and does not imply concurrence with the evaluation. Upon completion of a discussion with the supervisor, if the employee has concern regarding the evaluation, an appeals process is available to the individual being evaluated.
4. Assuming budgetary allowance, salary increases are provided to all those who meet or exceed expectations.
5. For all individuals who partially meet or do not meet expectations on the performance review summary, the supervisor will write a development plan within 30 working days of the evaluative feedback.
6. At the time in the calendar year when the director is notified of available salary increase dollars, Institute Directors will develop proposed salary increases based on the performance summary.

Employees that receive a “partially meets expectations” or “does not meet expectations” rating will not receive merit increases or additional salary adjustments.

7. To provide consistency across the organization, the Institute Directors will meet individually with the MSUE Director and Associate Directors to discuss performance level of employees from their Institute and proposed merit pay increases.

Additional Steps for “Partially Meets” or “Does Not Meet” Expectations

The following procedure is implemented for an employee who receives a “partially meets” or “does not meet” performance rating. See Partially Meets notes following these steps for further information.

When an employee’s performance is rated as “partially meets” or “does not meet” expectations, when the time for Performance Summary appeal has elapsed or the director sustains a “does not meet” recommendation from a performance appraisal appeals committee, the employee’s immediate supervisor will develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) within 30 days. The PIP is at least three months in length.

1. To the extent possible, the immediate supervisor’s supervisor and the employee should participate in the PIP development. This plan includes a professional development goal, methods to be used for development, aspects of development for which the employee is responsible and those for which the supervisor is responsible, the involvement of others in aspects of development, a timeline and indicators of anticipated learning outcomes. A meeting of the employee and the immediate supervisor is held to finalize and sign the plan.

A PIP expresses a supervisor’s perception of needed performance improvements and does not require the employee’s agreement. Though it is better to have the employee’s agreement, the performance plan will proceed regardless.

2. The Institute Director or District Coordinator will meet periodically (weekly is the goal) with the employee to assess progress, provide feedback and provide support. Documentation of these meetings and discussions should be retained by the supervisor and may be provided to the employee.
3. The PIP can be constructed with or without a dismissal sanction. The dismissal sanction is applied only after discussion between the District Coordinator, Institute Director and the MSUE Human Resources manager.

If the PIP includes the dismissal sanction, the employee is informed at the beginning, in writing, and reminded throughout the plan, orally and in writing, that failure to meet the performance goals will result discipline, up to and including discharge.

If acceptable progress is not being made at any reasonable point during a PIP that does not contain the dismissal sanction language, the immediate supervisor, following consultation with his/her supervisor and the MSUE Human Resources manager, provides written communication to the employee, outlining specific lack of progress and noting that continued failure to achieve the performance goals will result in dismissal.

4. For **continuing employment** employees (those who have been granted continuing employment or are working toward continuing employment), at least four months written notice of dismissal is required. However, the PIP does not have to continue through this four-month period.

If an employee does not meet the performance goals of the PIP, the employee will be dismissed. If the four-month continuing employment notice is required, it will be given at this point.

5. For **fixed-term** employees, the same PIP process is applied. However, the employer is not obligated to extend an appointment to accommodate the PIP, nor is a fixed-term employee subject to the four-month continuing employment notice requirement.

If an employee does not meet the performance goals of the PIP, the employee’s fixed-term appointment will not be renewed at the end of his/her current fixed-term appointment.

6. If the employee meets the performance goals of the PIP, the employee returns to the annual cycle of PDS and appropriate documentation concerning successful improvement will be made. Although successful in the PIP, there is no raise associated with this step.

Partially Meets

The same performance improvement plan procedure is implemented for an employee who receives a “partially meets” performance rating. If at the end of the initial PIP period, the employee meets most but not all of the goals of the PIP, an additional PIP period may be established. This “extended” PIP must include written communication to the employee, outlining the specific lack of progress, and noting that continued failure to achieve the performance goals will result in dismissal.

There is no salary increase given when an employee receives a “partially meets” rating. With successful completion of the PIP, the employee returns to the annual PDS cycle and it is expected that the improvements made will be continuous and ongoing. Without a mostly successful completion (see above paragraph), the employee is notified of his/her dismissal. The four-month continuing employment notice must be given as part of this process, as appropriate (see item 4 above).

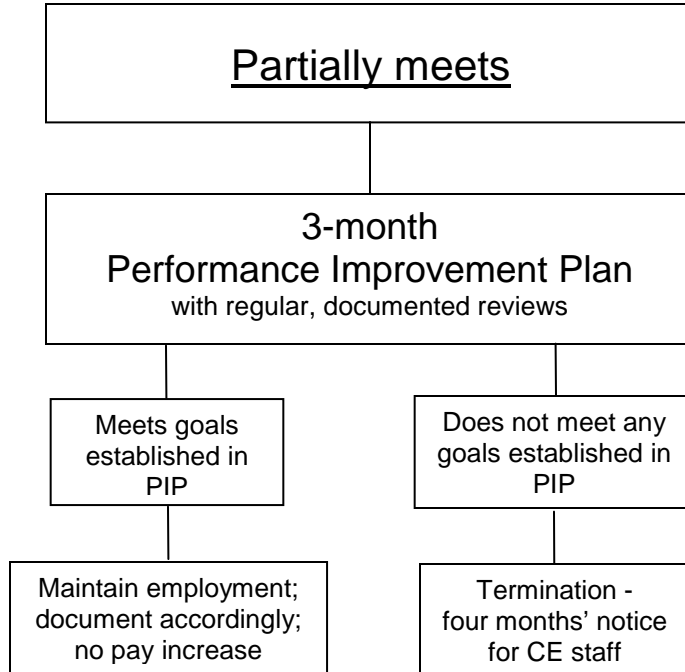
PIP Guide

It is anticipated that the majority of staff members will fall into the Meets Expectations category. The following charts illustrate the process for an employee who receives a rating of “partially meets expectations” or “does not meet expectations.” Please note that this chart is meant as a reference guide only and specific action taken should be based on the full PDS document and relevant MSUE policies.

Performance Level:

Partially meets

Additional support to improve performance at the “partially meets” rating level.

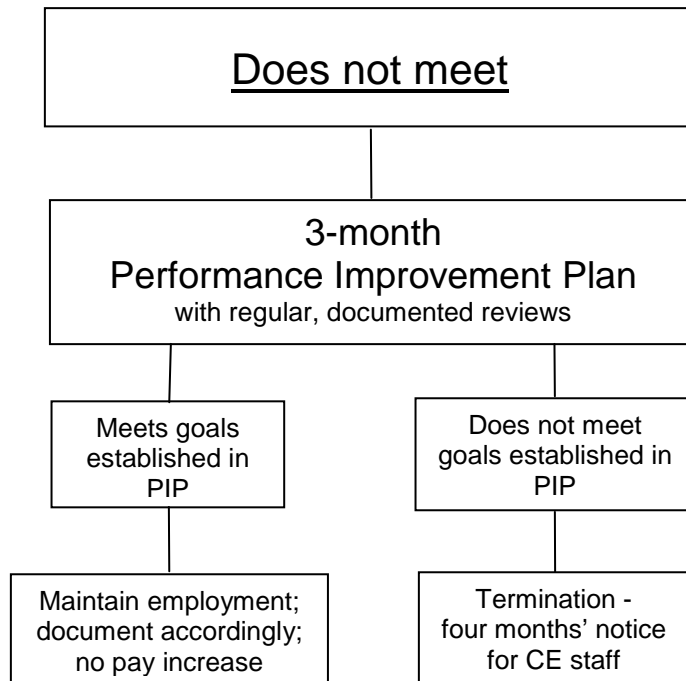


If, at the end of the initial PIP period established for “partially meets” performance rating, the employee meets most of the goals of the PIP, an additional PIP period may be established. Follow the schedule outlined for “Does Not Meet,” below.

Performance Level:

Does not meet

Additional support to improve performance at the “does not meet” rating level.



This chart is meant as a reference guide. Actions taken should be based on the details of the PDS document and relevant MSUE policies.

Feedback of Supervisor's Performance

At the time of the performance review all Extension employees are encouraged to provide feedback about their supervisor's performance. Employees can do this by completing the "Extension Supervisor Performance" form. The completed form will be submitted to the Directors' office.

"Appeals" Process

If an employee does not agree with the content of the performance development summary, s/he may attach a letter to that effect with the summary.

An appeals process is also available, should an Extension employee, who do not agree with the performance rating, wish to pursue consideration of a change in the rating. This process consists of two steps. First, the employee writes to the Institute Director and District Coordinator within 15 days of the signature date on the "Performance Review" form. The employee outlines, specifically, why she/he disagrees with the rating and the desired outcome. The employee, Institute Director and District Coordinator meet to discuss the employee's concern. Any changes must be noted on the summary form and detailed in writing within one week of this appeal.

If the first step does not resolve the issue to the employee's satisfaction, he or she may go to a second step by writing to the MSUE Human Resources manager within five business days of notification of the disposition of the first step. The MSUE Human Resources manager will notify the employee upon receipt of the concern and will consider the appeal, discuss with the Institute Director, District Coordinator and, if appropriate, the Director's Office and provide a response to the employee within five business days of receipt.