Instructions
Dartmouth College Annual Staff Performance Evaluation

Performance management is a year-round process, and requires much more than one conversation each year. The annual performance discussion is among the most important of those conversations. It provides an opportunity for employees and managers to step away from day-to-day work demands and have a focused discussion about the employee's performance, position, goals, and role in the department. It is also an opportunity for the manager to hear valuable feedback from the employee. The Annual Evaluation Form is intended to facilitate and memorialize the annual performance discussion. While the form is designed to be user-friendly with little instruction necessary, this document provides a brief overview of the different sections and components. You may contact the Learning and Development department within the Office of Human Resources or your Human Resources Consultant with any additional questions about this process at (603) 646-3411.

I.   Introduction

The form includes several elements essential to evaluating performance at Dartmouth. It is intended to help managers coach and develop employees; recognize strengths, accomplishments and developmental areas; and plan for the year ahead in a way that is consistent with departmental priorities. We strongly suggest managers ask employees to complete and return the Employee's Preparation for Evaluation in advance of the evaluation discussion meeting. Alternatively, the manager could ask the employee to be prepared to discuss those topics when they meet. This feedback from employees helps managers understand the employee's perception of their position and performance, and provides employee insight into performance goals and opportunities for learning and development. Additionally, this information will likely remind managers of milestones, training, and accomplishments that occurred in the previous year.

II.   Assessment Categories

There are five defined assessment categories for specific areas of accountability or competency: *Solid Performance Developing, Solid Performance, Solid Performance Exceeding, Needs Improvement, and Exceptional Performance*. **Dartmouth expects the vast majority of its employees will have performance that falls within the Solid Performance spectrum.** Dartmouth HR expanded the Solid Performance category based on community feedback and our observation that managers were more and more frequently choosing more than one assessment rating in a particular competency/accountability or as an overall assessment. The expanded categories should enable managers to select one assessment category for each competency/accountability area. "Needs Improvement" should be used where an employee's performance in a particular area is not meeting expectations for the role. "Exceptional" should be used to recognize areas of performance that truly set or exceed the highest standard for a particular competency or accountability, often beyond the expected position requirements. A few notes about using the assessment categories:

- Definitions: Read the definitions before assigning a category to ensure consistency and accuracy.

- Comments:
  - Use the comments section to give focused feedback on a particular area of competency or accountability to support or explain the assessment category selected.
  - Include positive examples and language to support an assessment of Solid Performance.
  - Include constructive language and specific examples in any areas where the employee needs to improve or further develop.
  - Explain where and how the employee exceeded expectations when Solid Performance – Exceeding is chosen.
  - Explain how the employee's performance meets the exceptional definition in any area where this category is chosen.
  - Managers may also elaborate on comments and provide further specifics in the narrative summary section. Managers who do so should provide some comments in the comments section, and note that the employee should also see the Summary of Performance in Section 4 for more detail.

III.   Form Components/Sections

1. Core Competencies
2. Position-Specific Competencies/Accountabilities
3. Objectives/Accomplishments – Past Year
4. Overall Summary of Performance (narrative) and Overall Assessment
5. Objectives or Goals – Year Ahead
6. Training and Professional Development
7. Employee Comments
8. Signatures

Section 1: Core Competencies

Core competencies apply to every position at Dartmouth. 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, effective communication is a position-specific competency for a position of Writer. At the same time, a core competency for all positions is to communicate effectively and professionally, whether that communication occurs with colleagues; with faculty, staff, or students we serve; with our supervisors and direct reports; with the general public, or in written or oral form.

Section 2: Position-Specific Competencies/Accountabilities

Position-specific competencies are typically drawn from the "skills and knowledge" section of a position description. Some examples of position-specific competencies include demonstrating technical knowledge in a particular field, decision-making and judgment, organizational skills, attention to detail, analytical skills, strategic thinking and planning, etc.

Position-specific accountabilities are typically drawn from the "key accountabilities" section of the position-description. Some examples include program support, operations, budget management, systems management, and data analysis and reporting. The competency and accountability categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, project management may be a key accountability for a particular position as well as a competency.

The key to this section is for managers to focus on the top three-to-five areas that are essential for the position. To ensure a balanced review, managers should select accountabilities/competencies in this section based on the position requirements and not the current incumbent's particular strengths or areas for development.

Section 2(a), Managerial Competencies, should be completed only for positions that have responsibility for managing the work of others. This section may be deleted on evaluations for non-supervisory positions, or noted as N/A.

Section 3: Specific Objectives/Accomplishments for Past Year

This section is designed to capture and recognize specific accomplishments during the evaluation period. Managers should also note progress on any goals that were set in the prior year's annual evaluation that may have been modified or adjusted. The difference between an objective and an accomplishment is that objectives are typically planned, and may or may not have been accomplished. An accomplishment may be the completion of a specific objective, but also may be an achievement that arose out of unexpected circumstances. The key here is to include milestones or specific one-time achievements rather than listing day-to-day activities normally expected of a position. For example, "conducted research and analyzed data" is likely in the realm of day-to-day activities or accountabilities. Co-authoring a paper based on that research for submission to a journal or other publication would be an accomplishment for that evaluation period.

Section 4: Summary of Performance and Overall Assessment

This section may be used in different ways depending on your evaluation style. Many managers like to include the majority of their comments and examples in a narrative style in this section. Others may write more detail in the individual comment sections and less in the summary. All boxes in the form are designed to expand as you type. Many employees report that the narrative portion of the evaluation, whether it is included in a longer summary or within individual sections, is the most meaningful to them. Please remember that it is just as important to provide specific details about where the employee's performance has excelled as it is to include details in areas where improvement might be needed.

The assigning of the **Overall Assessment** should be a reasoned and logical conclusion, taking into consideration and weighing the importance of the individual assessment categories in Sections 1 and 2, the employee's progress on goals and objectives, the level of the position, and the length of time an employee has been in a position or field and/or has had the opportunity to develop in particular areas. For example, you may have recently hired or promoted someone in a position who is still working to develop critical skills, and that learning curve was expected when you hired that person. A Solid Performance – Developing rating in a particular area may not be a cause for a concern for your overall assessment of that employee in the first year of employment. However, if the employee is in a more senior level position in which a certain level of knowledge, skill, proficiency and competence is expected to have already been obtained, a Needs Improvement or Solid Performance – Developing assessment in a critical area may have more weight in your overall determination. While it is not an exact science, the overall assessment should be fair and should make sense to the employee in light of the entire evaluation.

Section 5: Performance Objectives/Goals for Year Ahead

Performance objectives and/or goals should be included as appropriate for the position. Some examples include a project to be accomplished within a specific timeframe, redesigning a particular process within the department, or obtaining training and knowledge on a new software program. An objective may also be geared towards areas where an employee needs to build skills or where skill enhancement would benefit the employee and the department. Use the SMART model for setting goals and objectives: objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-based. More information on setting goals and a goal setting worksheet are available on the HR website.

Section 6: Learning and Professional Development

It is helpful to speak with the employee in advance of completing this section. Identify training and development opportunities or recommendations that will help the employee meet performance objectives or 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 Dartmouth 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 Dartmouth. Consider also training and workshops that help with team building and personal effectiveness, including workshops that encourage work/life balance. Visit the HR's Learning and Development website for current campus offerings and ideas.

Section 7: Employee Comments

The employee comment section is optional for the employee. Employees may wish to add comments to the form, may ask for their responses to the Employee's Preparation for Evaluation to be included with the final evaluation form, may attach a separate document with their comments, or may choose not to comment. Managers should provide employees with a reasonable amount of time to review and provide comments on the evaluation before being asked to sign it.

Section 8: Signatures

The original copy of the Annual Staff Performance Evaluation should be signed by the employee and manager, then the department head, then the VP or VP's designee, and then sent to the Office of Human Resources. Employees and managers should each retain a copy. As the form notes, the employee's signature indicates only that the evaluation has been received by the employee, and not necessarily the employee's agreement with the evaluation. Despite this language, there have been occasions where an employee may state they will not sign the evaluation. If that occurs, the manager should ask the employee to review the language below the signature line, and give the employee time to rethink the decision not to sign the form. If the employee still declines to sign the evaluation, the manager should inform the employee that the manager will note on the form that the review was discussed with and presented to the employee and the employee declined to sign it.

Finally, please remember that your Human Resources Consultant is available to assist managers and employees with any questions about the performance evaluation process.