UCSB Performance Management  
Best Practices

Effective Communication  
Clear and direct communication is the key element of effective performance management:

- Work frequently with your direct reports to manage performance and professional development. Create an ongoing dialogue about their performance and how individual job expectations link to your department’s mission and goals.
- Actively listen during your individual meetings with employees and be receptive to feedback.
- Listen to employee concerns with an open mind.
- Make sure you clearly communicate priorities and time frames at the start of any new project or assignment; if employees say they feel overloaded, clarify short-term and long-term objectives and formulate plans and strategies to help them get the work accomplished.
- Strive to be a high performing manager who leads by example and sets the tone for others to follow.
- Discuss the following with your employees:
  - Frequency of performance evaluations.
  - Other supervisors/managers who may contribute to the performance evaluation process.
  - Performance criteria covered during the review, including the UC Core Competencies if applicable.
  - How performance is measured and how to achieve various performance ratings.
  - If applicable, how annual goals and objectives are established.
  - The following Performance related forms:
    - Performance Evaluation form – including performance standards and ratings.
    - Employee Self-Assessment form.
    - Performance Goals and Objectives form, if applicable.
- Discuss the UC Core Competencies with staff. This includes:
  - The purpose and importance of the UC Core Competencies and how they apply to both university and department goals.
  - The competencies that are most important for their job.
  - How to align competencies with performance expectations and goals (for non-represented staff).
Training and improvement needed for key competency areas.

Setting Expectations
Ideally, you should meet individually with your direct reports periodically to share specific expectations about the employee performance, attendance and conduct. Key expectations may include:

- Critical tasks and performance indicators- what are the expected levels of quality, quantity, initiative or timeliness required in their role. Evaluate what key technical areas of expertise are expected and what training, if any, do they need to meet those expectations.
- Attendance – what are your expectations for time and attendance, what are the call-in procedures if an employee is late or absent and how should s/he request vacation or time-off for appointments?
- Interpersonal relationships and teamwork- what are your expectations for working as a team and with others outside your department? Be responsive to employee requests for assistance in resolving a conflict or concern.
- Your expectations related to the areas of responsibility for the job.
- Your expectations for effective demonstration of the UC Core Competencies that apply to the job.
- Your expectations for performance behaviors, work ethic, and customer service.
- Your expectations for effective use of resources, flexibility, and adaptability
- Your expectations for the successful completion of annual performance goals and objectives (if applicable).

Documenting Performance Goals & Objectives
Depending on the employee’s job, setting clear and achievable annual goals may be part of performance planning. Formalizing goals and objectives will map your own expectations to the employee’s perceptions of what their goals should be for the performance year. Formal and written goals and objectives will also provide a reminder of critical milestones throughout the performance year. Performance goals should be specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-resource bound. There are three types of goals that can be formalized:

- Job Performance Goals – These goals focus on the requirements of the job and should be mapped to department priorities.
- Performance Improvement Goals – These goals focus on correcting performance deficiencies.
- Developmental Goals- These goals focus on increasing an employee’s skill set and job related talent needs.
**Employee Engagement**

Employee Engagement is a key component for effective and sustained performance. Employee Engagement is a concept and an approach that addresses:

- An employee’s **commitment** to the University’s goals and values.
- The level of employee **motivation** to contribute to the success of the University.
- The employee’s personal **satisfaction** with the job.

All three factors of commitment, motivation, and satisfaction need to be fulfilled for a high level of engagement. As a manager or supervisor, you should keep an open dialogue with each employee about engagement starting with getting to know your employees. Think about the following questions:

- What are their interests?
- What are their career goals?
- What do they want to contribute?
- What motivates them?
- What obstacles can you remove to make them more successful?

If you don’t know, have conversations with them that are separate from the annual performance review. During the engagement conversation you can use the following topics to get a better understanding of your employee’s level of engagement and how it can be increased:

- Ensure that the campus and department goals are clear. Explain how the employee fits into the bigger picture to give them a clear purpose for their job.
- Create an environment of open dialogue by listening and asking questions about their level of satisfaction.
- Brainstorm together to resolve obstacles.
- If appropriate, discuss how the employee can have more autonomy at work such as more control over how a task gets completed.
- Recognize work well done.
- Discuss development needs and how the employee’s talents can be more effectively utilized at work.

**Feedback & Coaching**

Ongoing feedback and coaching are two very distinct things that should be part of year-round performance management. Feedback is an evaluative process that focuses on past performance and is provided to an employee with the goal of influencing future behavior. Coaching is a developmental process that should include a series of
conversations with an employee that focus on solutions to performance challenges and developmental needs. A good coach provides feedback then creates an environment for change and development.

Use the following tips when providing feedback:

- Feedback should be timely and given in an appropriate environment, especially if you are addressing poor performance.
- Feedback should focus on observed behavior.
- Feedback should be very specific and descriptive.
- Feedback should be objective.
- If appropriate, feedback should include information to make the employee aware of the impact their behavior has on others.
- Feedback for poor performance should include steps for improvement and expected outcomes.

Coaching should be incorporated when feedback alone does not resolve a performance issue or when a specific performance need is observed or expressed (such as a development need). Use the following tips when coaching:

- Schedule an initial meeting with the employee to discuss and establish a plan for improvement or development.
- Ask thought provoking questions that foster innovative thinking and dig deeper into issues and concerns.
- Brainstorm to problem-solve issues.
- Share your own experiences and provide suggestions for improvement.
- Remove roadblocks to success.
- Create and agree upon goals and objectives for performance improvement or development.
- Establish timelines.
- Have regular check-ins to discuss progress and provide feedback.

**Development Planning**

Development planning should be part of your year-round performance management cycle.

Individual Development Plan tool:
https://www.learningcenter.ucsb.edu/content/plan
Areas of employee development could be for specific skills, knowledge, and abilities that are needed to get the job done or for an employee’s career growth. Areas of development could include:

- Actions that support specific goals and objectives.
- Development of specific UC Core Competencies.
- Development of specific job skills or areas of responsibility.
- Actions to correct performance.
- Opportunities to enhance career growth.

Look for training and development opportunities that promote employee growth in skills, knowledge and abilities. In addition to our campus Career Management resources and Training programs, there are many other opportunities, some free, for professional development:

- On-the-job experience
- Special assignments and projects
- Job shadowing, job sharing and job rotation
- Conferences, seminars and workshops
- Webinars and online training classes
- Lynda.com
- In-house training classes
- Community College courses
- Professional or trade association memberships
- Self-study assignments, such as reading articles, journals or magazines
- Teaching others what you’ve learned thorough any of these methods

**Getting Help**

Managers are encouraged to seek out additional training in performance management topics.

**Employee & Labor Relations** assists administrators, managers & supervisors with general advice and consultation regarding best performance management practices, including:

- Advice regarding staff performance, attendance or conduct problems
- Union contracts, agreements & UC policy and procedures related to performance management.
- Assistance with investigations and coordination of formal grievance or complaint processes.