



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 4.2910
DIVISION: Strategy, Operations, and Finance
TITLE: Annual Performance Development Process
DATE: February 12th, 2024
Policy for: All Administrative and Staff Positions
Authorized by: Department of Human Resources

I. Purpose

As an institution of higher learning, Western Kentucky University (WKU) fosters a culture of continuous professional growth and development. This policy establishes a structured and supportive framework for assessing and enhancing the performance of administrators and staff through constructive feedback and regular check-ins that foster open communication, goal alignment, and development of skills and competencies, while ensuring effective and efficient execution of the University's strategic plan.

The annual appraisal serves as a structured review that consolidates insights gathered from regular check-ins and must be a fair and balanced assessment of the employee's performance for the specified evaluation period and include expectations for future performance.

II. Policy

Performance development is an on-going process that is foundational to enhancing open, honest, and timely communication between employees and supervisors. While supervisory feedback concerning individual performance is best communicated at the time of the specific observation, a formal, documented appraisal is required annually for all employees appointed to staff (i.e., non-faculty) and administrative positions (to include administrators with faculty rank such as the provost, associate provosts, assistant provosts, deans, and associate deans).

Through this process, supervisors will ensure that performance consistently meets expectations of the appointment, identify employees deserving of recognition, and determine needs for implementing performance improvement measures and/or other employment actions that may be necessary. Supervisors will also use the annual appraisal to identify training and/or professional development needs for specific employees and the department in general.

III. Objectives

In establishing this policy, Western Kentucky University seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- A. Provide employees with regular and constructive feedback on their performance to include areas in which the individual excels and/or areas in which they may need to improve.
- B. Ensure employees have a clear understanding of their duties, responsibilities, and professional conduct expectations, as well as how their individual contributions support the efforts of the institution.
- C. Identify professional development opportunities and training needs.
- D. Establish a basis for setting goals, defining expectations, and measuring outcomes.

IV. Procedure and General Provisions

- A. **Scope:** All regular, full-time staff and administrative employees shall be evaluated annually utilizing the process established by the University. Performance appraisals of individuals in part-time positions are encouraged but are optional based on departmental discretion.
- B. **Performance Appraisal Cycle:** The annual performance appraisal process will begin on July 1 of each fiscal year. At the beginning of this period, the supervisor will meet with each direct report to reflect on performance and achievements from the previous fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), establish goals and objectives for the current fiscal year, and review the individual's job description to ensure accuracy. An appraisal form will be completed that documents these items, and may consider feedback from check-ins throughout the year, as well as other performance data. The completed appraisals will be due no later than November 1st of the current fiscal year.
- C. **Responsibility of the Evaluator:** Supervisors are encouraged to establish guidelines and document progress by monitoring and scheduling regular check-ins with their employees throughout the year to promote engagement and encourage timely feedback. The formal appraisal document must be discussed with the employee, acknowledged electronically/signed by both the employee and supervisor, and forwarded to Human Resources for official purposes. If a performance improvement plan and/or disciplinary actions were issued during the performance review cycle, they shall be referenced in the annual appraisal document. Timely completion of performance appraisals at all levels is an integral function / responsibility of individuals who supervise staff. Failure to complete performance appraisals is a serious matter and may result in disciplinary or other personnel actions as outlined in WKU Policy 4.8501.
- D. **Responsibility of the Employee:** Employees are expected to actively participate in the appraisal process by participating in the self-reflection portion of the appraisal, to include providing insight concerning professional achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement. Employees shall collaborate with their supervisors in establishing relevant performance goals. Employees shall electronically acknowledge/sign and submit their annual appraisal in accordance with established procedures and timelines. The employee signature does not indicate agreement with appraisal results, but rather confirms that the supervisor has discussed and reviewed the appraisal with the employee. The appraisal will become part of the employee's official personnel file. If the employee disagrees with their overall appraisal, they may

provide a timely written response to the evaluator that may be added to their personnel file. An employee who has not been evaluated as outlined in this policy shall notify Human Resources who will take appropriate action to resolve the matter.

- E. **Recognition and Rewards:** Meritorious performance and contributions may be acknowledged through various forms of recognition and rewards, including but not limited to, salary adjustments, career advancement, and/or non-monetary recognition programs.
- F. **Disagreement:** Any employee who disagrees with their appraisal may file a written response to their immediate supervisor within ten (10) business days from the date of their acknowledgement/signature on the appraisal form.

V. Confidentiality

Annual performance appraisal results may be used by university officials in the context of hiring decisions, promotions, organizational changes, and other personnel matters. Performance appraisal documents, as maintained by the Department of Human Resources, may be made available to department/unit heads and other University officials as appropriate.

VI. Exclusions

1. Although goal setting is encouraged, annual performance appraisals are not required on individuals who were employed after July 1 of the current fiscal year.
2. Exceptions to this policy must be documented and approved by the senior divisional officer, and the Chief Human Resources Officer (or designee). A copy of the exception documentation shall be placed in the employee's official personnel file.
3. Executive Leadership and Administrative Officers reporting directly to the President may adhere to an alternate performance appraisal format and/or cycle, occurring no less than every two years. The President will evaluate the performance of each executive leader based on the established goals and job responsibilities.
4. Contracted employees or those entities with an established MOU may be exempt from this policy.
5. In the event of a dual reporting relationship, the majority funding source is responsible for completion of the formal performance appraisal, unless alternative arrangements are made. The secondary funding source should actively participate in providing feedback where appropriate.

VII. Related Policies

See also:

1.5032 Selection, Appointment, Evaluation and Reassignment of Deans and Associate Deans

1.5042 Selection, Appointment, and Reassignment of Department Chairs/
Directors