



2025 – 2026 Performance Planning & Evaluation Program

For Managers

Welcome and Introductions

- Name
- Department
- How many years at UMass Lowell?
- What makes an effective performance evaluation?
- How do you evaluate your employees' performance at such a challenging time?



2025 – 2026 Timeline

- January 1, 2026 – Add/Edit Previous Year Goals to Evaluation
- March 31, 2026 – Employee Self-Ratings Due
- May 15, 2026 – Manager Ratings Due
- May 20, 2026 – Manager Approval & Signature
- May 25, 2026 – Manager's Manager Approval & Signature
- May 26, 2026 – Manager/Employee Meet to Discuss Evaluation Due
- May 31, 2026 – Employee Signature Due

Critical Components in the Performance Management Process

- Job description
- Strategic Goals
- Self-Evaluation
- Personal and Developmental Goals (SMART)
- Performance Notes
- Performance Development Plan (PDP)

SMART Goals

- “Lack of clear expectations and goal setting accounts for 80% of performance problems.”



Performance Evaluations in a Changing Work Environment

Today's workplace demands a more thoughtful approach to performance reviews.

Let's explore what to do and avoid to support employee success and retention.

What to do



Be Flexible & Empathetic

- Adapt your evaluation style to reflect current challenges and realities.

Recognize Effort

- Acknowledge employees who are engaged and working hard – it boosts morale and retention.

What to Avoid



Don't Be Harsh with Struggling Employees

- Offer a time-bound grace period to help them adjust, especially in remote settings.

Don't Rely on Old Biases

- Use fresh data and seek input from colleagues to assess collaboration and communication.

Don't Default to "Business as Usual"

- Consider more frequent evaluations – quarterly or semi-annual reviews may be more effective now.

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Conducting Effective Performance Evaluation Meetings

Key Practices For Meaningful Conversations

Take Your Time

Allow enough time for a thoughtful and respectful discussion.

Encourage Dialogue

Create space for the employee to share their perspective.

Balance Feedback

Offer constructive insights while recognizing achievements.

Be Genuine with Praise

Provide meaningful, specific recognition where it's deserved.

Use Clear Examples

Support feedback with specific observations and outcomes.

Stay Objective and Professional

Keep emotions in check to maintain fairness and clarity.

Ensure Fair And Job-focused Evaluations



Focus on Job-Related Criteria

Base evaluations on performance, not personal or irrelevant factors.



Maintain Impartiality

Set aside personal feelings to ensure a fair and unbiased review.

Tips for Managing a Remote Workforce

Set Clear
Expectations

Define Core Hours

Manage Calendars Transparently

Support
Focused
Work

Establish Messaging Norms

Designate Meeting-Free Time

Keep Norms
Fresh

Review Regularly

Tips for Communicating Thoughtfully & Supporting Healthy Work Habits



Foster Clear and Respectful Communication

- Communicate Openly
 - Encourage transparency and ask for feedback – don't assume silence means agreement
- Use the Right Channels
 - Save sensitive conversations for video or in-person discussions, not messaging apps
- Follow Up Privately
 - Check in with quieter team members to ensure their voices are heard



Promote Work-Life Balance

- Set Healthy Boundaries
 - Let your team know you don't expect replies outside of work hours
- Clarify Urgency
 - If something is time sensitive, use direct communication like a text
- Model Balance
 - Encourage your team to disconnect and recharge outside of work

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Performance Development Plan

What is a Performance Development Plan?

- A planning tool that uses input from the supervisor and employee to identify knowledge areas and skills that the employee needs to acquire, or areas of performance that need to be strengthened.
- A development plan can be used in 3 ways:
 - To acquire a new skill, ability or know-how needed by the department
 - To strengthen performance or improve a skill that does not meet position requirements
 - To prepare for a future goal or aspiration

Preparing a Performance Development Plan

Set the Foundation

- **Consult with HR**
Align on goals and process before starting the plan.
- **Meet with the Employee**
Discuss the plan together, agree on check-in frequency and timeline.

Support Progress

- **Track and Discuss Progress**
Note improvements and areas needing attention.
- **Coach with Clarity**
Offer constructive feedback using specific examples.
- **Ask How You Can Help**
Show support and ask what the employee needs to succeed.

Sample Performance Development Plan (PDP)



Learning with Purpose

Performance Development Plan (PDP)

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| EMPLOYEE NAME: Michael Jordan | | |
| Job Title Project Coordinator | Department Athletics | Supervisor Phil Jackson |
| Last Appraisal Date May 21, 2014 | PDP Date May 26, 2014 | Follow Up PDP Review Date (within 60 days) August 26, 2014 |

Instructions: A Performance Development Plan (PDP) identifies and documents required performance improvement when an employee is new to a position, has new or increased responsibilities, or demonstrates current performance or behavior requiring improvement. The PDP includes a description of what behavior(s), performance, situation(s), or condition(s) need development; outlines what expected outcome(s) which must be met by the employee; and identifies resources required (if any) and a time frame within which performance improvement is expected.

| Area(s) for Development | |
|---|---|
| <p>Major Responsibilities: List the major responsibility(s) or behavior(s) requiring development in approximate order of importance Commitment and Accountability, independent work as project coordinator and ability to handle multiple tasks Flexibility, communication, and ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your need for a level of structure and inability to perform your role without specific direction and regular assistance (e.g. multiple emails, face-to-face communications). • Restructuring the assignment process without discussing it first • Changing the system without getting input from stakeholders. • Creating stressful work relationships with staff members to the point that supervisory responsibilities had to be taken away. | <p>Expected Outcome: Michael is expected take more initiative and to work independently as project coordinator. He is also expected to be sure that the work submitted does not need further edits and revisions. I also expect him to work flexibly and handle multiple tasks and priorities effectively without direct, daily supervision.</p> <p>Expectations (examples):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work independently, with less supervision and less structure. • Improve & managing work relationships (when making decisions offices/colleagues into consideration, interactions with others should be constructive not contentious) • Improve outreach and collaboration • Time management <p>Resources Needed: Additional training (HR/EOO WLD offerings – will work with HR directly on training)</p> <p>Time Frame: Three month follow up, bi-weekly check-in</p> |

SITUATION-BEHAVIOR-IMPACT FEEDBACK TOOL

PROVIDING CLEAR, SPECIFIC FEEDBACK



The graphic is a vertical card with a light blue background and a dark blue footer. It is divided into three sections, each with a large letter in a dark blue circle on the left. The top section is for 'SITUATION', the middle for 'BEHAVIOR', and the bottom for 'IMPACT'. Each section includes a title, a subtitle, and a list of bullet points. The footer contains the text 'Center for Creative Leadership' and a logo.

S

SITUATION ABOUT THE CONTEXT

- Describe the situation.
- Be specific. The goal is for the receiver to be clear about the time, place, and circumstances.

B

BEHAVIOR ABOUT THE FEEDBACK RECIPIENT

- Describe the observable behavior. Keep it simple and descriptive.
- Here's what I saw and / or heard — what a video recording would capture.
- Avoid judgment. Do not talk about what you assume the other was thinking, or the motivation for the behavior.

I

IMPACT ABOUT THE FEEDBACK GIVER, OTHERS, OR COLLECTIVE RESULTS

- Impact on you — what you thought and / or felt.
- Impact on others — how others reacted. Keep it factual.
- Impact on the results of the team, project, and / or organization.

Center for Creative Leadership 

- Situation: describe the “when” and “where” of the situation.
- Behavior: describe the other person’s behavior (but only mention the actions that you have observed yourself).
- Impact: communicate the impact of the person’s behavior on you, your team and the organization. (positive or constructive)
- Finally discuss what your team member needs to do to change this behavior in the future, or if their behavior has had a positive impact, explore how they can build on this.
- SBI and Situation-Behavior-Impact are trademarks of the Center for Creative Leadership

Key Points About Constructive Feedback

Prepare a discussion plan beforehand to be direct in delivering your message

- Avoid giving mixed messages: “yes, but” and “the sandwich method”
- Avoid “need to” phrases
- State observations, not interpretations
- Stay on track

Express concern and be sincere

Give the feedback privately, in person

Meet in person; don't send by chat or email

- Avoid group punishments and passive aggressive (or cowardly) group “friendly reminders”
- Involve ONLY those necessary; protect confidentiality to build trust

The GROW Model of Coaching

The GROW Model

Goal

Their 'B' - aims, desires, aspirations

Reality

Their 'A' – starting point, current position, story so far

Options

Ideas, possibilities, resources available

Will

Or way forward. The plan/next steps and their commitment to act



BiteSize Learning

- Way Forward: Determine a course of action to move forward. Create a plan. Identify points to check-in on progress and modify.
- Goal: Identify the real goal of the coaching session. The ideal. What needs to happen for the employee to be successful.
- Reality: Invite self-assessment. Where are you now, current situation. Test assumptions, mine for reality, discard irrelevant.
- Options/Obstacles: Invite solutions, offer suggestions. Identify possible obstacles.
- Source: Whitmore, John (2009). Coaching For Performance. Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing

STAY INTERVIEW



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- This conversation is the next step in your continued growth and development.
You make a meaningful difference, and I truly value your contributions.
- Let's explore what matters most to both of us:
 - What keeps you here?
 - What might tempt you to leave?
 - What energizes you most about your work?
 - Are we fully tapping into your talents?
 - What's getting in the way of your success?
 - How can I better support you?
- Please schedule a meeting with me within the next two weeks to discuss these questions—and anything else you'd like to share.

Remember

- Performance Management is about ongoing two-way communication.
- No surprises at the “official” annual evaluation
- We all have a responsibility in the process.
- The annual performance planning & evaluation is just one step in the ongoing process.

Thank You

If there are any further questions, please contact

AskHR at www.uml.edu/askhr.