

UT SOUTHWESTERN NEW PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FAQ'S

Summer, 2018

ADVANTAGES

- **FOCUS** - Aligns and clarifies job responsibilities and project and engagement goals to drive accountability and avoid wasted time and resources
- **ENGAGEMENT** – Strengthens the communication link between managers and their employees around meaningful priorities
- **FLEXIBILITY** – Allows the ability to tailor online appraisals by job family, because what may have relevance for an RN, may not for a Researcher
- **EFFICIENCY** – Replaces a manual, paper-based tool with a streamlined online process with increased visibility and tracking



Performance management plays an important role in clarifying expectations and improving outcomes, as productivity generally positively correlates with transparency and measurement. Of similar importance, the process encourages regular communication between managers and their employees, a key aspect of increased employee engagement, fewer employee relations issues, and improved retention.

A performance appraisal process and tool has been piloted with over 5,000 employees to dually address feedback from the UT Southwestern community regarding the process, and upgrade the current manual, paper-based tool. Input from the current pilot participants and key stakeholders will be gathered in FY19 to finalize a flexible online appraisal tool, currently slated for rollout in summer 2019.

Q: What is different about the new appraisal process?

A: The new process includes goal-setting to ensure employees focus on the appropriate priorities and job responsibilities, including employee engagement priorities (*Note: if an employee's role or **priorities** does not change year-over-year, this information can be easily populated from the previous year*). The process also includes a new clearly defined non-numerical rating system, definitions and professional development plan.

Q: What is the mid-year discussion, and is it time-consuming?

A: The mid-year discussion is a quick, verbal conversation that allows a manager to adjust an employee's goals if necessary, and provide feedback regarding whether the employee is "on-track" or "off-track" relative to expectations. *There is no written documentation necessary* if the employee is on-track.

Q: If our administrator assists with performance appraisals with their PIs for example, how will that differ with this process?

A: The online tool allows for an "indirect manager," such as an administrator, to be assigned to employees. This administrator will also have access to the online performance appraisal and can assist with the process as they do currently.

Q: Does this process require more time for a manager?

A: This process should not require additional time, unless a manager does not individually meet with their employees on a regular basis. This process may require additional brief meetings with staff, or a shift from time in team meetings to individual meetings, twice per year. This approach supports the UT Southwestern engagement survey finding, that the manager-employee direct relationship was the primary indicator driving engagement and retention. In addition, a process that encourages clear expectations and feedback upfront, often saves hours dealing with employee relations issues later.

Q: What is the initial feedback on the process and tool?

A: Feedback has been generally positive. Managers commonly report that because there is a change, it requires an adjustment; however, they feel the process is superior to the current approach, and useful for gaining input and accountability from employees. Similarly, while some employees may initially have apprehension committing to a certain goal or responsibility, they typically appreciate the clarity and focus in retrospect, as it draws an engagement link between their work and our mission.

Q: Why are we rolling this out now if the online tool does not launch until next year, and will I have input into the online tool?

A: In order to transparently communicate changes to employees regarding their performance ratings and form, it is best practice to communicate at the beginning of the performance period. Beginning in early FY19, input will be solicited from pilot participants, and other key stakeholders to build a flexible online tool that accommodates the particular needs of different job families, prior to expected rollout in 2019.

Q. Who is required to receive an appraisal?

A: All eligible employees are required to receive an appraisal. Eligible employees include all A&P, Classified, PRN's, and Principal Investigators who are hired on or before March 1st. Anyone hired after March 1st will receive the 90/180 probationary review. Dr. Podolsky is required to sign a letter each year attesting all eligible employees have received an appraisal. This signed letter is sent to the Board of Regents.

Q. Why are goals/responsibilities required in the appraisal process?

A: Having a clear understanding of the tasks, behaviors, and competencies expected of an employee in their role is vital to ensuring success, and the success of UT Southwestern. A conversation about goals/responsibilities and expectations for the year is an opportunity for the employee and supervisor to collaborate to define the standards of performance to be achieved.

Q: How do you set Goals/Responsibilities? The supervisor and employee work together to define performance goals that indicate successful completion of responsibilities associated with the job position, and measures of success. Goals/Responsibilities may be updated/revised if changes occur during the performance year. The SMART method can be utilized to develop goals.

A: Can you utilize the job description to write goals and measures of success? Yes, the job description provides detail about the task associated with the job, these can be written by making the job description task (SMART) specific, measurable, actionable/attainable relevant/realistic and timely/time-bound.

Q: What are Engagement goals?

A: Engagement has an effect on key performance indicators and is a key driver of performance, to increase employee engagement within UTSW engagement goals have been added. Engagement goals are ways in which employees can gain an additional connection to the UTSW mission. Examples consist of participation in wellness, UTSW community initiatives, fostering teamwork and collaboration with your department, etc. A listing of engagement goal examples, and activities can be found on the UTSW Performance Management Website and will assist you in developing engagement goals for the FY19 performance period <https://www.utsouthwestern.net/intranet/hr/admin/performance/>

Q: Are there any numerical ratings in the New Performance Appraisal process?

A: No, the process utilizes two non-numerical ratings: Goals/Responsibilities (What you Do) and Standards of Competencies (How you Do It). The ratings are listed below:

Goals/Responsibilities (“What You Do”)	Standards & Competencies (“How You Do It”)
Far Exceeds Expectations (FE)	Role Model Skills/Behavior (RM)
Exceeds Expectations (EE)	Strong Skills /Behavior (ST)
Meets Expectations (ME)	Solid Skills/Behavior (SO)
Needs Improvement (NI)	Needs Improvement Skills/Behavior (NI)
Unsatisfactory (U)	Unsatisfactory (U)

To view rating descriptions please click here: [The New Performance Process Rating Descriptions](#)

Q: Is “Meets Expectations” a mediocre rating or considered a C level rating?

A: No. The “Meets Expectations” rating is considered a commendable rating, and states that the individual is consistently meeting expectations at and at times possibly exceeding expectations and the quality of work overall was very good. This rating reflects achievement of critical annual Goals/ Responsibilities and consistent performance at a high level throughout the year.

Q: Will employees receive two separate ratings?

A: Yes, employees will receive one rating for Goals/Responsibilities (What You Do) and one rating for Standards & Competencies (How You Do IT). The two ratings are not combined in any way.

Q: Is it possible to compare the old and new appraisal ratings and descriptions?

A: There are no comparisons or similarities between the old rating descriptions and new rating descriptions.

Q: What happens if an employee receives an overall Performance Rating of “Unsatisfactory” in either Goals/Responsibilities or Standards of Competencies?

A: An overall performance rating of “Unsatisfactory” requires the supervisor to contact Employee Relations for consultation regarding improvement options.

Q: Is an employee eligible for transfer or promotion if an “Unsatisfactory” rating is received?

A: An employee who has received an unsatisfactory performance rating in any category on the employee’s most recent performance evaluation is not eligible for promotion or transfer.

Q: Does a rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” rating prevent the eligibility of merit?

A: An evaluation of “Needs Improvement” in either Goals/Responsibilities or Standards of Competencies may be eligible for a partial merit (at the discretion of the department). An Unsatisfactory rating in either Goals/Responsibilities or Standards of Competencies would not be eligible for merit. An evaluation of “Needs Improvement” or less in either Goals/Responsibilities or Standards of Competencies should be addressed in the Professional Development Plan section of the form.

Q: How do Goal/Responsibilities and Standards/Competency ratings translate into a merit increase?

A: Consistent with our previous philosophy, employees who receive higher ratings, earn higher merit increases than those with lower ratings. This allocation is possible without having numerical ratings. Managers will enter ratings into the comment sections of the merit tool (ex. ME, SO), and similar to past years, compensation will build a grid for senior leadership approval that allocates the merit increases such that higher ratings receive higher merits.

