

PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

Office Procedural Circular No. 66 Performance Management Program for Corporate Services staff

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Part 1—Introduction

Background and sources

1 OPC's Performance Management Program (*PMP*) reflects the APS Value mentioned in paragraph 10(1)(k) of the *Public Service Act 1999* ("the APS focuses on achieving results and managing performance").

2 Under subclause 2.12(1) of the *Public Service Commissioner's Directions 1999*, in upholding and promoting the APS Value mentioned in paragraph 10(1)(k) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, an Agency Head must put in place measures in the Agency directed at ensuring that:

- “(e) the Agency establishes a fair and open performance management system that:
- (i) covers all APS employees; and
 - (ii) guides salary movement and is linked to the Agency's organisational and business goals and the maintenance of the APS Values; and
 - (iii) provides each APS employee with a clear statement of performance expectations and an opportunity to comment on those expectations; and
- (f) the Agency conducts its performance management system in accordance with the objectives mentioned in paragraph (e).”

3 Under subclause 2.12(2) of the *Public Service Commissioner's Directions 1999*, in upholding the APS Value mentioned in paragraph 10(1)(k) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, an APS employee must facilitate, and participate in, such a performance management system.

34 The public service management framework is not prescriptive and provides agencies with the flexibility to adopt approaches to performance management that are tailored to best serve the diverse needs of the organisations that make up the APS.

Objectives of the program

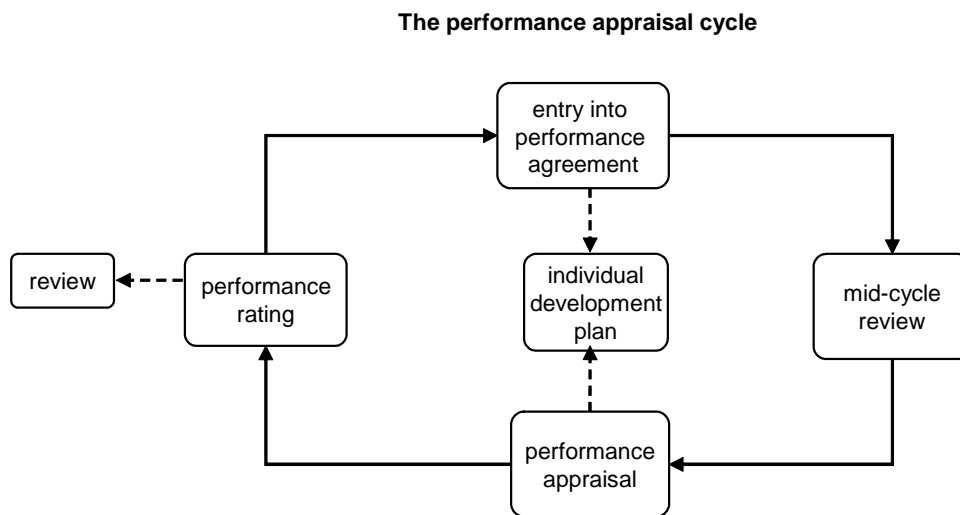
5 The PMP has the objectives of:

- improving the performance of individuals, teams and OPC with the purpose of enhancing the achievement of OPC's organisational objectives and outcomes for the government; and
- furthering the recognition, understanding and achievement of organisational objectives; and
- achieving organisational objectives in line with the APS Values.

6 These objectives will be furthered by:

- articulating the standards of work expected and the values and behaviours employees are expected to uphold in meeting their job requirements and in communicating and working with others;
- focussing efforts on the objectives and needs of the organisation;
- assisting employees to understand what work they do well, where their development needs are and how they can improve their performance.

Operation of the program



7 The PMP requires all Corporate Services (**CS**) staff to enter into performance agreements with their supervisors which also includes an individual development plan.

8 For the purposes of the PMP, the supervisor:

- for Executive Assistants (**EAs**) are the Service Centre supervisors;
- for IT staff is the IT Director; and
- for the remaining CS staff is the General Manager.

9 Appraisees will be appraised against a 3-point rating scale using generic performance standards (see Attachment) and office-specific descriptions of the “fully effective” standard in respect of the skills and activities covered by any standard performance targets.

10 Performance ratings will be given by the appraisee’s supervisor.

11 It is also fundamental to the program that it should augment rather than replace continuous feedback between supervisors and appraisees. The performance appraisal at the end of the cycle should involve no surprises for the appraisee or the supervisor. This cannot be guaranteed unless there has been on-going communication throughout the cycle.

12 The PMP also provides the basis for salary advancement for staff in terms of incremental progression through pay points within a classification. It does not provide a basis for progression to the next classification either in a broadband or otherwise.

Part 2—Performance agreements

Standard appraisal cycle and duration of agreements

13 The standard performance appraisal cycle is a year and begins on 1 July. An appraisal cycle begins on the date of commencing employment in OPC for new employees in their first year of employment in OPC.

14 The minimum duration for a performance appraisal cycle is 3 months.

15 For a CS staff member entering into a performance agreement between 1 April and 29 June in a year, the agreement will be expressed to run until the second 30 June after the date of the agreement (such agreements will run for a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 15 months).

16 In any other case, a performance agreement will be expressed to run until the first 30 June after the date of the agreement (such agreements will run for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months).

Contents of performance agreements

17 The standard performance agreement template to be used by CS staff is in Pers,SD—CS agreement/appraisal form. Note that the template includes provision for the appraisal report.

18 Within the limits set out below, the contents of performance agreements are to be negotiated between the signatories.

~~18~~¹⁹ Performance agreements are to contain, or refer to, qualitative performance standards setting out, for each target, a description of “fully effective” (rating 3) performance.

Executive Assistants

20 There are a number of standard competencies of the work of EAs. Therefore, it is appropriate to use a standard performance agreement, with standard targets and a standard description of “fully effective” performance, in relation to the standard competencies for EAs.

21 The standard EA performance agreement template is in Pers,SD, PMP—EA performance agreement/appraisal. It covers all the areas of work that is done by the EAs. Note that not all the targets will be included in an EA’s performance agreement. Only the targets applicable to the work of the individual EA will be included in an EA’s performance agreement.

~~21~~²² There is no requirement that weightings for targets should be the same for all EAs. However, the weightings assigned should be justifiable. Different weightings may arise

because of the different work tasks that may be done by EAs and the different workloads in Service Centres. Service Centre supervisors should discuss weightings with the General Manager if there is uncertainty about the appropriate weighting.

Other CS staff

23 The work tasks carried out by other CS staff differ from person to person. Therefore, it is not appropriate to use a standard performance agreement, with standard targets and performance standards, in relation to other CS staff. Individual targets and performance standards should be developed with and agreed by the appraisee's supervisor.

Input from people other than appraisee's supervisor

24 All CS performance agreements should state expressly whether input from people, other than the appraisee's supervisor, will be sought for the purposes of the appraisal.

Entering into performance agreements

Responsibility for entering into performance agreements

25 Appraisees are responsible for ensuring that they have entered into a performance agreement within 4 weeks after the start of the appraisal cycle. If an appraisee has been promoted or has been temporarily assigned higher duties for at least 3 months during the appraisal cycle, the appraisee will enter into a new performance agreement within 4 weeks after the promotion or higher duties comes into effect.

Signatories to performance agreements

26 The performance agreement is signed by both the appraisee and the appraisee's supervisor at the time the performance agreement is prepared.

27 All performance agreements will be reviewed and signed by the General Manager.

Change of supervisor

28 If there is a change of supervisor during the appraisal cycle, the appraisee's performance agreement should be discussed with the new supervisor and varied where appropriate. A variation may be considered necessary if the appraisee's work tasks has changed or there is a change in the weightings for targets. The most likely time this may be discussed or dealt with is when the mid-cycle review is being conducted (see Part 5).

29 If a variation is made to a performance agreement, the new supervisor and appraisee will need to sign the new agreement. The General Manager will also need to review and sign the new performance agreement.

30 If no changes are made to the performance agreement, the new supervisor should sign and date the agreement to acknowledge awareness of the content of the agreement.

3031 Supervisors should consult with the General Manager if there is uncertainty about the need for a variation to a performance agreement.

32 The new supervisor and the appraisee may seek feedback on the appraisee's performance from the former supervisor and other relevant staff. Such feedback may be useful to the new supervisor in discussions with the appraisee regarding variations to the appraisee's performance agreement, and when conducting the end of year appraisal. The feedback provided may be documented using the mid-cycle review report.

Paperwork

33 After a performance agreement has been signed by all the relevant signatories, copies should be kept by the appraisee and the appraisee's supervisor. The original will be forwarded to the General Manager.

3334 If, due to a variation, a new agreement is made during the year, the new agreement will be forwarded to the General Manager after copies have been made for the relevant signatories.

35 The General Manager will arrange secure storage of performance agreements within the Executive Service Centre. The Executive Service Centre will keep a record of performance agreements and will send reminders to CS staff who are yet to finalise their performance agreement.

3536 All hard copies of performance agreements will be destroyed in accordance with the minimum requirements set out by the National Archives of Australia in the Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (AFDA) (AFDA authorises destruction of performance agreements and appraisal reports 2 years after agreements are superseded).

Part 3—Individual Development Plans

37 The standard individual development plan (*IDP*) template to be used by CS staff is in Pers, SD—CS individual development plan

Entering into Individual Development Plans

38 An IDP provides the link between current capabilities and the expected level of performance. An IDP is a key tool for supervisors to provide feedback on current skills and for identifying ways to maintain and improve skills. An IDP should not be used as a “shopping list” of courses.

3839 When the first performance agreement is being prepared, and at each appraisal interview, the appraisee's supervisor and the appraisee should discuss the appraisee's development needs in relation to appropriate competencies. This will provide the basis for an IDP for the appraisee.

40 The appraisee should also be given an opportunity to raise career planning issues.

41 As a result of this discussion, an IDP should be prepared and attached to the signed performance agreement.

Signatories to Individual Development Plans

42 An IDP is signed by both the appraisee and the appraisee's supervisor at the time the performance agreement and IDP are prepared. If there is a change of supervisor during the appraisal cycle, the appraisee's IDP should be discussed with the new supervisor and varied where appropriate.

43 When developing an IDP, the appraisee and supervisor may consult with the General Manager regarding development needs and opportunities, and the availability of suitable development opportunities such as courses.

Paperwork

44 After an IDP has been signed by all the relevant signatories, copies should be made for the appraisee and the appraisee's supervisor. The original will be forwarded with the signed performance agreement to the General Manager.

45 If an IDP is varied during the year, the new IDP should be forwarded to the General Manager after copies have been made for the relevant signatories.

[4546](#) The General Manager will arrange secure storage of IDPs, with performance agreements, within the Executive Service Centre.

47 All hard copies of IDPs will be destroyed in accordance with the minimum requirements set out by the National Archives of Australia in AFDA (AFDA authorises destruction of performance agreements and appraisal reports 2 years after agreements are superseded).

Part 4—Performance appraisal

48 Documentation of appraisals is provided for in appraisees' performance agreements. See template at Pers, SD—CS performance agreement/appraisal.

The appraisal interviews

49 The appraisal interview is a formal interview between the appraisee and the appraisee's supervisor.

50 The appraisee's supervisor at the end of the appraisal cycle will be responsible for conducting the appraisal interview (where there has been a change of supervisor late in the appraisal period, the current supervisor, the former supervisor and the appraisee may agree that the former supervisor conduct the appraisal). The supervisor should seek input and assistance from the appraisee's previous supervisors during the appraisal cycle, where appropriate.

51 The following matters should be discussed during the appraisal interview:

- The appraisee's performance during the appraisal cycle, by reference to the targets and standards covered by the agreement. The appraisee's performance should be separately addressed against each target.

- The appropriateness of the agreement as the basis for the appraisal, having regard to the events of the appraisal cycle.
- How well the appraisee's training and development needs were met, and what those needs are for the next appraisal cycle (for inclusion in the next agreement).
- The appropriateness of the supervision and training provided to the appraisee.

52 When assessing the appraisee's performance by reference to the targets and standards covered by the agreement, the appraiser will have regard to the APS values.

Timing

53 The appraisal interview should take place 4 weeks before or after the date of expiry of the agreement except in special circumstances. Where the appraisal interview will not be held within this period, the supervisor must speak to FPC.

Notice

54 The appraisee's supervisor at the end of the appraisal cycle is responsible for arranging the appraisal interview. He or she should give the appraisee at least 3 working days' notice of the interview.

Departing staff

55 Staff leaving OPC, or starting an external placement or a period of leave that is expected to last at least 3 months, should where possible ensure that they are appraised before departure. In general, performance agreements will lapse on departure and new agreements will need to be arranged by returning staff.

56 Where an employee is undertaking a placement outside OPC, these arrangements may be varied by agreement between FPC and the appropriate authority in the organisation receiving the employee.

Preparation for appraisal interviews

57 Clearly the supervisor will need to prepare for the interview. It is desirable that the appraisee also prepare. Preparation for each party should include identifying specific matters to be discussed during the interview and, where appropriate, gathering examples for use in the discussion.

58 There is no requirement for any formal self-assessment by the appraisee. However, appraisees are strongly urged to appraise themselves against their performance agreement before the formal appraisal interview, even if they do not wish to show a written self-assessment to their supervisor. Any dramatic discrepancy between the self-assessment and the supervisor's views is likely to indicate a problem in some aspect of the working relationship, and the appraisee should discuss this, ideally with the supervisor in the first instance but otherwise with the General Manager or with FPC.

After performance appraisals are completed

64 Both the appraisee and the appraisee's supervisor will need to sign the report and obtain copies, if required. The original will be provided to the General Manager by the appraisee's supervisor in a sealed envelope addressed to the General Manager noting on the outside of the envelope that it is Personal-Staff-in-Confidence.

65 An employee who receives a rating of 3 (fully effective), and who is not on the top pay point of his or her classification, will advance to the next pay point with effect from the 1 July immediately after the end of the appraisal period (see clause 48(2) of OPC's AWAs).

~~65~~66 The General Manager will store the appraisal records in a sealed envelope under secure conditions, noting on the outside of the envelope that it is Personal-Staff-in-Confidence.

67 If the appraisee leaves OPC, the appraisee may request that existing appraisal records be returned to him or her, on or after the day of departure.

~~67~~68 As all performance appraisal documents are Staff-In-Confidence, the electronic versions should be given password protection.

69 All hard copies of performance appraisals will be destroyed in accordance with the minimum requirements set out by the National Archives of Australia in the AFDA (AFDA authorises destruction of performance agreements and appraisal reports 2 years after agreements are superseded).

Part 5—The mid-cycle review

70 A template of the mid-cycle review report is in Pers,SD—CS mid-cycle review report.

The review

71 A mid-cycle review will be held around the middle of the appraisal cycle unless the supervisor and appraisee agree that it is not necessary.

~~71~~72 If conducted, the review is a formal part of the performance management cycle. At the review interview, the following matters may be discussed:

- performance to date, by reference to the targets and standards included in the Agreement;
- the continued relevance of the Agreement (if changed circumstances have affected its relevance, the agreement should be revised);
- how well training and development needs are being met, and what needs to be done during the rest of the appraisal cycle to ensure they are met.

73 When assessing the appraisee's performance by reference to the targets and standards covered by the agreement, the appraiser will have regard to the APS values.

Need for continuous feedback

74 The mid-cycle review is important to ensuring that there are no surprises at the end of the cycle. However, it is not intended to take the place of continuous feedback.

Notice

75 The appraisee's supervisor is responsible for arranging the mid-cycle review. The appraisee will be given at least 3 working days' notice of the review discussion.

Paperwork

76 Both the appraisee and the appraisee's supervisor will need to sign the report and obtain copies, if required. Note that the General Manager will need to sign the mid-cycle review report endorsing any variations made to the performance agreement during the mid-cycle review.

77 The original of the mid-cycle review report will be provided to the General Manager by the appraisee's supervisor in a sealed envelope addressed to the General Manager noting on the outside of the envelope that it is Personal-Staff-in-Confidence.

~~77~~78 The General Manager will store the mid-cycle review records in a sealed envelope under secure conditions, noting on the outside of the envelope that it is Personal-Staff-in-Confidence.

79 All hard copies of mid-cycle reviews will be destroyed in accordance with the minimum requirements set out by the National Archives of Australia in AFDA (AFDA authorises destruction of performance agreements and appraisal reports 2 years after agreements are superseded).

Part 6—Review processes

Review of appraisals

80 An employee who is dissatisfied with the final appraisal outcome may seek a review of this outcome.

Informal review

81 The employee should first attempt to resolve the problem informally (as provided by general grievance procedures) through discussions with his or her supervisor, the General Manager, or FPC.

Formal review

82 If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, the employee may make a written application to FPC for review under regulation 5.24 of the Public Service Regulations 1999.

~~82~~83 If an application for review is made to FPC, FPC may, with the agreement of the Merit Protection Commissioner, refer the application to the Merit Protection Commissioner.

~~82~~84 The procedures for dealing with applications for review are set out in Part 5 of the Public Service Regulations 1999.

85 If FPC does not refer an application for review to the Merit Protection Commissioner, FPC will (unless it appears that there is a more appropriate way of dealing with the application) refer the matter to a review committee consisting of the 2 Second Parliamentary Counsel and, at the option of the employee seeking the review, a person nominated by the CPSU.

86 If FPC decides not to refer the matter to a review committee, FPC will give the applicant written reasons for deciding not to refer the matter.

87 If a Second Parliamentary Counsel is involved in the disputed appraisal, either as the appraiser or as a person who has contributed to the appraisal, he or she will be replaced on the committee by an SES Band 2 member of OPC.

88 This committee will have the power to make recommendations about the review to FPC, who may accept or reject the recommendation in whole or in part.

89 An employee who is dissatisfied with the outcome of a review application made to FPC may apply in writing to the Merit Protection Commissioner under regulation 5.29 of the Public Service Regulations 1999 for secondary review of the relevant action.

90 Under regulation 5.23 of the Public Service Regulations 1999, action will not be reviewable if (among other things), the application for review is frivolous or vexatious.

Part 7—Links to other matters

Probation

91 See OPC No. 83—Selection and recruitment policies, practices and procedures for information on Probation.

~~91~~92 Performance agreements will form the basis from which the work performance of an employee on probation is to be assessed.

Salary advancement within classifications

93 See clause 48 of OPC's AWAs.

Managing unsatisfactory performance

94 See clauses 17 and 48 of OPC's AWAs and OPC No. 37—*Managing unsatisfactory performance*.

Staff development plan

95 See Part 4—Development of Corporate Services staff of OPC No. 36—*Staff Development Plan*.

Operation of Privacy Act

96 The Performance Appraisal Record is classified Personal-Staff-in-Confidence and the provisions of the Privacy Act apply to the recording, retention and use of the Record. The Privacy Commissioner can impose penalties on any person who breaches the provisions of the Act. Documents generated in the course of the appraisal process are intended to be exempt from access under the Freedom of Information Act by third parties who are not part of the appraisal process.

Peter Quiggin
First Parliamentary Counsel
January 2008

Attachment—Generic performance standards

Rating	Description
3 Fully Effective	Performance fully meets the standard expected of employees at this classification level. This appraisal indicates that the employee has clearly more than met standard work requirements, achieving creditable results against all significant indicators and may have delivered superior results against one or two less significant indicators.
2 Adequate	Performance meets the standard expected of employees at this classification level. This appraisal indicates that the employee has delivered satisfactory results against most significant indicators. In some cases the employee may have achieved higher or lower results against some less significant indicators.
1 Unsatisfactory	Performance does not meet the standard expected of employees at this classification level. This appraisal indicates that the employee has failed to deliver adequate results against a number of significant indicators.
