Universiteit Leiden

Performance & Development Interviews supervisor's guide

Introduction

At Leiden University there are a number of methods of monitoring and assessing employee performance. These guidelines relate to the Performance and Development Interview, in which the employee's performance is assessed and objectives are agreed for the coming period. This interview also provides the opportunity to discuss the employee's further development. The formal framework for this new manner of employee performance assessment is described in the Regulation on Performance & Development Interviews as issued by the Board.

Why P&D interviews

P&D interviews are conducted annually, providing an appropriate occasion to evaluate employee performance, to make agreements about future results and to discuss the employee's development. These interviews are an opportunity to make adjustments necessary for reaching departmental objectives. The cycle of P&D interviews will be part of the university planning and control cycle, which periodically formulates, realizes, evaluates, and adjusts organizational objectives. The aim is to systematically work towards the realization of the University's strategic objectives.

Shared responsability

P&D interviews are a shared responsibility. As a supervisor you are responsible for conducting the annual interviews. Together with your supervisor you are also responsible for the adequate preparation of the interview as well as for the structural content of the interview.

The initial interview

In order to have successful interviews with employees about their results and to evaluate their performance fairly, both parties should be clear in advance on what is expected of the employee. For this reason, initial interviews are held with every employee upon the introduction of the P&D interviews and/or upon acceptance of a new position.

During the initial interview, you should establish which performance areas (core activities) from the UFO job-profile are appropriate to the employee. You should also come to an agreement regarding expectations of future results and areas for development. Please use the SMART-principles where possible. [1]

If necessary you should agree on preconditions: what does the employee need from you as a supervisor and/or from the organisation in general to achieve the desired results? This might involve training, specific equipment, etc. It is advisable to come to a clear agreement on the distribution of tasks.
Finally you should agree on the date of the P&D interview. The recommendations for the preparation for a P&D interview are also applicable to the preparation for an initial interview.

[1] SMART stands for Specifiek (Specific), Meetbaar (Measurable), Acceptabel (Acceptable), Realiseerbaar (Feasible), and in de Tijd begrensd (Time-limited).

The P&D interview

Assessment and agreements

A P&D interview consists of two parts: the first part is evaluative and retrospective, and the second part looks ahead to the future.

- In the retrospective part you should evaluate for each performance area the results obtained by the employee and his/her professional development, keeping in mind the annual agreement. This assessment should be expressed in letters on a four-point scale with A as the highest score and D as the lowest. Your final assessment should be expressed in the same manner, and you are to provide a short explanation of your assessment. Please ensure that there is a proper balance in your assessments, so that no more than 30% of all employees will receive an “A” as a final assessment (“exceeds the requirements”).
- In the part of the interview that looks ahead to the future, you should come to an agreement with the employee regarding expectations of new results and his/her professional development.

Conducting the interview

To conduct a satisfactory P&D interview, good interview techniques are essential. To this end, training will be provided. In addition, the formal aspect of the process, including the time schedule, should be carefully considered. These matters are explained briefly in this guide. Should you have any questions, please consult the Regulation on Performance & Development Interviews, or contact your superior and/or your Personnel & Organisation (P&O) advisor.

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General Preparation

During the P&D interview training, you will not only receive information about the procedure, you will also receive training in interview techniques to ensure that you are well prepared. In addition, it is advisable to have as much factual information available as possible, for example on the following subjects:

- Departmental and research objectives and/or the departmental objectives;
- The external view on your department (as expressed, for example, in teaching assessments, visitation results, customer satisfaction surveys);
- Specific difficulties within your department and its immediate surroundings;
- The stipulated or desired objectives for the following year;
- The financial resources available to you for investing in employee development.

Preparation per employee

It is advisable to have the agreements on the employee's objectives on hand together with the actual results. In the case of academic staff, supervisors, and employees with a higher salary scale than 8, you can make use of their annual report. This report is to be handed in not less than a week before the P&D interview. It is also advisable to look at the following aspects:

- Faculty standards and possible career paths;
- The role of the employee in successes and in difficulties.

If the results of the employee are not clear, you are advised to consult someone who has an overview of the objectives and results of the employee, for instance his/her project leader.

You could also invite this person to attend the P&D interview. Should you decide to do so, please inform the employee of your intentions in the letter of invitation. It should be mentioned that the employee can always ask for a third party to be present at the interview. The employee should indicate this in advance. The employee should be invited for a P&D interview not less than two weeks in advance.

If you do not expect the interview to run smoothly, because of a negative assessment for example, it is advisable to consult with your superior and/or the P&O Department beforehand. One final word of advice: remember to book a quiet room where the interview can be conducted without any disturbances.

Conducting the interview

During the interview, the employee should be made aware of the two distinct parts of the interview: one evaluative and retrospective, and the other looking ahead to the future.

- Be clear and do not hesitate, if necessary, to give negative as well as positive feedback.
- Be prepared to have your own role criticised.
- Make agreements based on the SMART principles, as they will form the basis for the next P&D interview. This means that you should agree on “Publishing two articles in renowned journals within a year” instead of Carrying out qualitative research”.

- Summarize the discussion at regular intervals during the interview and draft your report directly after or during the interview.

A negative assessment

In the event of a negative assessment, it is important that you make the employee aware of the possibility of submitting a request for reconsideration. In this event, the supervisor's superior will be involved during the process of determining the assessment. This is important in the event that the employee lodges a formal objection against the assessment.

Making use of the P&D interview form

The P&D interview form is available to make a report of your interview. This form contains a summary of your assessment; the interview itself, with special attention to the motivation for your assessment; and the objectives agreed on. Only subjects and viewpoints that were in fact discussed can be brought up. It is advisable to use this form, filling it in during or directly after the interview.

The form should be sent to the employee not later than four weeks after the interview. If the employee does not agree with the assessment s/he can hand in a formal request for reconsideration. For a detailed summary of the steps to be followed in this situation, please refer to the Regulation on Performance & Development Interviews.

Feedback sessions

In many situations it is sensible to plan feedback sessions at certain intervals. This might be the case when an employee is given new tasks, starts a new or extensive project or when it is not possible to agree on definitive objectives, for example, when external factors are not clear or uncertain. Either you yourself or your employee can always initiate a feedback session when the need arises. This can be due to changing circumstances in the case of new tasks, but also in the case of extended illness and diminishing performance. During the feedback session, no assessment on the four-point scale should be made, but the state of affairs should be discussed with regard to the objectives agreed on, which can be adjusted if necessary. In addition, new agreements can be made concerning preconditions. New or adjusted agreements are put down on paper and added to the last P&D interview report.

Consequences for the legal position

An assessment might result in a reward for the employee, but it might also lead to a negative decision.

Decisions with positive consequences for the legal position

Positive consequences might consist of giving an extra periodical or other reward and a promotion. It is important that you consult in advance with your superior about your intentions for rewarding your employee.

Decisions with negative consequences for the legal position

It is obvious that a negative assessment does not come out of the blue. It is the cumulative effect of a number of interviews with your employee, in which you have pointed out the areas for improvement and in which you have given the employee opportunities for improvement. The most obvious decisions with negative consequences for the legal positions are: not awarding the incremental salary increase, not awarding a promised reward such as promotion for good performance, and not moving the employee from the starting grade to the actual salary scale corresponding to the job. The most extreme negative consequence is starting up the exit procedure.
It goes without saying that you should treat all these cases with the utmost care and that you should in advance consult with your supervisor or the assessment authority, respectively.

Objection

An employee can lodge an objection against an assessment on the grounds of the General Administrative Law Act. Further information can be obtained from your Personnel Department.

The following schedule shows what is done by whom and when. Further details can be found in the Regulation on Performance and & Development Interviews.

When	What	By whom
Before the interview		
No less than 2 weeks before the interview	Invite employee (in writing or by e-mail)	Supervisor
No less than 1 week before the interview	Hand in annual report	Employee
After the interview		
As soon as possible after the interview	Write report using P&D interview form	Supervisor
No later than 4 weeks after the interview	Submit form to employee	Supervisor
Within 2 weeks after submission of the form	Sign as seen/approved	Employee
A. The employee does not submit a request for reconsideration:		
Within 2 weeks after submission of the form	Confirm assessment and submit form for signing by supervisor's superior and/or	Supervisor

	the assessment authority	
B. The employee does submit a request for reconsideration:		
Within 2 weeks after submission of the form	Written request for reconsideration of the assessment	Employee
Within 3 weeks after submission of the request for reconsideration	Hearing of the employee by the supervisor, reconsider and confirm assessment according to the request **or**	Supervisor
Within 2 weeks after submission of the request for reconsideration	Submit assessment and request for reconsideration to supervisor’s superior and/or the assessment authority	Supervisor
Within 2 weeks after submission of the form	Hearing of the employee by the supervisor's superior, revise and confirm the assessment and inform the employee providing a substantiated notification, confirm the assessment	Supervisor’s Superior and/or the Assessment Authority
Administration		
Immediately after confirming the assessment	Send a copy to the employee and the original to the P&O Department	Supervisor
After receiving the original	Read the original	P&O Advisor
After receiving the original	Registration and filing of the original	P&O Administration