



Performance Dialogue

POLICY STATEMENT

The university requires all regular, full- and part-time, nonacademic staff members and their supervisors to participate in the performance dialogue process, which promotes and documents communication between supervisors and staff members throughout the year.

REASON FOR POLICY

Cornell University supports an environment that provides opportunities for ongoing exchanges of views between supervisors and staff members regarding job results, performance, and future planning and is committed to producing results while developing staff members. This policy facilitates staff members' understanding of what they are expected to do, and provides an avenue to receive clear, honest feedback about how they are doing toward agreed-upon expectations.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- Ithaca-based campus units

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- All regular, full- and part-time, nonacademic staff members
- Managers, supervisors, administrators, deans, directors, and department heads (including academics)
- Unit human resources representatives

WEB ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY

- This policy: www.dfa.cornell.edu/tools-library/policies/performance-dialogue
- University Policy Office: www.policy.cornell.edu

POLICY 6.10.6 Performance Dialogue

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RELATED RESOURCES

University Policies and Documents

[University Policy 4.7, Retention of University Records](#)

[University Policy 6.11.3, Employee Discipline \(Excluding Academic and Bargaining Unit Staff\)](#)

[Human Resources Policy 6.11.4, Staff Complaint and Grievance Procedure](#)

[Human Resources Policy 6.13.4, Personnel Files](#)

[Performance Management Process](#): Includes Skills for Success, Leadership Skills for Success, Performance Dialogue, and other performance management tools

University Forms and Systems

[HR Tools](#): Includes the Staff Position Description template and access to other recruitment, performance management and development tools

[Performance Management Process Forms](#): Includes Performance Dialogue forms for union and non-union employees, position description and classification documents, etc.

[Workday](#)

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CONTACTS

Direct any general questions about this policy to your college or unit administrative office. If you have questions about specific issues, contact the following offices.

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Human Resources, Organizational and Workforce Development	(607) 254-6400	org_dev@cornell.edu www.hr.cornell.edu/about/owd.html
Unit-Specific Procedures for Completing Performance Dialogues	Your local human resources representative	Unit-specific	www.hr.cornell.edu/about/adminhr.html

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DEFINITIONS

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Expectation	A jointly understood description of the work that is required for successful performance.
Leadership Skills for Success	In addition to the Skills for Success (see definition below), additional skills that are applicable to those in leadership positions, particularly supervisors, managers, program managers, and project managers. All staff members, however, may be assessed on leadership skills to assist with further career development, and may request that their supervisors coach them on the Leadership Skills for Success.
Local Human Resources Representative	The individual assigned to a unit with the responsibility to coordinate and handle human resources matters.
Performance Dialogue	An intentional, two-way conversation that occurs annually, absent extenuating circumstances, between staff members and their immediate supervisors to review the staff members' position descriptions and performance in the job and establish goals for the upcoming year. Performance dialogue conversations should be documented in writing.
Skills for Success	A list of skills that are essential for individual and organizational success. They are applicable to all Cornell employees and are evaluated as part of the performance management process.
Staff Position Description	A document that describes the duties, responsibilities, critical skills, behavioral competencies, level of education, and experience needed to achieve top performance in the position.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

The major responsibilities each party has in connection with this policy are as follows:

Division of Human Resources	Consult with employees and supervisors in collaboration with local human resources representatives (when appropriate) on policy interpretation and best practices for managing performance.
Local Human Resources Representative	Consult with supervisors and staff members about completing the performance dialogue. Convey and clarify university and local college/unit guidelines for completing the performance dialogue. Consult with supervisors and/or staff members in cases where an overall performance rating of "needs improvement" will be given. Ensure compliance with policy requirements.
Staff Member	Understand and perform the duties and goals of the job. Participate in conversations about performance throughout the year and in annual reviews. Ask for constructive feedback from the supervisor throughout the year and receive constructive feedback. Seek professional development opportunities to develop skills. Provide feedback to the supervisor.
Supervisor	Establish goals, expectations, and measures for success. Continually monitor performance toward expectations. Provide ongoing performance feedback and coaching. Follow the performance management process for annual performance reviews and ensure timely completion of all performance dialogues. Be receptive to feedback from the staff member.

PRINCIPLES

Annual Performance Dialogues

The performance dialogue is an intentional, two-way conversation that occurs annually, absent extenuating circumstances, between staff members and their immediate supervisors, to review the staff members' position descriptions and performance in the job. Performance dialogue conversations should be documented in writing. The evaluation can be used to inform the following fiscal year's salary improvement determinations for non-union represented staff members.

The performance dialogue process is designed to (1) communicate what was done well, and what may need to change or improve; (2) review the status of last year's goals; (3) discuss actions to promote more effective job performance, including a review of the Skills for Success, Leadership Skills for Success (if applicable), and skills specific to the role; and (4) review the coming year's goals. The discussion between a supervisor and staff member concerning job performance should occur routinely and regularly throughout the year. Staff members must be evaluated only for those job responsibilities and expectations that are in their staff position descriptions or are mutually understood by both the supervisors and staff members.

Appeal Process

If a staff member disagrees with any part of the performance dialogue, the staff member may share written supplementary, explanatory materials to accompany the dialogue documentation. These comments will become a permanent part of that record. The staff member's signature/submission simply acknowledges receipt of the dialogue and does not necessarily constitute agreement with the content of the dialogue.

If, from the staff member's point of view, the dialogue documentation is not factually accurate, the staff member may request a review by the supervisor's manager. If the disagreement remains regarding facts noted in the dialogue documentation, the staff member may file a formal grievance using the university's grievance procedure. (See Related Resources.)

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PROCEDURES

Completing the Performance Dialogue

The Division of Human Resources provides consultation, training, and resources to assist supervisors and staff members with best practices in performance management.

Local human resources, on behalf of the college or unit, is responsible for attesting that performance dialogues have been completed. Contact the local human resources representative for college- or unit-specific guidelines.