



Performance Management System: An Overview

Continuous improvement is essential in service oriented organizations such as law libraries. In order to provide the best possible service, library staff need to have the necessary tools and training required to continually improve their skills. They also need to have a useful and formalized means of communicating these needs. The *Performance Management System* provides a communication channel allowing both the employee and the employer* to take joint responsibility in the process.

Tools

The following performance management tools, modelled on a modified system used by the Law Society of Upper Canada, are required for this process. Used together, these tools comprise the *Performance Management System*. Please use the following forms and discard previous versions.

The *Goal Setting* and *Goal Setting: SMART definitions (Form 1)*, are to be completed by the employee and employer together.

The *Performance Review: Employee (Form 2)* is to be completed by the employee.

The *Performance Review: Employer (Form 3)* is to be completed by the employer.

The *Overall Employee Performance Rating* and the *Overall Employee Performance Rating: Definitions (Form 4)* is to be tabulated by the employer.

The *Performance Review: Employer and Employee (Form 5)* is to be completed by the employer and employee.

The Process

Step 1: Annual Goal Setting (January of each year)

A *Performance Management System* also includes goal setting for the year, which is determined together by the employee and the employer at a face-to-face meeting in January of each year. The aim is to set results-based goals which are achievable and measurable. The goal-setting tools (*Goal Setting* and *Goal Setting: SMART definitions (Form 1)*) assist in ensuring a common understanding of the operational and developmental goals of the employee, and the planned activities upon which measures of success will be evaluated. Goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely as articulated in the definitions.

Employees and employers set the year's objectives and goals, define performance measures and establish target dates. Employees need to know what they are expected to achieve and receive feedback in time to overcome any obstacles to their effective performance. Setting two or three realistic goals for the year, which can move the library ahead, is sufficient. It is better to set two or three modest, achievable goals than be immobilized by a huge list of goals that can never be achieved. Goal-setting is participatory, based on employee career development plans and the organization's desired results.

Timing: to be completed by mid-January of each year.

Step 2: Informal review of the goals for the year (April / May of each year)

The employer and employee should set a reasonable date in April or May of each year to have an informal face-to-face review of the goals; to discuss ongoing progress; to provide feedback and to re-assess the priority or relevance of the goals. Sometimes goals need to change due to circumstances and this should be noted. *Goal Setting (Form 1)* is a living document. Revision, as and if necessary, is essential.

Timing: to be completed by April or May of each year.

* The employer may be represented by the Law Association President, the Library Committee and/or Library Committee Chair or the Law Librarian.

Step 3: Annual performance review (August / September of each year)

A performance review is designed to:

- encourage participation and feedback between the employee and the employer;
- provide a structured format for discussing employee strengths and areas that may need improvement as well as employee job/career interests for the future;
- assist in the creation of action plans to further develop employee skills and enhance performance;
- clearly define performance expectations and assist with salary planning and decisions; and
- provide the basis to recognize employee initiative and performance excellence.

A *Performance Management System* includes an Annual Performance Review. Both the employer and employee should have a current copy of the employee's position description and be able to relate the position description to the performance review tools. The employee, when enumerating her/his accomplishments on *Performance Review: Employee (Form 2)*, should use wording that is action-oriented and concise rather than passive and wordy (e.g. "organized" rather than "was responsible for organizing...")

The *Performance Review: Employee (Form 2)* is to be completed by the employee. The employee then provides it to the employer prior to the performance review meeting. (It is recommended that this form be provided to the employer a week before the meeting.) This provides the employer with the opportunity to familiarize her/himself with the employee's self-assessment in order better to complete their *Performance Review: Employer (Form 3)*. The employee should also provide the employer with their current position description and a copy of *Goal Setting: SMART definitions (Form 1)*. The employer then completes the *Performance Review: Employer (Form 3)*. Once *Form 3* has been completed the individual ratings can be tabulated by the employer and an *Overall Employee Performance Rating (Form 4)* can be completed.

Timing: August / September of each year.

Step 4: Annual performance review meeting (September of each year)

Once the employer and employee have each completed their Performance Review forms (Forms 1, 2 and 3), a *Performance Review Meeting* should take place between them to discuss the forms. Allow an hour for this face-to-face meeting. It should be an honest and candid two-way communication in which the employer's performance review is related to the employee's description of her/his performance and the employee's position description and goals. Skills, competencies and developmental needs should be discussed by both the employer and the employee.

If possible, allow time to move to Step 3, Goal-Setting. If you need more time to think and reflect, set up a separate meeting to discuss Step 3.

Timing: September of each year.

Step 5: Confirmation of completion of process (October 1 of each year)

Employers are expected to complete *Performance Review: Employer and Employee (Form 5)* by October 1. Employers may submit a copy of Form 5 to LibraryCo if they wish but this is not mandatory.

Timing: October 1 of each year.