Performance and Development Plan
Manager checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to assist managers / team leaders to prepare for and engage in performance and development conversations with employees.

Preparing for the performance and development conversation

Adequate preparation, by the manager / team leader and employee, is required to ensure a productive and meaningful performance and development conversation.

For managers / team leaders this involves:

- Reviewing the PDP Template and other key documents that set the context in which the performance and development conversation will take place (e.g. the employee’s role description, strategic and operational plans, Code of Conduct, the PDP Policy and 70:20:10 Framework)
- Explaining the PDP process (i.e. purpose and benefits) and timeframes to employees, outlining their role and responsibilities (e.g. preparing, collaborating etc.), referring them to relevant documents, including the PDP Template, their role description, and booking the initial meeting

Note: General explanations about the PDP process, the roles of the parties and the supporting documentation can take place in team meetings. This ensures that all employees hear the same messages, provides an opportunity to engage the team in discussion about the PDP process, and answer questions or address concerns that individuals may have.

- Reflecting on the employee’s past performance, if applicable, and future performance (refer PDP Conversation Planner and Guide for suggested reflective questions) and preparing notes, discussion points, and questions they may wish to ask the employee (e.g. Are you aware of how your role contributes to the achievement of organisational goals and objectives?)

Participating in a performance and development conversation

This conversation sets the platform for the PDP process by enabling the manager / team leader and their employee to develop a shared understanding of the employee’s responsibilities, and associated performance and behavioural expectations, and their development needs. For managers / team leaders this involves leading and facilitating the PDP conversation.

This will involve:

- Collaborating with the employee to develop SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) related to performance planning and development activities
- Providing constructive and detailed feedback regarding employee strengths, achievements and areas for improvement (i.e. Be specific, use examples, discuss impact, jointly develop improvement strategies, and clarify what good performance looks like)
- Gauging the employee’s comprehension and buy-in by asking questions during and at the end of the discussion to check their perspective and understanding
- Reinforcing your commitment to the employee in supporting their on-going development
- Recording the key points of the discussion either during or immediately following the conversation (Note: Ask the employee to complete the PDP Template and send you the draft for checking prior to signing the final version)
• Agreeing a timeframe with the employee for completing and signing the PDP Template (Note: You will need to give the employee a signed copy of the completed template and place another copy on file)
• Agreeing a date for the 6-month review meeting
• Discussing and agreeing with the employee timeframes for on-going performance discussions (e.g. weekly or fortnightly meetings) and processes for raising concerns and providing ongoing feedback (e.g. how and when informal and ad-hoc feedback will be given).

Whilst a 6-monthly review is a mandatory requirement, both the manager/team leader and employee are encouraged to initiate informal performance and development conversations in between formal reviews. The content of a PDP can be revised at any time and as often as necessary during the PDP cycle. This can be in response to changing business direction and priorities or to help with any unforeseen development needs of the team member.

**Tips for giving feedback - Reinforcing behaviour and performance**

Managers need to deliver valuable and constructive feedback in a way that employees can understand and accept willingly. Reinforcement and redirection are two types of feedback that are effective in the workplace. Provide feedback on a regular basis about the employee’s performance and development. Don’t wait for the employee to ask about their performance

- **Reinforcement** - Identifies job-related behaviours and performance that contribute to individual, group and organisational goals and encourages the employee to repeat and develop
- Be descriptive of the behaviour you wish to reinforce, e.g. “Thank you for reorganising the filing system. Organising the files by dates makes them much easier to find and I especially like the way you put the frequently used files on the bottom where I can reach them”
- Explain the behaviour’s positive impact on the team/unit/organisation e.g. “I know that with so many people away sick this month, it took extra effort for you to get the financial report completed on time. Thanks to your effort, management had the information they needed to make some important decisions and as a result we were able to demonstrate cost savings
- Help the employee take credit for his/her success e.g. “I realise the entire team was involved in making the orientation day a success, but I especially want to thank you for all your work organising the agenda. Thanks to you, all of the presenters were well briefed of the key topics”

**Tips for giving feedback - Redirecting behaviour and performance**

Redirection - Identifies job-related behaviours and performance that do not contribute to individual, group and organisational goals and helps the team member develop alternative strategies

- Describe the behaviour or performance you want to redirect e.g. “Lisa I noticed that you were late two days this week and four days last week. You were also late 6 times last month”
- Listen (and observe) the reaction of the team member and give them a chance to respond in order to provide context for the behaviour
- Clarify your expectations of the team member’s behaviour or performance and explain the actions negative effect
- Help the team member acknowledge the behaviour or performance that needs to be redirected and help them take responsibility for addressing it
- Develop strategies/actions that will help the team member adjust his or her actions

**Benefits of Performance and Development Conversations**

*(Corporate Leadership Council research on team member engagement)*

Providing fair and accurate performance feedback (i.e. FAST – frequent, actionable, specific and timely) can improve a team member’s performance by up to 39%

- Focussing on a team member’s strengths in PDP conversations can improve their performance by up to 36%
• Increasing a team member’s knowledge and understanding of the standards by which they will be assessed results in a possible 36% improvement in their performance

• Demonstrating and communicating organisational values can improve team member discretionary effort by 12%

• Demonstrating how a team member’s work links to organisational strategy can improve their discretionary effort by almost 33% and their intent to stay by over 36%.

• Communicating how a team member’s hard work will translate into success for the broader organisation can improve their discretionary effort by over 30% and their intent to stay by 34%.