

9.1 Performance Management Policy

Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to supporting the growth and development of employees through effective performance management. A key element of performance management is the translation of government and department business plans into individual and team performance targets and competencies to ensure employees are able to contribute in a meaningful fashion. Performance management is an integral component of providing excellence in service to the general public. It is recognized that employees are the enablers of responsive and effective government, and performance management empowers employees to achieve their full potential within government.

Policy Objectives

This policy establishes methods for managing the human resources of government in an effective manner. The goals of the Performance Management Policy are to:

- achieve corporate plans and goals by linking individual and team performance objectives to department business plans
- provide a balanced approach for measuring performance results and competencies
- develop core competencies that reflect the values and skills that are necessary for individual and government success
- develop people through regular constructive coaching and dialogue
- promote job satisfaction in a motivating environment and recognize and reward good performance.

Application

This policy applies to all civil servants whose terms and conditions are set out in accordance with the *Civil Service Act* and regulations and bargaining unit staff who are employed by the Government of Nova Scotia as identified in the collective agreements between the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission and Nova Scotia Government Employees Union, and the Nova Scotia Department of Justice and the union representing corrections employees, insofar as the provisions do not conflict with existing collective agreements.

Policy Directives

- Each employee will have a performance appraisal conducted annually, or on a change of position or appointment, or more frequently as required, and will be provided with a copy of the appraisal.

PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES

- Probationary employees will have interim performance reviews conducted. Managers should check the applicable collective agreement to confirm the length of the probationary period. In circumstances where the probationary period may be extended, the employee must be notified at least one month in advance of the expiry of the initial probationary period. For bargaining unit employees, the length of the probationary period is specified in the relevant collective agreement.
- Where unsatisfactory performance is identified concerning a probationary employee and reasonable steps are taken to give the probationary employee an opportunity to make the required improvements and this fails to address the performance issues, the employment of the probationary employee shall be terminated.
- Employees who satisfactorily complete the probationary period and are appointed on a permanent basis must be provided with ongoing performance reviews that are consistent with the process of evaluation, performance appraisal, and, if necessary, performance improvement.

PERFORMANCE PLAN

- A performance appraisal includes the completion of a performance plan, which must be established jointly by the manager in consultation with the employee to ensure a clear understanding of performance targets and expected results. Individual performance targets must be linked to department business plans and must include performance standards, measures, and indicators.
- A performance plan must be documented using the appropriate Performance Plan Form.
- Employee performance must be formally reviewed in relation to the performance targets and expected results as established in the performance plan.
- A performance plan must identify training and development activities that support achievement of performance targets and identify opportunities for promotion/advancement.

PERFORMANCE COACHING

- Managers and employees must jointly keep track of the performance plan and identify shortcomings and solutions in a timely fashion.
- Managers should provide employees with ongoing feedback and coaching regarding job performance throughout the review period.

ACCESS TO PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

- Performance appraisals are to be reviewed by the immediate superior of the manager who is responsible for preparing the appraisal to ensure that appraisals are comprehensive and consistently reflect performance standards established.
- Performance appraisals are strictly confidential and are not to be shared beyond the employee, the immediate manager, the reviewing superior, the Deputy Minister, and human resources staff without the consent of the employee.
- The Public Service Commissioner has the right to access performance appraisals from the departmental employee master file for the purposes of carrying out the responsibilities established pursuant to the *Civil Service Act*.

UNSATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE

- A manager is responsible for identifying and reviewing facts that are relevant to unsatisfactory job performance. All information collected must be properly documented. Unsatisfactory performance by employees must be addressed with the employee by the manager in a timely fashion. Specific information concerning the areas of deficiencies and the improvements expected must be provided to the employee, which should include, where appropriate, a specific date by which improvement is expected to be achieved. The manager should inform the employee of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program.
- An employee who disagrees with the evaluation of his/her performance may respond to the evaluation by providing either a verbal or written response to their manager.
- If a manager has a reasonable basis for believing that an employee is intentionally failing to meet the performance requirements of the position, this may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination. A manager should consult with their respective Deputy Minister, Human Resources Director, and Staff Relations Consultant prior to administering disciplinary action.

MERIT INCREMENT

The granting of a merit increment is contingent upon an employee successfully meeting their individual performance targets as reflected in their annual performance appraisal. Reference should be made to the collective agreement or civil service regulations as appropriate.

Policy Guidelines

Policy guidelines for performance management may be developed.

Accountability

DEPUTY MINISTERS

Deputy Ministers are responsible for:

- ensuring that managers are held accountable for conducting performance appraisals on an annual basis
- ensuring that every manager has a performance appraisal conducted
- ensuring that the Performance Management Policy and Guidelines are followed
- explaining corporate/department targets and priorities to senior managers
- ensuring that the quality of performance assessments prepared by senior managers is maintained
- submitting assessment and performance ratings to the Public Service Commission.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

Senior management and managers/supervisors (within departments) are responsible for:

- participating fully in the performance management process
- establishing individual performance targets in consultation with their deputy minister
- fulfilling their individual performance targets
- establishing individual performance targets with employees
- reviewing employees' performance annually or as required
- recommending a performance rating to deputy heads
- focusing on coaching, supporting, and developing their employees
- recognizing and supporting good employee performance
- dealing with performance deficiencies constructively and in a timely fashion
- ensuring that poor performance is clearly and consistently handled
- promoting communication, understanding, and dialogue between individuals and teams in the organization.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISIONS/CORPORATE SERVICES UNITS

The Human Resources Divisions/Corporate Services Units are responsible for supporting Deputy Ministers, senior managers and managers/supervisors, and employees with performance management.

EMPLOYEES

Employees are responsible for:

- participating in the establishment of individual performance targets
- being accountable for meeting the individual performance targets
- participating fully in the performance management process
- encouraging regular constructive dialogue and feedback on their own performance.

Monitoring

Departments are responsible for complying with the terms of this policy. The Public Service Commission may periodically conduct audits of departmental performance management practices to ascertain compliance by departments with this policy.

References

Nova Scotia *Civil Service Act* and regulations

Collective agreements between the Public Service Commission and the NSGEU, and Department of Justice and the union representing corrections employees.

Performance Appraisal Forms

- Management Employees
- Bargaining Unit Employees

Enquiries

General Enquiries, Public Service Commission (902) 424-7660

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