

## Performance Development Program for General Staff

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**Q1: What is the Performance Development Program for General Staff?**

**A1:** The Performance Development Program (PDP) provides a mechanism to support the planning and monitoring of staff performance and for supporting the identification of individual development needs for general staff at ACU.

The program is designed to support effective two-way communication between you and your Nominated Supervisor so that you and your Nominated Supervisor have a clear understanding of your role and what level of performance is expected of you, as well as the learning and development activities that would help to enhance your performance in the workplace.

**Q2: Why does the University have a Performance Development Program?**

**A2:** The *Strategic Plan 1999 – 2008* recognises that excellence and quality need to be positively supported with relevant programs and strategies designed to assist staff to meet their individual as well as their collective work goals.

The PDP helps to ensure that:

- the University Mission and ethos are upheld, strategic goals are achieved, operations are enhanced and effective customer service is delivered;
- a mechanism is in place to assist with the communication and discussion of University strategic and other organisational or functional unit plans;
- you have a clear and agreed sense of your work role, your individual performance strategies and of the collective goals of the work group;
- a process is set in place for reviewing your achievements against performance objectives and for providing feedback on performance;
- a stronger focus is placed on personal and corporate learning and your associated development strategies, which, in turn, assists in clarifying career aspirations; and,
- a transparent process is in place as the basis for rewarding excellence in performance for General Staff.

**Q3: Who does the Performance Development Program (PDP) cover?**

**A3:** The PDP applies to all General Staff who are employed on a continuing or fixed-term basis for a period greater than 6 months. It is expected that you, if you are a General Staff member at ACU, will participate in the program.

**Q4: Who is responsible for ensuring the Performance Development Program is conducted each year at ACU?**

**A4:** Your Nominated Supervisor is formally assigned the responsibility for ensuring that the PDP cycle is conducted each year in accordance with the PDP policy and procedure.

**Q5: When is my annual review due?**

**A5:** The Annual Planning and Review Cycle is normally twelve months in duration. All Performance Plans and Annual Reviews for General Staff are required to be completed during the 16 week period that represents a large part of Semester 1 each year (February to May) – known as the PDP Window which will occur from Feb 1 to May 30. New General Staff who are eligible to participate in the PDP must have their first Individual Performance Plan completed within three months of commencing employment at ACU.

To ensure that new staff fit into the annual planning and review cycle in the next appropriate PDP Window, the initial Performance Plan for a new staff member may be for a period of between 6 months and 14 months in length. The second and subsequent Planning and Review cycle will then fall into the normal 12 month PDP Window.

**Q6: What is my role as a General Staff member in the Performance Development Program?**

**A6:** As a General Staff member, you are responsible for actively participating in the PDP and for working to achieve the agreed Performance Plan. It is expected that you will actively participate in the planning and review discussions with your Nominated Supervisor by keeping notes and discussing progress of performance or development targets with your Nominated Supervisor.

Throughout the year, you should conduct ongoing self-assessment of your performance in preparation for your Annual Review. Keeping notes on achievements and relevant issues and challenges may be helpful. These can assist in discussions with your Nominated Supervisor regarding your performance and development when the time comes.

**Q7: What if my Nominated Supervisor is on a different campus from me? Can I work with the Assistant Supervisor to prepare the Performance Plan and do the Annual Review?**

**A7:** While the Assistant Supervisor may assist the Nominated Supervisor in monitoring your performance, they are not accountable directly for managing the Performance Development Program at the organisational or functional unit level. They may, however, act for the Nominated Supervisor and work with you to develop KPIs and the individual Learning and Development Plan and, where requested by the Nominated Supervisor, submit completed performance review documentation to the Nominated Supervisor as recommendations.

**Q8: How does the Program work?**

**Q8:** The Program is cyclical and has two key aspects to it:

- preparation of the Performance Plan and
- the subsequent Annual Review.

The first stage is the prospective establishment of work-related action plans and your Learning and Development Plan – this is the **Performance Plan**.

The second stage is a retrospective review of your work performance and development outcomes for the review period – this is the **Annual Review**.

**Q9: What steps are involved in the Program?**

**Q9:** There are six sequential steps in the PDP process:

- initial discussion between you and your Nominated Supervisor at the beginning of the cycle;
- development of your individual Performance Plan;
- Nominated Supervisor's provision of informal feedback and support;
- modification and adjustment of your Performance Plan, if necessary;
- review of your performance, development and achievements in the Annual Review;
- and,
- beginning the next cycle implying a return to the initial step.

A more detailed description of each step is included in the Policy on Performance Development for General Staff available on the HR webpage.

**Q10: How does the process begin?**

**A10:** At the beginning of the performance development cycle, you and your Nominated Supervisor should meet and discuss what is expected of you in your job and what learning and development you might need to enhance your performance. You then develop relevant Key Performance Indicators and record them on the appropriate form. In developing these, documents such as the existing position description and the appropriate organisational or functional unit planning documents should be considered.

**Q11: What are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)?**

**A11:** Key Performance Indicators or KPIs can be defined as measures of the desired performance outputs or outcomes relating to your key responsibilities. They typically focus on factors including timeliness, accuracy, quality, delivery, quantity and the efficiency of a process or outcome.

They are designed to enhance objectivity in the performance review process. KPIs are representative only and do not cover every aspect of your position responsibilities. They are jointly determined on an annual basis by you and your Nominated Supervisor and recorded in your Performance Plan.

**Q12: How often should my performance and development progress be discussed with my Nominated Supervisor?**

**A12:** A formal review will be conducted annually by your Nominated Supervisor. However informal advice and feedback should be provided regularly throughout the cycle. It is recommended that informal discussions take place at least quarterly at a mutually convenient time.

**Q13: What if, during the year my KPIs are no longer relevant due to unforeseen changes. Can my Performance Plan be changed?**

**A13:** Where circumstances require change, your Performance Plan may be modified accordingly following consultation between you and your Nominated Supervisor. In such cases, the variation is then signed by both you and your Nominated Supervisor, dated and appended to the original Performance Plan. A copy is also forwarded to Human Resources to be placed on your Personnel file.

**Q14: What is involved in the Annual Review?**

**A14:** At the Annual Review, your performance throughout the year in relation to the KPIs is reviewed and an assessment is made by your Nominated Supervisor. You and your Nominated Supervisor then discuss your performance. Both you and your Nominated (or Assistant) Supervisor need to prepare for the performance review discussion.

**Q15: How will my performance be assessed?**

**A15:** In order to assess your performance, your Nominated Supervisor will:

- Review achievement of each KPI by indicating whether the KPI has been "achieved" or "not achieved" during the review period; and,
- Indicate the overall level of performance achieved by taking into consideration all assessments made for the range of KPIs and other relevant work related factors that may have impacted on your performance during the review period. These performance levels are described in the General Staff Performance Development Program policy.

**Q16: Do I need to prepare for these discussions?**

**A16:** It is recommended that you prepare for the Annual Review discussion by:

- re-acquainting yourself with the agreed KPIs for the performance review period and any documented variations to them;
- identifying any achievements or areas of concern;
- considering any extenuating circumstances that may have applied during the review period; and,
- considering any progress in relation to the learning and development proposals made at the beginning of the review cycle.

**Q17: What if I don't agree with the performance assessments made by my Nominated Supervisor?**

**A17:** If you do not agree with the performance assessment made by your Nominated Supervisor, you should discuss these comments with your Nominated Supervisor in the first instance. You will also be given the opportunity to record your view in the comments section of the Annual Review. The signed document will be forwarded to your Executive Team member for review and appropriate action where relevant.

Should you decline to sign the Annual Review Form "as sighted", your Nominated Supervisor will record that the opportunity to sign the form has been provided to you. She/he signs and dates the notation before forwarding it to your Executive Team member.

**Q18: What happens if my overall performance is assessed by my Nominated Supervisor as "Does not meet expectations"?**

**A18:** It is expected that throughout the Performance Development cycle, regular informal discussions will take place between you and your Nominated Supervisor which clarify and confirm expected performance levels and your progress in achieving them so far. This gives you an opportunity before the Annual Review to work to adjust your performance levels if required.

Where your performance has been assessed in the Annual Review as "Does not meet expectations" it is expected that you and your Nominated Supervisor will promptly establish a new Performance Plan. This Performance Plan will clarify expected performance levels and establish a reasonable time period within which the objectives or KPIs are to be met and will also include any appropriate development activities that will support performance to the required standard. Through this, your Nominated Supervisor will clarify the nature of the improvement required.

If your performance does not improve to the required standard under the terms of the new Performance Plan, your Nominated Supervisor will manage your performance in accordance with the process and procedures outlined in the policy on "Managing Performance".

**Q19: What happens after the Annual Review?**

**A19:** Once your Annual Review has been completed, the next Performance Development cycle begins. You and your Nominated Supervisor should discuss and document the new Performance Plan immediately following the Annual Review. Your Nominated Supervisor may, prior to this, hold discussions with the staff of the unit to clarify and confirm priorities for the next review period. The outcomes of your last Annual Review will also help to inform your new Performance Plan.

**Q20: What happens if I change positions in the University? How would this affect the Performance Development Program process for me?**

**A20:** If you change positions within the University, it is recommended that you and your Nominated Supervisor complete the equivalent of an Annual Review prior to moving to your new role. This will not be necessary if an Annual Review has been conducted within the 4 months prior to your move.

A new Performance Plan will need to be completed with your new Nominated Supervisor within one month of commencing in the new position.

**Q21. Is the Performance Development Program confidential, how many copies are made and where are the completed forms kept?**

**A21:** All matters relating to the Performance Development Program process are strictly confidential. Care, therefore, should be exercised when forwarding PDP documents between campuses and offices. Such documentation should be marked "Confidential" and

the original completed Performance Plan and Annual Review forms are forwarded to L&D at Mackillop, North Sydney campus. On receipt of this documentation, it will be updated on your electronic record (PayGlobal) and sent to Strathfield to be placed in your personal file. A record of the sections relating to the Individual Learning and Development Proposal and Outcomes is collated by the Learning and Development Unit for planning purposes. Your Nominated Supervisor also keeps a copy and provides one to you for personal retention.

**Q22: Is there a link between the Performance Development Program and my Incremental Progression?**

**A22:** Yes, your Nominated Supervisor must conduct a review of your performance prior to recommending your incremental progression or any rewards for performance. Where your Nominated Supervisor considers that your performance is not satisfactory, they may set a new review date no more than 6 months after the anniversary date of your increment at which time, your performance will again be reviewed.

**Q23: How do I find out more about the program?**

**A23:** If you wish to obtain further information on the Performance Development Program, you should first seek clarification from your Nominated Supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of the arrangements in your work area.

Should you require further information on the policy; questions can be directed to your local Human Resources Consultant.

Other relevant Policies and Q&As:

Incremental Progression for General Staff  
Rewarding Performance for General Staff