

Introduction

Performance Review Dialogues
for managers and employees at the
University of Borås

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Performance Review Dialogues

Performance review dialogues are an opportunity for employees and managers to, as an overview, review expectations and give each other feedback on the previous work period. The performance review dialogues are characterised by conversations in which employees have the opportunity to discuss their work situation, the future, and their own development. Although it is the employee who is in focus, the conversation is based on the university's circumstances and needs.

In point form, the purpose of the performance review dialogue is as follows:

- To develop the individual and organisation towards the university's goals.
- To develop consensus and a good collaborative climate.
- To strengthen the relationship between managers and employees.
- To attend to any shortcomings in the work environment and signs of illness.

The university's performance review dialogue documentation consists of two parts. The first part consists of preparatory material to be filled out beforehand and then used during the dialogue. The second part is documentation of the performance review dialogue; it is then followed up with the "Individual Development Plan". This is also the material that forms the basis for salary/salary-determining discussions. The preparatory material is divided into different areas: *Work environment and well-being; Employeeship; Goal-fulfilment and performance; Development contribution; Innovation, utilisation and collaboration; University or Faculty/department focus areas and other; Teaching; Research/artistic development; and Leadership.*

The areas in the preparatory material, apart from Work environment and well-being, are based on the principles that the university has in the established salary criteria. The questions within each area are examples; they aim to stimulate thoughts and concerns about, for example, what goals should be set for the coming year. There are also issues concerning work environment as well as space for other questions that can be addressed in the performance review dialogue. **It is important not to see these issues as a checklist; rather, managers and employees can base the dialogue on those questions that are relevant.** There may be other questions that need to be discussed in the dialogue. There may also be university or Faculty/department focus areas that are determined annually and which should be known to employees prior to the performance review dialogue.

Employees and managers together will, in the performance review dialogue, formulate the applicable goals for the coming year.

The link between performance review dialogues and salary/salary-determining discussions.¹

There is a link between performance review dialogues and salary/salary-determining discussions. In January-March, performance review dialogues between employees and managers are held. Performance review dialogues are forward-looking, focus on personnel and organisational development, and result in an individual development plan. The employee will then work towards the goals for the coming year. Salary/salary-determining discussions focus on the present and the past and look back at the previous working period. In the salary/salary-determining discussions, the manager and employee review and evaluate goal achievement, performance, and how the employee has contributed to the university's development. Salary/salary-determining discussions are to be conducted in September-October in connection with salary review.

¹ Salary-determining discussions are the primary model that applies for Saco-S members; this means that the employee's salary is determined directly in talks between employees and managers, rather than in negotiations between the employer and the union. Salary discussions are dialogues in which employees and managers meet to discuss the employee's performance and achievement. However, new individual salary negotiations take place with the unions.

Things to consider before, during, and after the performance review dialogue:

To consider before the performance review dialogue

- Employees and managers prepare, separately, by considering which of the areas/questions/reflections that can be found in the "Preparatory Material for Performance Review Dialogues" should form the basis for the dialogues. **Note that the preparatory material should thus not be seen as a checklist in which all questions will be answered.**
- Is there a university or Faculty/department focus area that should be discussed in the dialogue?
- It is a good idea to use your notes from last year's salary/salary-determining discussions as a basis for your preparation. The notes can also be used in the performance review dialogue.

To consider during the performance review dialogue

- Begin with determining which areas/issues to focus on during the dialogue.
- Be factual, clear, and be sure to listen.
- Be specific and give examples of what you mean.
- The dialogue is confidential; try to be honest and have an open discussion.
- Take your share of the responsibility for having a good and meaningful conversation. Preparation is very important.
- Goals that apply to the employee for the coming year are documented in the "Individual Development Plan." You can set goals related to both work tasks and skills development as well as come to agreement on what measures and activities should be implemented and how. Formulate these goals together in the document.
- The objectives should be formulated on the basis of employee and organisational needs, the operational plan, and the university's overall goals. **Please note: All employees do not need to have goals related to all criteria.**
- Formulate clear goals that can be followed up upon.
- Keep in mind that clarity around goals during the dialogue facilitates the salary/salary-determining discussions.
- Keep the conversation focused on the employee and how his/her performance and skills can be developed and what objectives will thus be set for the coming year. Remember that the goals can be both short and long term.
- Check that you both have discussed the areas/issues that you wanted to focus on during the dialogue.
- The manager and employee will both sign the "Individual Development Plan" and thus establish the final version of the objectives that will apply to the employee in the coming year.
- The manager will retain the original version of the signed documentation. The employee receives a copy.
- Give each other feedback on how you experienced the dialogue.

To consider after the performance review dialogue

- The signed documents will be saved and kept by the manager for at least five years.
- If the manager leaves the university, the "Individual Development Plan" will be entrusted to the next manager.
- If, during the dialogue, you both agree on something that is to be given feedback upon or followed-up on by either the manager or employee--remember to do it!

Employee's preparation

The employee should prepare for the dialogue by reviewing the manager's instructions as well as the material "Preparatory Material for Performance Review Dialogues". Preliminary information is provided either in a meeting or through instructions by email.

Employees can take the following questions into account during preparations:

- *Are there specific issues related to the university and/or Faculty/department that you believe should come up in the dialogue?*
- *How has the work of the Faculty/department/unit affected you over the course of this year?*
- *Do you feel that demands and expectations have felt manageable and meaningful?*
- *Do you have any specific skills development needs for the future?*
- *What feedback do you want to give to your manager?*

Manager's preparation

The manager should prepare for the dialogue by taking into consideration the discussions being had at different organisational levels ahead of the performance review dialogues.

The process begins in the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Council where work is done to create a shared picture of what is ongoing in the organisation, in what direction the university will be driven, and how that will be actualised in the performance review dialogues with all employees. There may be particular focus areas for the year. Discussions about how the overall principles from the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Council are to be applied within the various areas of the university are then undertaken in the Professional Services's and Faculties' Advisory Councils.

Managers can take the following questions into account during preparations:

- *What shared characteristic elements of the university or Faculty/department should be addressed in the dialogue?*
- *What stage is your Faculty/department/unit in? Has it recently undergone or will there soon be changes that affect most employees?*
- *In which direction do you want to drive the organisation and what do you want to build consensus around?*
- *What common goals and strategies are relevant to communicate in performance review dialogues and how they can be made meaningful and manageable for employees?*
- *Are there new roles or changing skills requirements?*
- *What feedback do you want to give the employee (good performance, successful behaviours, strengths as well as areas for development)?*
- *What do you want get feedback on from your employees?*

Follow-up

After completing performance review dialogues, the form "Performance Review Dialogue Follow-up" should be filled in by the manager and sent to HR. Feedback regarding university-wide issues is to be reported to HR and Faculty/departmental issues should be taken up with the relevant leadership.