



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Performance Appraisal & Planning Policy and Procedures

March 2012



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Section 1: Context

1 Introduction

The Uniting Church in Australia as an employer, is committed to an ethos of integrity, inclusion, respect for others and the environment, justice, openness and honesty. By applying this ethos through the management and engagement of its staff, the Uniting Church is striving to develop a work environment and culture which:

- Provides meaningful and rewarding work for all
- Values and respects individual difference
- Acknowledges, and where possible rewards, performance excellence
- Provides a safe place for feedback and review
- Gives appropriate support and encouragement
- Is committed to productivity and efficiency
- Promotes a healthy and sustainable work life balance
- Supports and fosters professional growth and development

2 Definition

“Operations”

For the purpose of this policy “Operations” is defined as those areas which are part of the Congregation

3 Context

Over a period of some years a number of different models of performance review have been adopted but overall there has been a ‘one size fits all’ approach which is not reflective of the diversity of the workplace.

4 Workplace diversity

The nature of work performed across the congregational sites is diverse. Whilst some areas have clearly articulated and measureable deadlines and outcomes around expected performance, others function in a ministry, community development or Field Services context where such objective measurement is possible but requires different forms of bench-marking.

The Performance Appraisal and Planning Policy seeks to meet the performance appraisal needs and expectations of all elements of operations by providing a universal framework which can accommodate customized arrangements for very different work areas.



Section 2: Performance Appraisal and Planning Policy

1 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Congregation that all staff employed within 'Congregational Operations' will participate in an individual Performance Planning and Appraisal process at least annually. The rhythm of that process will be determined in each area in accordance with workflow demands, and authorised by the relevant Chair of Church Council.

2 Objective

The purpose of the Performance Planning and Review process is to create an imaginative environment in which staff are energized through participation, individual and systemic performance is enhanced, aspirations are nurtured and people are valued for what they bring to the workplace. The process is an opportunity for the manager and staff member to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year, and to plan for the next year in the context of the Congregational / Presbytery strategy. This is also a critical opportunity to review the current position description and the alignment between the position description and actual performance expectations.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff of the Congregational Operations.

4 Application

4.1 Work area needs

Each area of Congregational Operations will determine a customized "Performance Planning and Appraisal" process to be applied to that area of operations. Each customized process will operate within a universal framework (see 4.4 below) to ensure that the values of the organization are sustained and nourished, and that appropriate recognition is given to each individual and unit for the valuable contribution made to the strategic direction of the Congregation / Presbytery.

4.2 Process design

The "Performance Planning and Appraisal" process proposed for each area will be prepared in consultation with the Chair of Church Council and will require the approval of the Presbytery prior to implementation.

4.3 Universal Framework

The Staff Appraisal and Planning process to be implemented within each work area will be tailored to suit the needs of each context within the bounds of a universal framework and within the context of the themes of:

- Discipleship
- Leadership
- Partnership
- Risk taking

Each of the focus areas (see 4.4 below) must be included in the staff appraisal and planning process designed for each work area. Within some focus areas there are some "non-negotiable" considerations that must be addressed to ensure the Congregation meets its obligations as an employer. Other items may be incorporated by each work

area based on their context and needs. Synod HR will provide support and advice, including sample template forms for consideration.

4.4 Framework Focus Areas

- 1) Review of previous years achievements or contributions to the Congregation/Presbytery
- 2) Alignment between current work performance and employee's Position Description
- 3) Working within the ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia
- 4) Contribution to team development and performance
- 5) Competencies including interpersonal, communication and organisational skills
- 6) Technical skills and knowledge appropriate to the work area
- 7) Planning for the future
- 8) Ongoing development and improvement
- 9) Employee satisfaction and work/life balance
- 10) Workplace environment and context
 - i. Do you have the required resources to fulfil your role?
 - ii. Are there any impediments or barriers to you fulfilling your role? If so please describe them.
 - iii. Describe the level of support you receive from your colleagues/manager.

5 Filing

In order to finalise the performance appraisal and planning process the completed form will be signed by the relevant staff member and manager and a copy lodged with the Congregation / Presbytery to enable appropriate maintenance of records.

6 Monitoring and Improvement

The Congregation/Presbytery will review this policy as required but at least every two years.

7 Related Policies And Procedures

Equal Opportunity Policy



Section 3: Planning, guidance notes and procedures

1 Planning, guidance notes and procedures

It is important that managers and staff members find the performance appraisal process to be a positive experience. In order to help to achieve this information on planning and procedures is provided below as well as some guidance notes for staff members and managers.

2 Planning

2.1 Preparation

Preparation for both manager and staff member includes

- reflection about each key heading of the Performance Appraisal and Planning form
- making notes under each heading to assist with discussion
- review of current staff member position description and identification of potential amendments (these may be required for a range of reasons including a new direction of the work unit or the need to respond to new legislative or regulatory requirements)
- consideration of overall performance – final section

2.2 Scheduling

The time for the performance appraisal meeting should be scheduled not less than one week in advance. It is important that discussions are not rushed so 45 minutes to an hour should be allowed for discussions between staff member and manager.

3 Guidance notes

3.1 For staff members

Performance appraisal is part of the ongoing process of professional learning and development of every staff member. Constructive feedback enhances self-awareness and helps to identify areas for further professional development.

Constructive feedback includes recognition of strengths and achievements as well as developmental input. Where areas for improvement are raised it is important to listen carefully, to clarify with your manager exactly what is required of you, and to make sure that expectations are documented clearly in the appraisal form. These expectations can form the basis of a strategy for development which is agreed between staff member and manager.

This process is also an opportunity for staff members to undertake a thorough review of their position descriptions (PD). Consider each section of the PD and make notes ready for discussion – have additional and ongoing responsibilities been required during the last 12 months, are additional competencies required, is interaction required with a broader range of people, is any new knowledge required?

Staff members should also consider what kind of professional development will assist them to enhance their capacity in their particular position and field.



The Synod Human Resources team is available to assist any staff members who have queries or require assistance in preparing for the appraisal process.



3.2 For managers

Arrange for the performance appraisal and planning process to be in a private and quiet environment and ensure that there are no interruptions.

It should be noted that staff may be anxious about the performance appraisal and planning process and managers have a responsibility to ensure that the process is positive and constructive from the outset.

It can be helpful to start with a general question about how the staff member has felt about his / her work for the last 12 months, and what he / she feels has been the greatest or most satisfying work place achievement.

During the process it is critical that managers listen carefully and allow employees plenty of opportunity to be heard. Clear and positive acknowledgement of the staff member's achievements sets a positive framework for planning for the next 12 months.

Overall staff members will have had positive intentions even although outcomes may not always have been up to expectations so it is important that managers are sensitive to this. Ensure that you are clear and specific about areas for development and seek staff member input on strategies to address these.

It is also important to ensure that the appraisal process covers the whole job and the full 12 month review period. This helps to ensure that the process is fair and that any particular problem area does not prejudice the rest of the appraisal process.

The appraisal and planning process should not contain any surprises for the staff member in relation to problem issues. These should be addressed as they arise and not 'saved' for the appraisal process.

The Synod Human Resources team is available to assist any managers who have queries or require assistance in preparing for the appraisal process.



4 Procedure

Who	Actions
(a) Presbytery staff member TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ determines an appropriate performance planning and appraisal process and document within the framework of the Performance Appraisal and Planning Policy▪ determines an appropriate annual performance appraisal cycle suited to the work area (s)
(b) Chair of Church Council TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ approves performance planning and appraisal process and document
(c) Manager*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ provides the staff member with a copy of his / her position description▪ provides the staff member with a performance appraisal form▪ arranges a time for the appraisal meeting giving notice of at least 1 week▪ makes notes for discussion in each section of the performance appraisal form
(d) Staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ lists key responsibilities from his / her position description in performance appraisal form▪ makes notes for discussion in each section of the performance appraisal form
(e) Manager and Staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ meet as arranged in a quiet setting which is free from interruptions▪ discuss each section of the performance appraisal form taking into consideration notes of both manager and staff member
(f) Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ takes into account employee perspective in each section and incorporates as appropriate into performance appraisal form
(g) Manager and Staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ sign the completed performance appraisal form. If for any reason the staff member does not sign the form then this should be noted by the manager together with reasons for lack of staff member signature
(h) Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ provides staff member with a copy of the signed performance appraisal form▪ within 7 days, lodges the performance appraisal form with the Presbytery in an envelope marked "confidential"

* The term 'manager' is used in a generic sense and may have another title including Director

Section 4: Performance appraisal and planning template

Version: 01/2012

When / how to use this form

This form is a tool for Performance Appraisal for staff in the Congregations of the Uniting Church in Australia. All sections of the form should be completed in the context of the strategic directions of "On The Way Together"

Information or comments contained in the form may be amended during performance appraisal discussions. Once finalised the form should be signed by manager and employee and a copy forwarded to the Presbytery in an envelope marked "Confidential".

The form can be completed by clicking tab to go to each field.

SECTION 1: Employee details

Name			
Position			
Unit		Commission / Secretariat	
Manager / Reviewer			

SECTION 2: Achievements / Progress

In this section please refer to your position description, list key functions of your position and comment on achievements or progress towards goals.

Key function	Comments

SECTION 3: Position description review

1 Identify any amendments needed for staff member position description

2 Identify ways in which the staff member demonstrates that he / she works within the ethos of the Uniting Church

3 Identify ways in which the staff member contributes to his / her team

4 Outline current level of job satisfaction and work life balance and any plans for change during the next 12 months

SECTION 4: Competencies

This section has been designed to provide opportunity to consider a range of employee competencies / attributes but please note that it is not necessary to provide a comment in every box. Comments and proposed actions should be included in any competency which noted as 'Needs improvement'.

Key competencies/(attributes)	Employee Competence			Actions / Comments	Completion Date (if required)
	Excellent	Good	Needs improvement		
Capacity to work within the ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Capacity to listen to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Capacity to plan effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Capacity to meet deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Capacity to work as effective team member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Client service skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Financial management skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Key competencies/(attributes)	Employee Competence			Actions / Comments	Completion Date (if required)
	Excellent	Good	Needs improvement		
Professional knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Interpersonal skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Organisational skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Problem solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Networking skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Team management skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

SECTION 5: Goals - 2012

Goal	Actions in 2011	Timeline

SECTION 6: Professional Development Plan 2012

In preparing this plan for 2012 consideration should be given to professional development needed to assist in goals outlined in Section 4 as well as the long term needs of your role /unit.

Area for Development	Purpose	Activity	Estimated Completion Date

SECTION 7: General

Discussion should include (a) any need for additional support from manager or colleagues (b) any particular performance needs / impediments

SECTION 8: Signatures

Employee	
Manager	
Date	
Date for next review	

Section 5: Process flow chart

