

## POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

POLICY NUMBER:	POH081211000
PREVIOUS POLICY NUMBER:	POH060510000 ( <i>amended 22/12/08 via minor amendments</i> )
POLICY NAME:	Staff Performance and Development Planning ("SPDP")
DATE APPROVED:	18 December 2008
POLICY TYPE AND CATEGORY:	Human Resources
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Director Human Resources
FIRST EFFECTIVE FROM:	15 May 2006

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The Staff Performance and Development Plan (SPDP) process provides a structured opportunity for staff to plan for and reflect on individual goals and professional development and is integral to the growth of staff and their accountability with the University. The process links closely to career planning and development, promotion, probation, succession planning and mechanisms for identifying and addressing poor performance.

This process reflects the University's commitment to providing staff with forward-looking opportunities for personal and professional growth. Through this, organisational capacity and capabilities will be strengthened which will in turn support the achievement of the University outcomes in engaged teaching, learning and research.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Prior to 2006 there was a range of performance management and related tools used for specific groups of staff within the University, eg. Performance Enhancement and Development Scheme (PEDS) for Higher Education and General staff. However, there was no comprehensive and consistent performance management system for all staff.
- 2.2 The Voice It staff climate survey conducted in 2004 and 2006 identified that the majority of staff believe there is insufficient time spent on career planning.
- 2.3 In response to 2.1 and 2.2 above, the SPDP process, a key part of which is an online tool, was introduced across the University from June 2006. Since then all continuing and fixed term staff members work towards an individual performance and development plan which has been discussed and agreed with their supervisor. It is planned that casual and sessional staff will also be incorporated into the SPDP process in the future.
- 2.4 The staff objective of the University's current strategic direction, *Making VU 2016: A Statement of Purpose*, is to engage staff in a creative and rewarding learning community for the benefit of students, staff and other stakeholders. Several strategies relating to this objective are closely linked with VU's SPDP framework by ensuring it:

- focuses professional development and learning opportunities around University strategy
- embeds leadership capabilities and management competencies at all levels of the University
- builds the professionalism and expertise of general staff to support the University's core business
- is designed to nurture sustained performance
- provides mechanisms to address underperformance.

### 3.0 DEFINITIONS

**Staff Performance and Development Plan** – a structured, individualised approach to managing performance and developing capability in the University. The process is designed to allow supervisors and staff to create simple, effective performance and development plans and to easily review performance against those plans where performance refers to both the application of skills and conduct /behaviour.

**Professional development** – A systematic approach to professional and career development to ensure that all staff have the capabilities necessary to fulfill their roles, develop themselves and their careers, adapt to change and assist in developing others.

**Review** – (i) a meeting held between the supervisor and staff member specifically to discuss performance and progress measured against their performance and development plan. (ii) a document which sets out an individual's progress and performance towards their plan by way of ratings and comments by both the staff member and the supervisor

**Plan** - an abbreviation for the Staff Performance and Development Plan, usually referred to when discussing an individual's plan as part of the annual performance and development cycle.

### 4.0 KEY WORDS

Performance management; performance and development plan; performance review; poor performance; career development; professional development; review.

### 5.0 PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 The SPDP process focuses on growth and aims to provide every staff member with personal and professional development opportunities.
- 5.2 The SPDP process is based on feedback where every staff member has regular meaningful performance conversations with their supervisor and engages in a process of giving, seeking and receiving constructive feedback.
- 5.3 The SPDP process is intended to be a dynamic, interactive and transparent one based on the principles of :
  - 5.3.1 shared responsibility, with each supervisor and staff member expected to make a contribution to the staff member's annual Plan, and,
  - 5.3.2 accountability, where there is transparent documentation of staff member's goals, workload and achievements.
- 5.4 The SPDP process is approached in a manner that is fair and transparent, consistent with the values of the University and that encourages trust and regular, open communication.
- 5.5 The process aligns the individual's annual objectives and performance with the University's Strategic Plan and values, setting clear goals, targets, expectations and standards for both performance and behaviour.

Performance and conduct/behaviour is then assessed in relation to these goals and targets and consistent with both the individuals' position description and with the workload allocation as agreed each year.

- 5.6 The University encourages and supports a culture of continuous learning and performance improvement through ongoing professional and career development of its staff.
- 5.7 The SPDP process will encourage staff to perform at their best.
- 5.8 The SPDP process will assist staff who are not performing at the required level through the identification of guidance, support and professional development opportunities required for their performance to improve.

## 6. POLICY

- 6.1 Participation in the SPDP process is mandatory for all ongoing and fixed term staff, irrespective of time fraction and/or length of contract.
- 6.2 The process is based on an annual planning and review cycle coordinated with VU's planning to effectively align individual goals with University objectives. The SPDP cycle involves at least two formal performance meetings between a staff member and supervisor during each cycle, (see below). However, it is expected that a staff member and his/her supervisor will informally discuss performance more regularly as a means of supporting continuous improvement practices.

### STAFF PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANNUAL CYCLE

Time line	Action	Reference
December – March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review prior year's objectives and consider outcomes.</li> <li>• Set objectives for coming year.</li> <li>• Agree professional development.</li> </ul>	"SPDP Round"
By end March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPDP plan agreed for coming year.</li> </ul>	
July/August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of objectives and progress to date through the Mid Cycle Review process.</li> <li>• Opportunity for updating objectives or re-setting priorities for second six months of the Plan.</li> </ul>	"Mid Cycle Review"

- 6.3 In establishing the annual Plan, supervisors and staff will set clear performance objectives reflecting workplace priorities, team and organisational plans and individual career plans. In this way the process closely links the priorities of the University Strategic direction and priorities and associated unit strategic plans to the individual's Plan.

### How the University Strategic Objectives Relate to Performance Plans

#### *MAKING VU 2016: A Statement of Purpose*



- 6.4 The Plan encompasses continuous learning, improvement and individual career progression.
- 6.5 The Plan focuses on performance standards using evidence/data (eg a portfolio approach) through such mechanisms as peer and student evaluations or other documented evaluation tools, and values staff, student and client feedback.
- 6.6 The Plan supports the development of strategies to:
- (i) further encourage high performance, and,
  - (ii) identify support and development to improve performance by linking to the University's industrial obligations, policies and processes for managing performance that does not meet expected standards.
- 6.7 The Plan is integral to the University's procedures for salary increments and its policy framework on rewards and recognition; the performance review ratings will have a direct correlation with these policies and procedures.
- 6.8 New staff will use a module of the SPDP process during their probationary period to agree and regularly review with their supervisor a probation report which documents their progress made against their probation criteria (objectives) in line with the University's Probation Policy.
- 6.9 Opportunities for professional and career development, including Higher Education academic promotions processes, can be identified through the Plan. The action undertaken by both the staff member and the supervisor in relation to these opportunities, as well as the outcomes, are documented as part of the SPDP review process.
- 6.10 The SPDP process is undertaken by a staff member's usual line manager ("supervisor") unless alternative arrangements are more appropriate for the purposes of the SPDP.
- 6.11 If a staff member is aggrieved by the process and all efforts to remedy the situation at the local level are exhausted, the staff member may request that the Senior Officer of the organisational unit reviews the situation. The Senior Officer will then determine the matter. If the staff member's supervisor is the Senior or Principal Officer, then the relevant Principal Officer or the Vice Chancellor respectively will review the situation and determine the matter.

## 7.0 PROCEDURES

- 7.1 The SPDP comprises several key steps, listed below and set out in Appendix 1.
- 7.1.1 The University's strategic priorities set the objectives and high level key performance indicators (KPIs) which cascade into each area's strategic and operational plan.
- 7.1.2 The strategic plans for organisational units then identify objectives, KPIs and strategies for new initiatives and continuous improvement for these areas. These are normally made reference to in each staff member's Plan.
- 7.1.3 For academic staff members, the VU Standards for Academic Levels as set out in the Academic Classification Policy are also articulated at this stage of the Plan.
- 7.1.4 Supervisors should complete their own Plan before they develop a Plan with their staff members to ensure overall alignment.
- 7.1.5 The staff member and their supervisor then develop a Plan based on 7.1.2, 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 above, the staff member's position description and consistent with the workload allocation agreed for that year. For example, an academic or teaching staff member may plan around their teaching and learning, research activity, external engagement, etc.
- Plans will set out for each staff member:
- Their objectives for the coming year.
  - A statement setting out how they will 'live' the University values.
  - Their agreed professional development activities for the coming year which will support them in achieving their objectives.
  - Their career aspirations and opportunities (optional)
  - The support required from their supervisor to help them achieve their objectives.
- 7.1.6 The Plan is then used as the basis for the formal review meetings between the staff member and their supervisor. At least two formal review meetings should take place during each annual cycle: one in July/August to review progress and update the plan (the 'Mid Cycle Review') and a review in December – March to discuss and assess outcomes.
- 7.1.7 The staff member is advised to collect on an ongoing basis evidence /data relating to their Plan for use in the review meetings; a portfolio approach is encouraged. Likewise, the supervisor should fully prepare for the reviews collating information and feedback relating to the staff member's Plan on an ongoing basis.
- 7.1.8 During the planning meeting, support and development opportunities, including those for career development, are identified including, where necessary, strategies to improve performance that does not meet expected standards.
- 7.1.9 Once agreed, the Plan is approved online and a copy is available at any time to the staff member, their supervisor, their supervisor's supervisor and up the line in accordance with an effective management framework.
- 7.2 The Plan recognises that an individual's responsibilities, duties and key performance indicators may vary over time according to changing organisational needs. Accordingly the process allows for reasonable and agreed modifications to be made.
- 7.3 An outline of the objectives of, and processes associated with, the SPDP will be incorporated into the University's induction and orientation processes for all new staff.

- 7.4 The Vice Chancellor, who has online access to the plans for all staff members, reserves the right from time to time to undertake a check on the quality of individual plans to ensure consistency and quality of approach to the SPDP process.

## 8.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES

- *Victoria University (Academic and General Staff) Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2005*
- *Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Multi-Employer Certified Agreement 2003 (MECA)*
- Probation Policy
- Higher Education Academic Promotions Policy and Procedures
- Academic Classification Policy
- HR Delegations Policy
- Market Loadings Policy
- *Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Multi-Business Agreement 2009 (MBA)*

## 9.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*iedex* Consultants – for the design and enhancements to the SPDP online tool  
Monash University – Performance Development Process: Academic Staff

## 10.0 CONSULTATION

Originally - with SPDP Steering Committee for the design, development and pilot of the SPDP process  
During the policy review – with HR Advisors, Employee Relations and University wide.

## 11.0 REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed again no later than 31 December 2011.

## 12.0 ACCOUNTABILITIES

### 12.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Staff Member** is responsible for:

- contributing to the development of their SPDP
- maintaining an up to date portfolio of evidence to support their performance
- actively using opportunities for personal and professional development
- attending relevant SPDP training when required

The **Supervisor** is responsible for:

- providing ongoing, regular and constructive feedback to staff
- approving plans
- ensuring that plans are aligned to unit goals
- formally meeting with the staff member to review – annually and mid cycle
- completing relevant training

Where a staff member has more than one supervisor, the nominated primary supervisor is responsible for consulting with the other supervisor(s) to determine the plan and review comments

**Human Resources** is responsible for:

- the implementation, maintenance and review of this Policy
- maintaining and enhancing the online tool
- providing effective training

## 12.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 12.3 TRAINING PLAN

Module 1 – overview of the SPDP framework, training on the online process and objective-setting.

Module 2 - workshops relating to other aspects of the process, eg coaching for success, giving and receiving feedback

Workshops on both modules for both supervisors and staff are provided by the Staff Professional Development Unit (SPDU) throughout the year and in particular during the SPDP rounds

Ongoing support and guidance is also available through the SPDU, Human Resources Advisors and SPDP Administration, and a network of identified SPDP "champions".

### 12.4 COMPLIANCE

All ongoing and fixed term staff members will have an individual staff performance and development plan annually agreed no later than March each year.

### 12.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY

- Completion rates of Plans by 31 March each year
- Checks by the Vice Chancellor on the quality of plans
- Review ratings average reports from SPDP tool
- No. of performance improvement cases
- Voice It Staff Climate Survey results

## 13.0 POLICY ADVISOR

Manager, Workforce Policy & Projects, Human Resources on x4101

## 14.0 FORMS

## 15.0 APPENDICES

- *Appendix 1* – Summary of the SPDP Online Process
- *Appendix 2* – The SPDP Cycle
- *Appendix 3* – Guidelines for Performance Improvement Planning

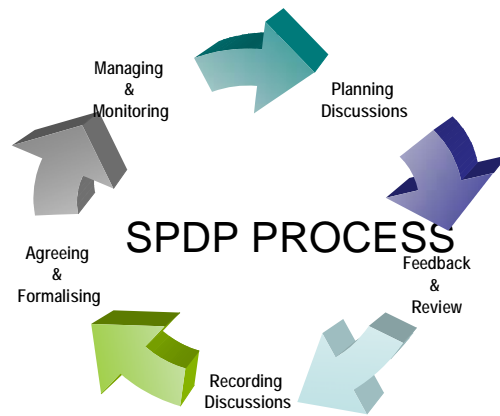
**Appendix 1**

**SUMMARY OF THE SPDP ONLINE PROCESS**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHO</b>
December - March	Staff details from CHRIS uploaded to SPDP online tool	SPDP Administrator
December - March	Staff and supervisor draft a plan in preparation for their one on one discussion	Supervisor & Staff member
December - March	One-on one meeting to discuss draft Plan and agree final Plan	Supervisor & Staff Member
July - August	Formal mid year review of objectives and progress to date	Supervisor & Staff Member
July - September	Enhancements made to SPDP online tool in response to feedback, testing undertaken and resources updated	SPDP Administrator
December - March	Formal end of year review. Cycle starts again and new plans developed.	Supervisor & Staff Member

*"The current official version of this policy is maintained on the Victoria University Central Policy Register and downloading and printing of this policy will produce an uncontrolled copy which may not be current."*

## Appendix 2 The SPDP Cycle



# GUIDELINES

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

### Appendix 3

*These guidelines have been developed to assist where a staff member's performance, (their application of skill set or conduct), is not meeting expected standards as articulated by their supervisor. The Guidelines support the University's performance and development planning and review processes through the SPDP framework. It is expected that these Guidelines will be used in conjunction with the relevant training such as Coaching for Success, Having Effective Performance Conversations.*

### Contents

1. [Purpose](#)
  2. [Background](#)
  3. [Definitions](#)
  4. [Principles](#)
  5. [Steps in the Performance Improvement Planning Process](#)
  6. [Timeframes](#)
  7. [Examples of Under-Performance and Possible Actions](#)
  8. [Case Studies](#)
  9. [References](#)
- [Appendix 1: Performance Improvement Plan Template](#)  
[Appendix 2: Flowchart for Effectively Managing Performance Improvement](#)

### 1. PURPOSE

These Guidelines aim to:

- Ensure the conduct and performance of all staff members at VU is at an acceptable standard thereby contributing to the University's overall productivity and performance
- Ensure all staff members are treated consistently, fairly and reasonably when concerns regarding performance are identified;
- Provide principles and processes to effectively guide supervisors and staff members through a performance improvement planning process;
- Assist supervisors in identifying obstacles to the achievement of performance standards and targets and in implementing measures to overcome them promptly. and,

It is not intended that this document provides guidance on formal disciplinary procedures that would be followed to address sustained unsatisfactory performance or conduct by a staff member. This is covered separately by employment agreements. However, it is anticipated that prior to any disciplinary action being taken under these agreements, a performance improvement plan process would have been implemented and reviewed for all instances where performance does not meet expectations.

It is important to remember that performance is made up of both conduct and skill application. It is also important that concerns regarding performance are identified and communicated as early as possible and steps are taken to immediately remedy this. Withholding constructive feedback is unfair on the staff member, other staff, the team, clients and the University. Although the Staff Performance and Development Plan (SPDP) process provides a structure for formal performance reviews (mid-cycle and end of year) concerns regarding performance should be addressed without waiting for these formal reviews and, where appropriate, a performance improvement plan (PIP) should be agreed with the staff member and implemented. Such a PIP should include any guidance, training or development activities, additional support or assistance needed by the staff member to ensure they meet the required standards within a reasonable and agreed timeframe.

The supervisor has the discretion to set appropriate and reasonable timelines based on the nature of the job and specific areas of performance that are considered to be of concern. Every effort shall be made to resolve performance concerns through guidance, counseling, appropriate staff development and/or appropriate work allocation.

# **GUIDELINES**

## **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

There may be circumstances where external events or illness may have impacted on a staff member's ability to work to their usual standard or meet their objectives on time; in these circumstances the performance improvement process can identify and document any reasonable (and in most cases temporary) arrangements made to address this.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

It is the responsibility of all supervisors to regularly communicate with their staff and to provide feedback on their performance both positive and negative. Supervisors together with their staff member are required to set clear performance objectives and standards that are aligned with the position description of the staff member and the University's strategic direction, and consider the professional development and career aspirations of the staff member. These objectives are documented and reviewed in accordance with the Staff Performance and Development Plan (SPDP) framework.

The Staff Performance and Development Plan (SPDP) framework provides a mechanism by which staff members' performance can be planned for and subsequently objectively assessed. This means that the performance of some staff members may, for whatever reason, be formally assessed as not meeting expected standards. Effective staff performance is dependent upon the commitment and willingness of supervisors to pro-actively manage the performance of their staff and to promptly address problems when they arise. Supervisors should never ignore performance concerns but should seek to address it at the first opportunity to assist the staff member raise their performance to an acceptable standard.

Staff members vary in their level of competency, their potential and their motivation to contribute to the organization. VU, like all organizations, has from time to time some staff who are not contributing effectively to organizational objectives for a variety of reasons. It is essential for VU to be able to manage and resolve performance difficulties in a timely and efficient manner, and a clear understanding of the basis for performance concerns will facilitate a fair and efficient process. In this way, early identification and a constructive and supportive approach to performance concerns can lead to early and positive resolution.

**Performance improvement planning is a remedial, not a punitive exercise – the aim is to assist staff to perform at an acceptable level.**

The supervisor's role in performance management includes supporting their staff in meeting the requirements of their position, assisting their staff to develop and identifying when they are not performing to expectations. Any supervisor dealing with performance concerns should be familiar with these Guidelines.

These Guidelines assume that a SPDP plan is in place for a staff member and that the expectations of that staff member in terms of performance and development objectives have been made clear and can be used as a measure.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

**Staff Performance and Development Plan (SPDP)** - A structured, individualised approach to managing performance and developing capability in the University. The process is designed to allow supervisors and staff to create simple, effective performance management plans and to easily review performance against those plans.

**Performance improvement planning** – is used when performance is identified as being below some or all requirements and expectations. Example indicators include performance objectives not being achieved to agreed standards, display of behaviours which are inconsistent with the VU Values and the Staff Code of Conduct, the need for constant guidance and direction, regular failure to meet deadlines, poor organizational and planning skills and poor work output.

**PIP** – Performance Improvement Plan

# GUIDELINES

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Staff members should be advised by their supervisors in a timely manner of areas where they are not meeting required standards and should be provided with guidance and support to reach such required standards.
- 4.2 The resolution of performance concerns relies on using processes that identify the likely cause of the performance concern and the development of strategies and identification of further developmental opportunities that may improve performance.
- 4.3 Performance management and improvement at VU is a shared responsibility, with the supervisor and staff member expected to collaborate in taking appropriate action to address performance related issues.
- 4.4 The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be applied throughout the performance improvement process.

### 5. STEPS IN THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

- 5.1 Where it is identified either through SPDP or by day to day observation and there is evidence to demonstrate that a staff member is not meeting the required standards of work performance and/or behaviours, the supervisor will attempt to address the matter informally in the first instance.
- 5.2 The supervisor must arrange a meeting with the staff member and inform them that the meeting is in relation to having an informal discussion regarding their performance. **This should not wait until the formal SPDP mid cycle or end of cycle review.**
- 5.3 During this meeting the supervisor must verbally advise the staff member of their concern and provide evidence with specific examples to demonstrate where and how their performance is currently not meeting performance expectations. Each example must be discussed in sufficient detail and must be related to the performance and development objectives documented in their position description and/or in their SPDP or agreed subsequently.
- 5.4 The supervisor together with the staff member must:
  - Examine possible barriers which may be preventing the staff member from achieving the required standards; and
  - Develop strategies with the staff member to improve their performance and which address any identified barriers.
- 5.5 Where it is appropriate, this may include examining whether:
  - The staff member understands the expectations of their role, responsibilities and behaviour. Where a lack of such understanding is apparent, discussing the expectations of the role, revisiting the objectives agreed under SPDP, and reviewing the staff member's' position description may be appropriate.
  - The performance standards expected of the staff member are realistic and in accordance with the position description and competencies required for the HEW or Academic level of the staff member. If not, the supervisor must ensure that appropriate work and performance standards are set. The supervisor may need to review the classification of the position.
  - The work behaviours expected of the staff member are realistic and in accordance with the position description, the SPDP, University Values and the Staff Code of Conduct. If not, the supervisor must ensure that appropriate standards are set.

# **GUIDELINES**

## **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

- The staff member is aware of their performance deficiency and has been provided an opportunity to respond. The supervisor may reflect on whether appropriate feedback was provided to the staff member. This may include opportunities for the provision of both positive reinforcement for good work and constructive feedback in circumstances where work standards could have been improved.
- The staff member has the knowledge and skills to perform the responsibilities in their position description. Consideration may be given to identifying training and developmental opportunities for the staff member to undertake.
- The work practices support the staff member in undertaking the role. If they do not and they require re-organising, the problem may be a work practice-related one only and not a performance related issue.
- The staff member has the resources required to undertake the role. If the required resources are not available, the problem may be a resource one only and not a performance related issue.
- The staff member has an excessive workload or is acting in a higher capacity. If this appears to be the case, the supervisor should review the staff members' workload and examine/facilitate opportunities for higher duties as appropriate.
- There are obstacles preventing good performance. Where this appears to be the case, consider ways to remove the obstacles. This may involve: talking to other people, improving awareness, providing information, obtaining more equipment, clarifying expectations, and creating new systems or processes.
- The staff member has a reasonable level of job satisfaction. Staff members who are overqualified or have been in the same position for a long time may no longer find their job challenging or may lose interest in the job. In such circumstances the supervisor together with the staff member may consider career counselling options and assistance with job applications for alternative positions.
- There are appropriate reward and recognition strategies in place to positively reinforce and acknowledge high standards of work performance and thereby continue to motivate staff members. The supervisor may establish appropriate reward and recognition strategies in line with University guidelines.

5.6 Where external influences are identified as a contributing factor to the performance concerns, the supervisor may consider additional options available through the University. For instance, where personal issues are identified the supervisor may advise the staff member that they can seek assistance from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or via the University's Return To Work process. The EAP is a confidential, externally managed program available at no cost to the staff member.

5.7 From this initial discussion, the supervisor should develop a performance improvement plan which:

- sets appropriate performance standards for the staff member to meet;
- sets a reasonable timeframe to monitor the staff member's progress against these performance standards, providing them with the opportunity to improve their performance;
- provides support to assist the staff member to meet the expectations and objectives set in their PIP which may include, but is not limited to, training, counselling, close supervision and/or guidance; and

## **GUIDELINES**

### **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

- allocates a time for a review, for example four to eight weeks. The time period should be determined by the task(s) to be completed, the complexity of the improvement needed and the skill development needs of the staff member.

(Refer to the Performance Improvement Plan Template at *Appendix 2*)

#### **5.8 The supervisor must inform the staff member of the possible consequences of failing to achieve the required performance standards and the potential progression to formal disciplinary procedures for unsatisfactory performance.**

5.9 The supervisor should record notes of the discussions and actions to be taken, and keep records of times and dates of relevant events. A copy must be provided to the staff member.

5.10 While monitoring the staff member's progress during the review period, the supervisor must ensure regular communication with the staff member is maintained, providing appropriate feedback and ensuring that any improvements in the staff members performance is acknowledged and documented. Make it clear that no further action will be taken if their performance continues at a satisfactory level (see 5.10.6 below). The staff member must be provided with every opportunity for assistance to achieve the required performance standards.

- 5.10.1 The supervisor must meet with the staff member at the nominated review time and advise the staff member of their progress.
- 5.10.2 Provide support to assist the staff member to meet the expectations and objectives set in their performance improvement plan. This may include, but is not limited to, training, counselling, close supervision and/or coaching. This should be included as part of the performance improvement plan.
- 5.10.3 Ensure that any improvement in the staff member's performance is acknowledged and documented during follow-up discussions.
- 5.10.4 If the staff member is demonstrating difficulty in meeting expectations during the review period, speak to them immediately and determine what additional assistance is required to meet the expectations in the agreed time.
- 5.10.5 At the review the supervisor should inform the staff member that if their performance does not improve disciplinary action may commence at the next review. Continue to monitor the staff member's performance and provide agreed assistance throughout the set period.
- 5.10.6 Where the staff member's performance standards have reached a satisfactory level, no further action is required while the staff member's work performance continues at a satisfactory level.
- 5.10.7 Where the staff member has not met the required standards but has made significant improvements, or where there are reasonable mitigating circumstances, eg unplanned absence, the supervisor may extend the review period.
- 5.10.8 Where the staff member has not made significant progress toward meeting the required performance standards, the supervisor must inform the staff member that they will be initiating action under the relevant employment agreement. The supervisor should then contact Human Resources to discuss the next steps.

The above approach:

- Enables staff members to have a clear understanding of the requirements of their job and the standards of performance expected of them;

## GUIDELINES

### PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

- Provides a proactive mechanism for supervisors to assess and provide feedback and acknowledgment of staff performance;
- Contributes to achieving workplace excellence by encouraging and developing staff members to balance their individual needs with those of the University;
- Enables supervisors together with the staff member to develop strategies to address areas where required work standards are not met; and
- Reinforces the University's commitment to strengthening organisational capability and building a high performing workforce

#### 6. TIMEFRAMES

The time performance improvement can take varies considerably; promptly addressing performance issues may result in immediate improvement, in other cases a significant amount of time will be necessary to manage the situation. For example, a staff member involved in project work may require a considerable time period before outcomes can be measured. If a staff member is not performing because of personal issues they may require time off to deal with the issue. If the poor performance is caused by job expectations changing, and the staff member not having the skills or experience for the role, they may require further support and training to improve their performance and the time before improvement is made may be longer.

#### 7. EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE CONCERNS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Note this is not an exhaustive list. Performance issues can arise from a variety of circumstances and need to be managed on a case by case basis.

Issue	Possible Causes	Possible Actions
Staff member does not undertake work as required showing signs of apathy and laziness	Job content and design Inappropriate job fit Individual or external characteristics	Informal performance discussion  Be clear about the performance requirements and expectation of the role
Staff member shows aggressive behaviour which impacts on team cohesiveness	Unsatisfied with working conditions/content Individual or external characteristics Personal or health problems	Be clear about expectations for dealing with other people in the workplace – relate to VU values and Staff Code of Conduct  If performance issues, begin performance improvement planning process  If not impacting on performance achievements, explore reasons behind behaviour, consider workloads, job design, options for career transition, some leave or referral to EAP services
Staff member will not follow directions or perform tasks as required	Failure to understand what is required Inability to perform tasks	Begin PIP with informal discussions around what is required in the position. Look at possible options for training and development if a skill deficit is identified

## GUIDELINES

### PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

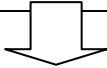
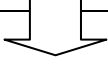
<p>Staff member does not complete work tasks to the required standard</p>	<p>Lacks the required skills and capabilities</p>	<p>Review recruitment practices to ensure appropriate selection decisions are being made</p> <p>Identify training and development opportunities as part of PIP</p> <p>If staff member fails to develop required skills, progress through performance management process and consider other possible options such as reassignment of duties, transfer to another area to achieve a better job fit</p>
<p>Staff member fails to acknowledge they are under-performing</p>	<p>Performance issues have not been adequately explained</p> <p>Process has not been adequately applied</p> <p>Staff member does not accept supervisor assessments</p>	<p>Ensure that a clear and well-communicated process is adopted</p> <p>Re-establish expected outcomes, use evidence of how performance has failed to meet expected standards, explain the impact of this on team success</p> <p>If appropriate, escalate performance assessment to more senior management and/or include an independent review of assessment</p>
<p>Staff member has high absenteeism</p>	<p>Job content and design</p> <p>Inappropriate job fit</p> <p>Management style</p> <p>Individual or external characteristics</p>	<p>Identify cause behind absenteeism</p> <p>Explore possible strategies for job redesign, job fit, changes to working arrangements, management of health issues</p> <p>Re-establish expectations of attendance</p> <p>Referral to EAP</p>
<p>Staff member bullies and harasses other staff or supervisor</p>	<p>Work related stress/dissatisfaction</p> <p>Individual or external characteristics</p>	<p>Identify causes behind bullying and harassment</p> <p>Explain expectation about workplace behaviour, Staff Code of Conduct and VU Values</p> <p>Explore counselling</p> <p>Begin process for breach of policy and Staff Code of Conduct</p>

# GUIDELINES

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

### 8. CASE STUDIES

#### 8.1 CASE STUDY A: Adrian: Not doing things as well as they should be done

Performance meets some but not all requirements and expectations <b>Required capability not met but key tasks/key result areas achieved.</b>	
Consider whether key tasks/key result areas were achieved	Assess capability in position (skills, knowledge)
	
Tasks achieved	Required capability not met
Consider factors that contributed to achieving results	Consider activities already undertaken to strengthen capabilities
	Consider other activities that could develop capabilities required for the position
<b>Initiate a performance improvement plan</b>	
Is the role a good fit?	
Consider career assessment and advice	Consider options for changes in current role
Discuss plans/expectations in current position, aspirations for promotion/future career moves.	

*Adrian is a HEW 6 recently promoted from another area of the university. Adrian's supervisor meets with him to review progress towards his SPDP. Everything on Adrian's performance plan has been achieved but the quality of the written work he produces is inconsistent. The final work he presents is of draft quality only. Layout and grammar is sloppy and information is incomplete or presented in a confusing way. Producing written material is a major requirement of Adrian's role and this is clarified with him as part of his review. The General Staff HEW Classification Descriptors are used to assist the supervisor in explaining the expectations of Adrian's performance at the HEW 6 classification.*

*After discussion about the reasons for poor quality work, Adrian claims that his supervisor is never available to assist with the work and so work presented at the deadline has had no opportunity for input from the supervisor. The supervisor concedes that he is hard to pin down but believes it is part of Adrian's role to ensure this happens. When they explore issues of grammar/spelling and layout, Adrian concedes that his previous work has not required production of such detailed reports and that his skills (including his written skills) could benefit from improvement. Together Adrian and his supervisor develop a performance improvement plan for the next three to six months to enable Adrian to meet the standards required in his new role.*

# **GUIDELINES**

## **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

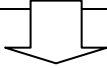
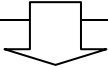
### **Strategies implemented to address this:**

- Supervisor provides an undertaking to meet/be available regularly to provide information/assistance and guidance to Adrian.
- Adrian will develop a work schedule for each major piece of written work with timelines for drafts, review and final copy.
- Adrian to receive training in microsoft word/excel and booked into a course on writing for business purposes.
- Adrian to be "buddied" with a fellow staff member who is a good document formatter in order to improve Adrian's skills.
- Another experienced staff member is given responsibility for proof reading Adrian's drafts in the first instance –coaching him in the process..
- A date is set for further review of Adrian's performance.
- In the interim the supervisor will regularly check on Adrian's progress and will make himself available for discussion of any of Adrian's concerns.

## GUIDELINES

### PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

#### 8.2 CASE STUDY B: Roberta: Not doing things that need to be done, despite those things that are completed being done really well.

Performance meets some but not all requirements and expectations <b>Required capability met but key tasks/key result areas not achieved.</b>	
Consider whether key tasks/key result areas were achieved	Assess capability in position (skills, knowledge)
	
Tasks not achieved	Required capability met
Consider factors that contributed to tasks not being achieved	Consider strengths against capabilities required for the position
Consider additional support that has already been provided to help achieve results	
Consider any additional support that could be provided to help achieve tasks	
<b>Initiate a performance improvement plan</b>	
Is the role a good fit?	
Consider options for changes in the current role	Consider career assessment and advice
Discuss plans/expectations in current position, aspirations for promotion/future career moves.	

*Roberta works in Student Services and is a perfectionist in everything she does. Not only does she want her work to be excellent, she wants to assist others to ensure that their work is perfect too.*

*When Roberta meets with her supervisor and they discuss her performance against her SPDP it becomes clear that the work she has completed is of the highest standard. Her student evaluations are excellent and other staff have consistently let the supervisor know that Roberta has contributed to the quality of their work and performance. However, Roberta's work output is not meeting the standards required – she is regularly not achieving at least half of the objectives agreed in her performance plan as she spends an inordinate amount of time undertaking the duties required as she strives for these to be completed perfectly and 'over-thoroughly' and is distracted by assisting others.*

#### **Strategies implemented to address this:**

- Supervisor re-establishes work output required and the reasons why
- Supervisor explains implications of not meeting required work output on success of team

## **GUIDELINES**

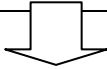
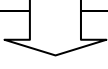
### **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

- Supervisor clarifies priorities of duties/objectives
- Supervisor clarifies expected standards of work and the implications of “over-servicing” or being overly thorough on work output
- Offer of a workstation in a quieter area when available to allow Roberta to focus on the tasks at hand and not get distracted by other staff members
- Roberta to attend a Time Management/Personal Organisation training course
- A schedule of more frequent review meetings is established between Roberta and her supervisor, action notes together with timeframes for meeting objectives agreed at these meetings are given to Roberta

## GUIDELINES

### PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

#### 8.3 CASE STUDY C: Michael: Not getting things done and not displaying capability to get things done

<p>Performance is below requirements and expectations  <b>Key tasks/results not achieved and capability not met.</b></p>	
<p>Consider whether key tasks/key result areas were achieved</p>	<p>Assess capability in position (skills, knowledge)</p>
	
<p>Tasks not achieved</p>	<p>Required capability not met</p>
<p>Consider factors that may have contributed to tasks not being achieved</p>	<p>Consider activities already undertaken to strengthen capabilities</p>
<p>Consider additional support that has already been provided to help achieve tasks</p>	<p>Consider other activities that could develop capabilities required for the position</p>
<p>Consider any additional support that could be provided to help achieve tasks</p>	
<p><b>Initiate a performance improvement plan</b></p>	
<p>Is the role a good fit?</p>	
<p>Consider options for changes in current role</p>	<p>Consider career assessment and advice</p>
<p>Consider options for other roles in VU that may provide a better fit.</p>	

*Michael is an academic in the School of Communication Technology. He was appointed as a Level A 12 months ago but is obviously struggling with the job and the expectations; his student evaluations of his teaching are poor and he has not yet embarked on any research work or commenced his PhD studies. He does not appear to have an understanding of how VU operates, despite having a comprehensive induction program both university-wide and at the local level.*

#### Strategies implemented to address this:

- Appoint an experienced colleague for close support and guidance
- Supervisor attends Michael's classes to observe and gives constructive feedback on teaching methods/approaches
- Have an open discussion with Michael regarding how he's currently feeling and his career preferences at this point in time
- Attends research training
- Assist him to develop a plan of action for research
- Provide role clarity

## **GUIDELINES**

### **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

- Clarify that if there is insufficient improvement (and clearly state what is required) Michael would not be passing his probation

#### **9. REFERENCES**

- Sharpening the Focus; Managing Performance in the APS
- Managing Underperformance Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts
- Performance Management Guidelines University of South Australia

# GUIDELINES

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Appendix 1

### Performance Improvement Plan Template

*Note that this template is provided for guidance only; other formats for PIPs may be used as agreed between the supervisor and staff member. It is anticipated that there would normally be a maximum of 3 areas for improvement included where under-performance has been identified.*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ORGANISATIONAL UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_ SUPERVISOR: \_\_\_\_\_

LAST REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ THIS REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ NEXT REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Task	Action/Strategies (how)	Who	Success Criteria	Time frame	Rating (tick one):
EXAMPLE: Follow and apply department policy/procedure in relation to student lateness/attendance	Read, review and check relevant policies in handbook Work closely with buddy		Being able to implement policy in actual classroom practice in a fair and consistent manner	On-going process of implementation during the course of semester 1, 2008.	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Meets Expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Expectations
EXAMPLE: Follow and apply department policy/procedure in relation to student assessment including any need for re-assessment	Read, review and check relevant policies in handbook		Being able to implement policy/procedure in actual classroom practice in a fair and consistent manner.	On-going process of implementation during the course of semester 1, 2008.	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Meets Expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Expectations

**GUIDELINES**  
**PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>Performance Level Definitions</b>
<b>Requires Improvement</b>	Performance falls below acceptable performance standards for quantity, quality and/or timelines.
<b>Meets Expectations</b>	Individual consistently meets the acceptable performance standards for quantity, quality and/or timelines for a sustained period of time.
<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	Individual consistently exceeds acceptable job performance standards for quantity, quality and/or timelines.

**SIGNATURES**

<b>Supervisor's Signature</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</b>	

<b>Staff Member's Signature (denotes that the staff member agrees that discussion has occurred with their supervisor and that they have received this document and understood its contents)</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</b>	

# GUIDELINES

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Appendix 2

### Flowchart for Effectively Managing Performance Improvement

Performance Questions		Suggested Action
Does the staff member understand (accept) their role &/or responsibilities?	<b>No</b> ⇒	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet to discuss and explain expectations of their job</li> <li>2. Support &amp; development</li> <li>3. Review Position.Description</li> </ol>
Is the staff member aware of their performance discrepancy?		
<b>Yes</b> ↓		
Does the staff member have the knowledge and skills to perform their job?	<b>No</b> ⇒	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training &amp; Dev. Options through SPDP</li> <li>2. Re-organise work practices – if appropriate</li> <li>3. Check your recruitment processes</li> <li>4. Develop a Performance Improvement Plan</li> </ol>
<b>Yes</b> ↓		
Does the staff member have the resources to do the job?	<b>No</b> ⇒	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If possible provide resources</li> <li>2. If you cannot you may have a resource problem only!</li> </ol>
<b>Yes</b> ↓		
Are there obstructions preventing good performance?	<b>Yes</b> ⇒	Remove obstacles e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to other people</li> <li>• Improve awareness</li> <li>• Provide info.</li> <li>• More equipment</li> <li>• Clarify expectations, create new systems or processes, etc</li> <li>• Employee Assistance Program (EAP)</li> </ul>
<b>No</b> ↓		
Are you over burdening the staff member for good performance?	<b>Yes</b> ⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build reward structures eg: ensuring recognition at relevant staff meetings; facilitating opportunities for Higher duties etc</li> <li>• Extra projects gain extra support &amp;/or reduced workload</li> </ul>
<b>No</b> ↓		
Does the staff member enjoy their job? (Different values? Over qualified?)	<b>No</b> ⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career guidance/counselling</li> <li>• Assist in their applications for alternative positions</li> </ul>
Do they have their “heart in it”?		
<b>Yes</b> ↓		
Do you reward staff members?	<b>No</b> ⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build in regular rewards and recognition programs</li> <li>• Build reward structures eg: ensuring recognition at relevant staff meetings; facilitating opportunities for Higher duties etc</li> </ul>
<b>Yes</b> ↓		
Still not performing?	<b>Yes</b> ⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take corrective action by escalating performance management or, if necessary, implementing the formal disciplinary process in consultation with Human Resources</li> </ul>