

6.2 Performance Appraisal

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Further reading:

Introduction to Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a systematic way of monitoring the standard of job performance against concrete and relevant performance indicators. It is widely used in all types of sectors and organisations to ensure employee job performance matches the goals of the sector, organisation and unit where they work.

Performance appraisal can help school authorities and school leaders ensure teachers perform tasks effectively and meet expected professional standards of quality teaching. This is an essential element of school management and a criterium for the school's success and its accountability to parents and society.

When information about the performance of a large section of teachers are summarised and reported it helps the TSC and MBSSE appraise the overall performance of the teaching workforce and enables decisions on interventions, such as teacher education, continuous professional development or improvements in management and teaching resources.

Performance Appraisal, however, should not just be a function of managerial control. It should also be a means of promoting interest in teaching, job satisfaction, career aspirations and a desire to learn and develop. It thus has two dimensions which must be treated equally: managerial oversight of performance and motivation to aspire, learn and develop.



The Personal Development Plan provides teacher's with an opportunity, in dialogue with their supervisor, to set performance targets in areas where improvement is desired, determine needed Continuous Professional Development (CPD), express career aspirations and point to issues concerning the teacher's work-related wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Performance indicators can be based on tasks specified in the teachers' job description or the competencies defined in the *Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders*.

Performance Appraisal is an important tool for focusing school leader and teacher attention on performance and improving performance in schools. More specifically it is used for:

- Determining areas where improvements in performance are needed
- Determining teacher learning needs and agreeing on continuous professional development
- Taking decisions on promotion
- Outlining a consistent career path for the teacher
- Stimulating professional and academic engagements
- Identifying areas for improvements in job satisfaction and well-being.

When conducting performance appraisals, it should be acknowledged that this is a sensitive process. It will only work if the appraisee is treated with respect and empathy, and confident what they say remains confidential. Those who conduct appraisals need to have good listening skills and an attitude of professionalism, fairness and objectivity.

Roles and Responsibilities

TSC

Monitors overall teacher performance and manages performance appraisal through the Teacher Professional Development & Performance Department.

Schools

School leaders manage teacher performance in the schools, and – as the immediate supervisor – implement the performance appraisal and development interviews.

Panel

A panel including a TSC-DO representative, the SMC or BoG, and a peer selected by the appraisee is established for performance appraisal in order to ensure transparency, fairness and objectivity.

Rules: Performance Appraisal

- Teacher performance appraisal is conducted annually, starting with completion of the Personal Development Plan at the beginning of the school year and concluding with assessment of results and a Performance Appraisal at the end of the school year. Halfway through the school year there is a mid-term appraisal of the Personal Development Plan.
- Each teacher is assigned a supervisor, usually the school leader, who carries out the performance appraisal through dialogue with the teacher and through observation and scrutiny of the teacher's performance and performance results.
- In order to ensure fairness, transparency and objectivity, a panel is established for a school or a cluster of schools. The panel oversees and approves the performance appraisal process.
- Performance appraisals are sensitive and should be completely confidential regarding personal information about the teacher and the results of the appraisal

Process: The Personal Development Plan and Performance Appraisal

The appraisal of a teacher's performance is initiated at the start of each school year by agreeing on 3-4 results to be achieved by the teacher during the semester in connection with work assignments. These may be based on a review of their Personal Development Plan and Performance Appraisal from the previous year. Agreed results are included in a Personal Development Plan and may address aspects such as:

- The teacher's need to improve performance in identified areas of work.
- The need to develop competencies for promotion and career.
- New or expanded job requirements.

The Personal Development Plan is based on confidential dialogue between the teacher and the teacher's immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will usually be the school leader or deputy/vice school leader. In large schools, a senior teacher may be assigned with the task.

The Personal Development Plan cannot capture all needs for improvement. These must be prioritised in the Plan. However, a teacher will be expected to try to enhance performance in all areas where the appraisal identifies a need.

It is important to be aware that in many cases performance can be improved or developed without costly training through:

- More effective ways of working
- Better materials, tools and work environment to support quality teaching
- Improved school leadership.

Nevertheless, the Personal Development Plan is the main tool for recording needs and wishes for CPD. These may partly be based on the previous year's performance appraisal but may equally be based on the teacher's own wish to develop his or her competencies. CPD does not automatically mean more costly training. It may equally be fulfilled through:

- Mentoring and guidance
- Self-directed learning through on-line and other sources
- Team-learning and training organised within the school using the school's own competency resource base.

The Personal Development Plan provides a good opportunity to discuss and initiate such alternative solutions.

The dialogue between teacher and supervisor is also a good opportunity to discuss the teacher's **career aspirations** and wishes for personal development. This can become the foundation of a systematic career development plan to be realised over time.

It is also essential during this dialogue to discuss the **wellbeing and job satisfaction** of the teacher and to discuss and initiate means of improvement. This can be supplemented by occasional job satisfactions surveys.

At the beginning of each second semester the supervisor should conduct a mid-term review of the teacher's progress in achieving the planned objectives and determine possible ways to ensure they will be met by the end of the school year.

At the end of the semester, the teacher should conduct a self-assessment of his or her Personal Development Plan followed by a joint review with the supervisor.

The above considerations of improvements to teaching, CPD, career aspirations, wellbeing and job satisfaction points to the importance of continuity in performance appraisal. Each annual appraisal is followed up during the next appraisal.

[Download Performance Appraisal form.](#)

Performance Appraisal

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL of teachers in Sierra Leone's teaching service
Personal Development Plan

Please refer to Teacher Performance Management Plan for Sierra Leone, Dr. Simone Doctors, 2018.

Best Practice: How to set criteria for performance

The Personal Develop Plan should include:

- Indicators: by which to determine the results
- Opportunities: in the workplace and daily work for implementing improvement and learning
- Threats: that may stand in the way and how they may be handled.

It is important to formulate good indicators. Traditionally, indicators are expected to be SMART:

- **S** for Specific (concrete, understandable, clear)
- **M** for Measurable (measure by quality, quantity, etc., should be easy to obtain information)
- **A** for Achievable (realistic to achieve but at the same time challenging)
- **R** for Relevant (make sense in the world of schools and teaching, be of common usage there)
- **T** for Timebound (within a realistic timeframe and a clear deadline)

Fundamentally, a good indicator should be simple and straightforward. It should be relevant to the teacher's job and the teaching profession. It should be easy to check it and checking it should not be associated with any major cost. It should be challenging to encourage personal growth, but also realistic for the teacher to achieve it within the given time, which must be agreed upon.

Example:

During the coming year, the teacher will apply learner-orientated participatory teaching methods (detail to be specified during initial meeting with supervisor).

Result: Pupils acquire a deeper understanding of the subject and become more critical and independent. They also develop confidence to present and ability for teamwork.

Indicator: Better overall results in internal tests; pupils do their homework without fail and with fewer corrections by the teacher; pupils are happy to work in groups and confident in presenting at the whiteboard; pupils demonstrate interest in learning more (all this must be specified on the basis of a baseline and measurable and concrete improvements).

An indicator may be quantitative or qualitative. Qualitative indicators may be based on the *Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders*.

It is essential that the school provides sufficient opportunities for teachers to implement their Personal Performance Plan and achieve the agreed objectives. Otherwise there is a risk that efforts will be wasted amid day-to-day work.