1. Introduction

The Performance Assessment Process incorporates three critical components - planning, feedback and development and is designed to:

- Link individual efforts to University goals and priorities;
- Provide an opportunity for staff input regarding expectations and professional development;
- Formally recognize the accomplishments and areas of special competence or strength of staff;
- Provide an opportunity for constructive feedback regarding areas of performance requiring improvement;
- Create supportive structures for career development and succession planning, and;
- Provide an objective link between performance results and merit pay decisions.

2. Components

Performance Planning

Performance planning is the beginning of the annual review process. It involves the forward planning of objectives, expectations and development goals for the coming year. The time spent in this part of the process is considered to be an investment in developing the knowledge, skills and abilities, i.e. the competencies of staff. As the year progresses and changes to the objectives and expectations occur, further refinement to the plans are made.

For staff members performance planning is an integrated process of planning and implementation that will be continuously reviewed throughout the year, and provides an opportunity to:

- Clarify roles to meet the University's strategic plan;
- Clarify divisional and departmental requirements;
- Continually realign individual objectives with the University's initiatives;
- Obtain agreement on what results and development are expected; and
- Develop objectives/expectations that describe results.

Best practice identifies that objectives are easily understood and acted upon when they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific. The acronym SMART is an aid to remember those components.

To set SMART objectives it is important to:

- Identify the outcome expected, the ‘what’;
- Provide indicators to measure the degree of achievement;
- Create an objective that constitutes a challenge within the staff member’s capabilities;
- Take into account available resources; and
- Include a target date or response time.

To effectively set expectations and/or goals with staff members it is helpful to identify the standards of quality (how well), quantity (how much) and time (deadline) for each area of responsibility. It is expected that expectations and/or goals can be fluid, changing as new information or events occur throughout the year. There could be changes to priorities, resource changes, program or service changes, all of which could effect the
individual's expectations and development plan. The reviewer and staff member can establish the expectations that are important for consideration together.

Feedback

Feedback involves observing how well the staff member achieves expected results and the degree to which the relevant competencies are demonstrated. Competencies provide detailed descriptions of the behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities typically demonstrated by a staff member while carrying out his or her role. The descriptions provide specific and objective terminology to help frame feedback discussions and can be found in Competencies Worksheets for P/M and Confidential staff, correspondingly.

Performance feedback involves informal discussions throughout the year regarding progress on the objectives/expectations and development plans and can include:

- Adjustment of priorities;
- Problem solving on any obstacles encountered;
- Advantage taken of any opportunities;
- Fulfillment of professional development;
- Positive recognition; and
- Corrective instruction.

Feedback may also be solicited from those in contact with the staff member in the course of his or her duties, for example, students, faculty, clients, or colleagues. This process should be a transparent one with the Reviewer and staff member identifying who should be contacted for what type of information together. The staff member should include all contact information for those they would like the Reviewer to contact in the appropriate section of the Activity Report (Part A). Feedback on performance from any source and any positive recognition or corrective instruction should include the specific event, a description of performance, the importance or impact on work and any follow up necessary. A summary of the feedback should be included in the appropriate section of Part B “Values and Competencies Summary”) so that the employee can benefit developmentally from the information.

Feedback should be provided as events occur and recorded as a reference so that the formal summary discussion at the end of the review period will not provide any surprise information regarding staff member's performance.

Development

Development involves growing knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies through a variety of methods for the current job and evolving career. This involves:

- Developing new competencies;
- Identifying gaps through discussion and mutual understanding; and
- Building on strengths identified in feedback conversations.

Competencies that are most relevant to the position are reviewed. The staff member's performance level is assessed for each relevant competency and development is planned that will enhance job performance, provide an opportunity for career development, or address areas that need improvement. –The Competency Development Guides for P/M and Confidential staff members supplement the – the Competencies Worksheets for P/M and Confidential staff members. It provides suggestions on what activities the staff member may undertake to acquire
the competencies identified in the performance discussion. Development goals may consist of a combination of learning opportunities as well as formal training programs.

A sample list of developmental activities follows:

- Use as a resource related to a particular competency any books and/or DVDs;
- Participate in the Rose Patten Leadership Program;
- Work on self-study or computer based courses/programs;
- Attend a U of T Organizational Development & Learning Centre training program or outside course, seminar or conference;
- Use the competencies worksheet as a self-assessment tool;
- Maintain a developmental journal, keeping track of successes, failures and development goals;
- Meet with someone who has progressed through similar career stages;
- Serve on a project or committee or cross-functional team;
- Seek additional challenges - work for short periods in other departments;
- Coach another individual on aspects of a job done well; and
- Spend time with an 'expert' on some aspect of the job.

3. Signatures

The new online Performance Assessment tool – Halogen eAppraisal is to be used by staff members and reviewers to facilitate the Performance Assessment process. After the online form is completed and staff members have provided their Summary Comments on the rating, the form needs to be signed off by the staff member in the online system. By doing this, the staff member indicates that they have had a discussion regarding their performance with their Manager and they have had an opportunity to review the completed assessment document.