



# Performance Improvement

## Human Resources Policy

Effective Date: July 2008

### 1 PURPOSE

To provide a framework for improving unsatisfactory performance.

### 2 APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Queensland Health employees.

### 3 GUIDELINES

Guidelines may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. The guidelines must be consistent with this policy.

### 4 DELEGATION

The “delegate” is as listed in the Queensland Health Human Resource Delegations Manual as amended from time to time.

### 5 REFERENCES

- *Health Services Act 1991*
- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Health Services Act 1991 Directive 03/99 - Unsatisfactory Performance*
- *Directive 18/97 - Performance Management*
- *Discipline HR Policy*
- *Performance Appraisal and Development HR Policy*

### 6 SUPERSEDES

- IRM 8.3 – Unsatisfactory Performance

### 7 POLICY

#### 7.1 Background

The Performance Improvement policy provides a framework for the identification and management of instances of unsatisfactory performance in Queensland Health.

The focus of the Policy and the Guidelines for Performance Improvement is the support of employees in the achievement of the performance requirements for their roles.

## 7.2 Performance Improvement Stages

The performance improvement process includes the following stages:

Initial Stage	Identification of unsatisfactory performance
Stage 1	Unsatisfactory performance meeting
Stage 2	Initiate Performance Improvement Program (PIP)
Stage 3	Final Review of Performance Improvement Program, Recommendation and Decision

## 8 APPLYING THE POLICY

Managers and employees are to comply with Health Service Directive 03/99 – Unsatisfactory Performance (Attachment One) and the Guidelines for Performance Improvement (Attachment Two).

## 9 DEFINITIONS

<b>EAS</b>	Employee Assistance Service
<b>Performance Improvement Program</b>	A Plan designed to improve work performance that will usually outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of unsatisfactory performance</li> <li>• A strategy to improve performance or actions to be taken</li> <li>• Timeframes</li> <li>• Responsibilities</li> </ul>

## 10 HISTORY

<b>July 2008</b>	Developed as a result of the HR Policy Consolidation Project.
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**HEALTH SERVICES ACT 1991**  
**DIRECTIVE OF THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL**

**No. 3/99 TITLE: UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE**

Pursuant to Section 27(1) of the *Health Services Act 1991*, His Excellency the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, has directed that a strategy for unsatisfactory performance be applied within the Department of Health, as detailed in the Schedule.

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**SCHEDULE**

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**PURPOSE:** To specify the principles and requirements for managing unsatisfactory performance within the Department of Health.

**1. APPLICATION:**

1.1 This directive applies to all health service employees.

1.2 All health service employees shall participate in these processes to manage unsatisfactory performance actively and in good faith.

**2. PRINCIPLES:**

2.1 A set of principles frame and guide the management of unsatisfactory performance. These principles are:

- (a) Managers must determine performance requirements following consultation with their employees, provide appropriate training and associated resources, monitor performance, provide feedback and counselling and take immediate action if unsatisfactory performance is identified.
- (b) Employees are responsible for achieving the performance requirements of their position.
- (c) Supervisors should ensure effective monitoring of performance and discuss remedies with employees at the earliest possible stage where performance requirements are not met.
- (d) Reasonable adjustments to work processes and physical environment shall be made to enable employees with disabilities to meet position requirements.
- (e) Procedural fairness and objectivity, equity, accountability and confidentiality requirements shall be met.
- (f) Unsatisfactory performance may lead to discipline and ultimately separation from Queensland Health when all other options have been explored.

These principles are to be observed by all health service managers, supervisors and employees.

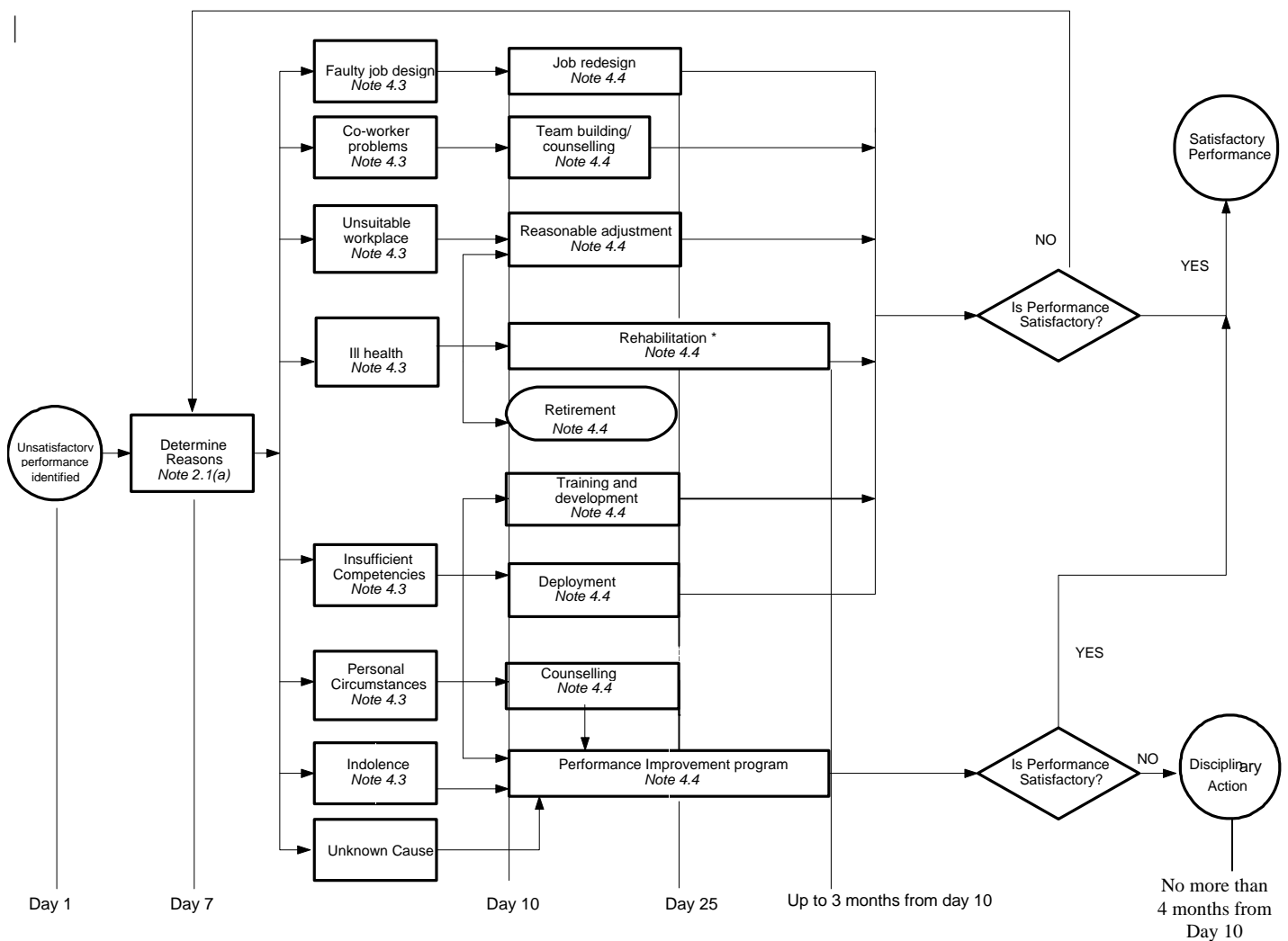
### 3. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

District Managers and other managers responsible for health service employees shall operationalise the process for managing unsatisfactory performance.

### 4. PROCESS:

4.1 Queensland Health's processes for managing unsatisfactory performance are based on the model in Section 4.2 below. The timeframes specified in Section 4.2 should be met but, where practical reasons exist, extensions may occur to ensure the ongoing integrity of the process.

4.2 The following diagram specifies the process for managing unsatisfactory performance.



Management of Unsatisfactory Performance of Health Service Employees

### 4.3 Unsatisfactory work performance shall be addressed:

- (a) through examination of possible direct reasons and influences including faulty job design, problems with co-workers, unsuitable work environment, ill health, insufficient employee competencies, personal circumstances, and indolence;

- (b) through fully involving the employee in deciding the action required. If practicable within the timeframes specified in Section 4.2, this should be with a union delegate present if desired by the employee. If a formal plan is selected, a performance improvement plan should be drawn up for a period of up to three months. However, where the circumstances warrant, this period can be lengthened. A copy of the plan should be lodged with the District Manager or delegate;
- (c) with the involvement of one or more of the following, as determined by employee and manager: a senior line manager; any required support and resources such as a workplace equity officer; appropriate union representative; or an independent investigating officer. An independent investigating officer should occupy a higher classification level than the employee;
- (d) with the sign off on documentation once a course of action has been agreed;
- (e) through monitoring the employee's progress and providing frequent feedback;
- (f) through determination of the conclusion by reviewing outcomes and making recommendations; and
- (g) by providing information to the employee on whether performance has become satisfactory, or, if unsatisfactory, requires administrative action or a disciplinary process.

4.4 Administrative actions that may be taken include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Job redesign;
- (b) Team building or counselling where there are co-worker problems;
- (c) Reasonable adjustment where the workplace environment is unsuitable;
- (d) Rehabilitation, reasonable adjustment or retirement for cases involving ill health;
- (e) Training and development or deployment, if competencies are insufficient;
- (f) Counselling in cases where personal circumstances adversely affect work practice; and
- (g) A performance improvement program.

## GUIDELINES FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

This process must be used following identification of unsatisfactory performance either during the routine Performance and Development (PAD) process or when the need arises. During Stages 1 & 2 outlined below, managers must complete the Natural Justice Process Check List which drives the entire process.

### Stage 1 Unsatisfactory Performance Meeting

At the initial meeting explore reason/s for unsatisfactory performance. Use the non-exhaustive table below to assist in rectifying the problem. Note - not all reasons for unsatisfactory performance will result in immediately initiating a Performance Improvement Program (PIP).

POTENTIAL CAUSES		PROPOSED SOLUTION/S
<b>Personal</b>	Interpersonal conflict	Team building / Mediation / Training / EAS. If no improvement consult HR for further advice.
	Medical condition / ill health / Excessive Absenteeism	Assistance from HR must be sought. Options include EAS / Rehabilitation / Reasonable Adjustment / Medical Assessment /transfer.
	Personal problem	EAS / Reasonable Adjustment. If no improvement see HR.
	Poor attitude, indolence	Initiate PIP – go to stage 2.
<b>Work related</b>	Inadequate skill set	Training / Voluntary Transfer or initiate PIP – go to stage 2.
	Faulty job design / workload	Job redesign where possible, if no improvement initiate PIP – go to stage 2.
	Unknown cause	Initiate PIP – go to stage 2.

### Stage 2 Initiate Performance Improvement Program (PIP)

Organise a meeting to explain process and provide relevant documentation (eg Role Description, relevant policies, evidence of unsatisfactory performance, the proposed PIP document).

1. Provide clear evidence of unsatisfactory performance. Where appropriate, use their job description and Code of Conduct as a minimum performance standard to follow.
2. Provide clear objective and measurable job performance expectations and support mechanisms in PIP.
3. Set PIP for a period of 2 to 3 months duration (if warranted the duration may be extended) to allow employee sufficient time to improve work performance to expected standards.
4. Plan weekly/fortnightly and final review meetings for entire PIP period.
5. Lodge a copy of the signed PIP with District Manager or Delegate.
6. Essential - Advise employee of possible outcomes if they fail to meet performance expectations which include disciplinary action and the types of penalties which are listed below.

### Stage 3 Final Review of Performance Improvement Program, Recommendation and Decision

If performance improves, document improvement and revert to PAD. If there is no improvement to the identified performance criteria, advice must be sought from HR. Some options open to the appropriate decision maker may include:

- Initiating disciplinary action with the assistance from HR. Penalties may include a fine, demotion, termination, involuntary transfer, forfeit an increment.
- Appointment at lower classification by mutual consent.
- Recommend a medical examination pursuant to s85 of *Public Service Act 1996*.
- Extension of PIP beyond 3 months to a maximum of 6 months in exceptional circumstances.

Employee \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Stage 1 meeting date \_\_\_\_\_ Stage 2 meeting date/s \_\_\_\_\_

**PRIOR TO THE MEETING**

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	NATURAL JUSTICE PROCESS CHECK LIST
		Ensure the evidence relied upon is relevant in the circumstances.
		Provide adequate notice of meeting by letter or email invitation – at least 48 hours.
		Advise nature of meeting – e.g. to discuss concerns over performance or implementation of PIP.
		Invite employee to bring a support person to attend the meeting (e.g. union representative). If necessary offer an interpreter.

**DURING THE MEETING**

		Employee to be given copies of all documentation / evidence of poor performance / attitudinal issues, being relied upon and explain impact of performance on workplace.
		Explain expectations of their role and in review meetings indicate whether performance is meeting expectations and how improvements can be made.
		Ensure employee understands all issues and allow employee opportunity to respond to issues verbally and/or in writing.
		Offer Employee Assistance Service.
		Provide support. (e.g. enquire whether there are issues that are impacting their performance for which they may require support.)

**AFTER THE MEETING**

		After the initial meeting and each review meeting (weekly or fortnightly) employee must be given an opportunity to read and sign minutes and / or PIP. Employee is entitled to provide written comments to documentation which is to be kept on file.
		Ensure decision maker has the delegation and can bring an open and objective mind.
		Document the entire processes in a confidential file (i.e. minutes / meeting invite / relevant emails / evidence relating to performance / provision of support, training provided etc.)

**THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS**

		Maintain strict confidentiality. Keep documentation in a secure location at all times.
		Supervisor / decision maker must take into consideration the employee's responses as provided throughout the process.
		Be flexible as each case should be decided on its own facts. Seek assistance from HR for clarification and assistance.
		Provide frequent performance feedback, schedule regular meetings and a final meeting.