Performance improvement

Policy Number: G11 (QH-POL-190)
Publication date: January 2020

Purpose: To provide a framework for identifying and improving unsatisfactory performance.

Application: This policy applies to all employees working in and for the Department of Health.

Delegation: The ‘delegate’ is as listed in the relevant Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

Legislative or other authority:
- Human Rights Act 2019
- Public Service Act 2008

Related policy or documents:
- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service
- Discipline HR Policy E10 (QH-POL-124)
- Employee Complaints HR Policy E12 (QH-POL-140)
- Reasonable Adjustment HR Policy G3 (QH-POL-210)
- Performance and Development HR Policy G9 (QH-POL-189)
- Performance Improvement Plan template

Policy subject:

1 Performance improvement

All employees are required to actively, and in good faith, participate in processes to manage unsatisfactory performance. The focus of a performance improvement process is to provide an employee with support and assistance to improve areas of unsatisfactory performance.

Employees are responsible for achieving the performance requirements of their position. Managers have an obligation to help support employees achieve their performance requirements.

2 Performance monitoring

Managers and supervisors are required to effectively monitor employee performance and discuss performance concerns with employees at the earliest possible stage.

Consideration should be given to possible direct reasons and influences for the performance concerns, including:
- faulty job design
- problems with co-workers
- unsuitable work environment
- ill health
- insufficient employee competencies
- personal circumstances
- indolence.
Reasonable adjustment should be considered for employees with an impairment. For more information on the requirement to provide reasonable adjustment refer to Reasonable Adjustment HR Policy G3.

Prior to commencing a process to address unsatisfactory performance an employee should have been provided with:

- information on the performance expectations, standards and/or requirements, in writing (e.g. a performance and development plan – refer to Performance and Development HR Policy G9)
- appropriate training and associated resources
- feedback and counselling where concerns are identified with performance.

Performance expectations, standards and requirements should be determined in consultation with the employee (where appropriate).

When an informal process does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in performance a formal performance improvement process may commence.

3 Performance improvement process

A performance improvement process designed to improve work performance will usually include:

- identification of areas of unsatisfactory performance
- a strategy to improve performance
- clear, appropriate and measurable performance expectations
- timeframes for improvement
- responsibilities (of all parties in achieving the performance expectations)
- potential outcomes if performance does not improve satisfactorily.

A performance improvement process must be documented and supported by relevant evidence to demonstrate performance concerns and improvements. The performance improvement process must meet the requirements of natural justice and be objective, equitable, accountable and confidential. Attachment One outlines the minimum mandatory requirements of a performance improvement process.

Unsatisfactory performance either during or after a formal performance improvement process has been completed, may result in the matter being referred to an appropriately authorised delegate for consideration of what (if any) further action is required. This may include the commencement of a discipline process which can lead to penalties, up to and including the termination of employment.

Managers should consult with their local Human Resources Unit prior to commencing a performance improvement process.

Concerns about the application of a performance improvement process should be raised in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Employee Complaints HR Policy E12.

History:

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<th>January 2020</th>
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<td>January 2014</td>
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<td>- remove attachment and incorporate content into policy, where relevant</td>
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<td>Previous</td>
<td>- IRM 8.3 – Unsatisfactory Performance</td>
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Attachment One – Performance improvement process

The following information is provided as the minimum mandatory standard practice, procedure or process to enable satisfactory compliance with this Queensland Health HR policy.

Local guidelines/procedures may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. Any local guidelines/procedures must be consistent with this policy and attachment and ensure employee entitlements continue to be met.

The following process is recommended when implementing a performance improvement plan (PIP).

1 Initial meeting

The manager and the employee should meet, during which the manager should:

- provide clear evidence of the performance concerns to be addressed
- develop clear, objective and measurable job performance expectations and support mechanisms in consultation with the employee
- assign responsibility of each requirement to the appropriate person
- establish the length of the PIP (e.g. usually three months) and schedule review meetings (e.g. usually weekly or fortnightly)
- remind the employee about the Employee Assistance Program and how to access
- advise of possible outcomes should the employee fail to meet performance expectations (specifically disciplinary action which may include termination of employment).

The performance expectations and support mechanisms discussed during the meeting must be documented in the PIP and signed by both parties. If the employee refuses to sign the PIP the reasons for refusal must be noted on the document (and addressed if applicable). A copy of the PIP must be provided to the employee.

2 Review meetings

Regular review meetings must be held, during which the manager should:

- review and discuss the PIP requirements with the employee and decide, against each criteria, whether the employee has met, or has not met the performance requirements for the review period
- provide objective evidence/examples to demonstrate the decision and document within the review meeting notes. The employee must be given an opportunity to comment, with responses being considered by the manager and documented
- consider the support offered where the performance requirements are not being met, and whether the employee would benefit from any additional support
- remind the employee about the Employee Assistance Program
- advise of the possible outcomes should the employee fail to meet the performance expectations (e.g. disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment)
- sign the review meeting notes along with the employee. Where the employee refuses to sign, this must be noted on the review meeting notes. A copy of the meeting notes and any evidence/examples discussed during the review meeting must be provided to the employee.

NOTE: Where a manager observes specific instances of behaviour or performance concerns which do not meet the requirements of the PIP, these concerns should be raised with the employee as they occur, and revisited in the review meeting.
If a manager has major concerns that an employee’s unsatisfactory performance is continuing during the PIP process despite sufficient support being provided, they may refer the matter to the appropriately authorised delegate prior to the completion of the PIP for consideration of what (if any) further action is required.

3 Final review meeting

The manager and the employee should meet when the established timeframe for the PIP has finalised, during which the manager should:

- discuss whether the performance requirements have been met, or have not been met for the duration of the PIP
- document the final outcome of the PIP and provide the employee with a copy of the final report
- where the performance requirements have been met:
  - revert to the normal performance monitoring through the performance development process
  - advise the employee they are required to maintain the expected levels of performance and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, which may lead to termination of employment
- where the performance requirements have not been met:
  - advise the employee the matter will be referred to an appropriate delegate for consideration of further action (i.e. disciplinary action)
  - advise the employee what will occur while the delegate considers the appropriate action to take
(Note: managers should seek advice from their local HR unit about options to manage the employee while the delegate is considering the matter).