

Unit 8: Performance Appraisal

INTRODUCTION

This unit aims at familiarising school inspectors with the process of performance appraisal. It is hoped that by going through this unit, you will be assisted to develop a repertoire of skills needed to undertake and contribute to teacher development and improved learning through appropriate and effective performance appraisal practices.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define the term 'performance appraisal'
- state the job descriptions of teachers, headteachers and inspectors
- set performance targets
- monitor performance
- conduct appraisal interviews
- write appropriate appraisal reports with recommendations
- decide on appropriate follow-up activities.

DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The definition of performance appraisal should include elements such as:

- a set of agreed achievable goals within a time scale
- monitoring and evaluation of performance
- giving feedback on the level of goal achievement.

It is important for you to note that performance appraisal ultimately aims at improving the quality of learning in schools through the following:

- professional assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of teachers and headteachers
- ensuring effective implementation of the agreed national school curriculum
- ensuring that an enabling environment for learning is established in schools and colleges
- creating opportunities for consultation among teachers, headteachers, and school inspectors
- creating a cadre of motivated education practitioners.

The appraisal cycle may go through the following stages:

- Stage one: job description
- Stage two: setting performance targets
- Stage three: monitoring of the appraisal process
- Stage four: conducting appraisal interviews
- Stage five: writing appropriate reports with recommendations
- Stage six: follow-up activities

Activity 8a

- (a) Write out the definition of performance appraisal, capturing the main elements cited earlier.
- (b) Examine the five purposes of performance appraisal given earlier and re-arrange the purposes according to the order of importance.

JOB DESCRIPTION

As previously stated, performance appraisal demands that performance targets are set which are then evaluated and feedback given on achievement levels. These performance targets should emanate from the job description of the officer being appraised, and in your situation, the job description should be discussed and agreed upon between you and your appraisee.

A typical job-description should contain the following sections:

- **Bio-data section**

This gives the personal characteristics of the officer being appraised e.g. age, sex, experience, qualifications.

- **Work environment section**

This section gives detailed information on the institution, location, post, including level of post and to whom the officers being appraised is accountable.

Example:

Institution: Ministry of Education
Post: Inspector
Location: Circuit One/Eastern Region
Level: Regional/District Inspector
Reporting to: Chief Inspector of Schools

Note that the elements cited above may differ from one country to another.

- **Competencies and responsibilities section**

This section lists a range of competencies and responsibilities to be performed by the officer occupying the particular post. Some of these, for an inspector, would be:

- ensuring maintenance of sound standards in schools
- inspection of schools and department
- assessment of school organisation and management
- advising education officers on staffing and posting of teachers

Activity 8b

List five competencies and responsibilities for each of the following posts, bringing out similarities and differences: teachers, headteachers, and inspectors.

COMMENT

Your answer may include some of the competencies for each of the three posts given on page 57:

TEACHER	HEADTEACHER	INSPECTOR
• Scheming	Establishing a learning environment	Supervision of instruction
• Lesson planning	Promoting good teaching standards	Provision of professional support and guidance to schools
• Lesson presentation	Supervision of teachers and support staff	Monitoring implementation of educational policies
• Classroom management	Management of school resources	Supervision of management
• Evaluation of own teaching	Evaluation of school performance	Promoting good public relations between schools and communities
• Assessment of learner's work	Linking the school with the community	Providing feedback to supervisors

SETTING PERFORMANCE TARGETS

In any performance appraisal, it is important that performance targets are set in order to assist the appraisees to focus on key result areas emanating from their job descriptions and to create benchmarks for assessing achievement levels. Key result areas are those activities that the appraisee should concentrate on during the agreed appraisal period, and these assist in the formulation of performance targets.

These targets must be set collaboratively by you the inspector, and your appraisees. They should be set at the beginning of the appraisal cycle and should be SMART, that is, they should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic (resourced)
- Time-bound

Activity 8c

Imagine you have had preliminary discussions with a headteacher of one of the schools under your charge, and you have agreed on both the key result areas and performance targets.

- Cite three key result areas that the headteacher should concentrate on for the next year.
- Identify and state performance targets for each of the key result areas cited above, bearing in mind that performance targets should be SMART.

COMMENT

Below is an example of one possible key result area and related performance targets for a headteacher over a period of one year. Note that the key result area in this example is general, while the related performance targets are SMART.

KEY RESULT AREA	PERFORMANCE TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducting school-based staff development for teachers	<p>To conduct six workshops for teachers on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• scheming• lesson planning• preparation of teaching aids• lesson delivery• assessment and evaluation• use of textbooks

MONITORING OF PERFORMANCE

Having agreed on performance targets with your appraisee, the appraisal cycle will have entered implementation stage. It is therefore necessary that you as the appraiser and your appraisee, agree on the monitoring process to be employed.

The monitoring process entails:

- collecting data on the appraisee's experiences

Some of the possible sources of these data are:

- interviews with teachers, headteachers, parents and other stakeholders
 - education policy documents
 - school documents
 - task and classroom observation
- reviewing key result areas extracted from job description
 - reviewing monitoring schedule
 - reviewing set targets
 - keeping track of the appraisee's progress.

Activity 8d

During the monitoring process, one of the key activities is data collection on the professional experiences of the appraisee.

Identify possible sources of data that you can use during the appraisal of the headteacher.

COMMENT

Possible sources of data may include:

- interviews with headteacher and other stakeholders
- public documents
- task/classroom observation

APPRAISAL INTERVIEWS

Interviews play a very important role in performance appraisal, and should therefore be a regular feature as a means of data collection and establishing rapport between the appraiser and the appraisee. They should take the form of meetings which should be friendly and relaxed.

Interviews will mainly be used for agreeing on:

- job descriptions
- time-frame and scope of the appraisal
- arrangements for observation
- other forms of data collection

Appraisal interviews should be well structured with the following sections:

- opening section
- middle section
- closing section

Activity 8e

Looking at the three sections, suggest what you, as the appraiser, should focus on in each of the three sections.

COMMENT

Below are items that can be included under each section of the appraisal interviews:

- opening section

This section involves:

- making appraisee feel at home
- agreeing on the purpose of the interview
- reviewing agreed targets

- middle section

This section involves:

- reviewing each target
- identifying problem areas
- agreeing on areas for improvement
- reviewing and agreeing on the time-frame

- closing section

This section involves:

- summarising main points covered in the interview
- drawing up an action plan for the next period
- closing on a positive note.

For you as the appraiser to effectively conduct the interview, you need to use appropriate techniques such as:

- looking interested
- inquiring with questions
- staying on target

- testing understanding
- evaluating the process formatively
- being objective

Note how closely these match the skills of a good counsellor.

APPRAISAL REPORTS

Towards the end of the appraisal cycle, after interaction with the appraisee, the appraiser should provide feedback through a report. This report should reflect the appraiser's findings, conclusions, and recommendations following agreed formats. The report will be fed with data collected during the monitoring process and must be open and negotiated with the appraisee.

Activity 8f

In writing appraisal reports, you should note that one of the important sections is that on recommendations which result from the conclusions section.

Outline some of the key characteristics of good recommendations in a report.

COMMENT

The following are some of the qualities of good recommendations:

- relevance to identified key result areas and agreed performance targets
- clarity
- brevity
- should be realistic and achievable
- should emanate from collected data

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

At the end of the appraisal cycle, it is necessary for both the appraiser and the appraisee to review the appraisal process with a view to identifying problems experienced, effecting the necessary measures to redress the problems, rewarding good performance, and preparing for the next appraisal cycle. This means that you as the appraiser and your appraisee must collaboratively plan for follow-up activities.

The follow-up activities may include:

- staff development
- staff re-deployment
- setting new performance targets for the next appraisal cycle
- recognition and celebration of achievement.

Activity 8g

Imagine that you have had an appraisal interview with a failing headteacher and together have agreed on the following issues:

- the school is very dirty

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- school buildings have been vandalised
- teaching resources have been stolen
- examination results are poor
- the school still has enough teachers though

Propose the appropriate follow-up activities to redress the situation at this school.

COMMENT

Follow-up activities may include:

- formation of the school committee to oversee school development issues
- staff development meeting with teachers
- staff development for the headteacher
- need for school-community activities to stem vandalism.

SUMMARY

At the end of this unit, you are expected to have developed the following skills:

- needs assessment
- planning
- interviewing
- problem solving
- monitoring
- goal setting
- decision making
- communication
- analysis

REFLECTION

Reflect on how you have handled the performance appraisal process in the past and identify ways in which you could improve on your appraisal techniques.

REFERENCES

Local Education Authority (1991) *Teacher Appraisal on the Isle of Wight: A Handbook for Teachers and Headteachers*, Isle of Wight

Ministry of Higher Education *Performance Appraisal*, UNICEF, Zimbabwe

Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1997) *Performance Appraisal for Teachers*, Volume 6, Namibia