Principles and Procedures

TITLE Performance Management

RATIONALE

An integrated Performance Management System has the potential to make a significant contribution to any organisation. Used effectively, performance management enhances corporate planning processes, focuses the effort and development of staff and provides a basis for differentiating between levels of performance so that recognition and reward are tied to organisational objectives.

The system relies on employees valuing the process, particularly planning for performance and development, which will then be translated into active and enthusiastic participation. While it is a joint process between employee and supervisor/manager, it is the responsibility of the latter to ensure that the elements are initiated and performance is regularly reviewed.

The core elements of the Generica Performance Management System are:

- planning for performance;
- competency development;
- performance review;
- recognition and reward;
- performance improvement and;
- disciplinary action.

EFFECTIVE DATE 14 December 1998

APPLICATION

Scope

The system applies to all employees, at all levels, except for casual and short-term (less than 6 months) temporary employees. It may be appropriate to use certain parts of the system for casual and short-term temporary employees, depending on factors such as conditions of employment, length of contract and local practices.

Note: Underlined text denotes direct links to documents on the Intranet.
Minimum Requirements

The six core elements of the Generica Performance Management System outline the minimum requirements which must be followed by all Generica employees to whom this system applies. These minimum requirements reflect our responsibilities under legislation and government policy.

A comprehensive resource kit has been developed to provide some practical assistance to supervisors/managers and employees in applying the core elements of the System and is located on the Intranet.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Employees** are responsible for participating in the planning, competency development, review and if necessary, improvement stages of the performance management process, which includes discussing their job, their abilities and development needs and setting realistic goals for their own performance.

- **Supervisors/Managers** are responsible for working with employees to ensure the performance management process is followed, including coaching, mentoring and monitoring of employees’ performance and conducting regular reviews.

- **Reviewing Officers** may be included in the process and may be requested to deal with any points of contention and if necessary, act as decision-maker.

CORE ELEMENTS

Planning for Performance

- The planning cycle for performance plans is 1 year. For employees involved in specific projects and/or engaged in a temporary capacity for less than 1 year, the duration of the project/engagement constitutes the planning cycle.

- The performance plan is linked and contributes to the business/service delivery plan for the work unit and Division/Region, which in turn is linked and contributes to the corporate plan and achievements of DET/DIR.

- A written performance plan is developed which includes major job objectives (probably no more than 5), actions planned to achieve each objective and standards/performance indicators against which performance is evaluated. When developing the performance plan, knowledge of, or reference to organisational planning documents and the position description is essential.

- The employee and manager decide on what source(s) of feedback are to be used for appraisal of performance. Traditionally, supervisor appraisal has been used and remains a valid source. However, other equally valid sources are available, namely peers, clients and subordinates.
Competency Development

When recruited, most employees should possess the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully complete the current job objectives. However, in an often rapidly changing environment, competency development is a key activity. It ensures an optimum skill mix in the workplace.

In developing a performance plan, competency development needs:

- are generated as part of the planning discussions; and
- are primarily targeted at current and predicted job requirements.

Currently there is an identified skills deficit in the department in relation to financial capability which requires immediate attention through proactive competency development initiatives. As such, all employees will have:

- their financial capability assessed through the performance management process and where necessary enhanced through competency development initiatives; and
- all performance plans will include a review of the employee’s financial capability.

Performance Review

- Regular informal feedback is provided to the employee as a matter of course and is delivered at a time close to the event(s) being discussed.

- Formal review of the performance plan, including competency development, is conducted and documented at least at the halfway point and end of the cycle. Employees and managers may find that more frequent review is beneficial (e.g. 3 monthly).

- A standardised rating method, based on a quantitative scale or qualitative statements, is used.
Recognition and Reward

Recognising and rewarding performance that meets or exceeds individual performance objectives, thereby contributing to Generica’s corporate plan and achievements, enhances organisational culture, commitment and morale. In Generica the following principles are valued:

- recognition and reward is provided in situations of true and substantial accomplishment; and
- it is in many cases immediate and simple;
- it reflects individual and team needs;
- the methods and styles used encourage employees to embrace what is important to Generica; and
- every person is provided with equal opportunity.

The following formal means of recognising and rewarding employee performance are presently endorsed by Generica:

- consistent and regular feedback (encouragement and praise);
- career enhancement which is based on merit and equity, where personal connections and favoured treatment have no place in the process;
- payment of salary increments which are a tangible reward for meeting performance objectives over the previous year;
- job rotation that further enhances career development and job interest;
- nomination for Awards from external agencies; and
- internal Awards which are developed by individual work units and Divisions.

Performance Improvement

- Performance deficits are assessed against standards/performance indicators set in the performance plan and if applicable, breaches of conduct which are inherent in the contract of employment.

- Personal and/or organisational difficulties, such as ill health or family circumstances and lack of training or inappropriate job design, are taken into account when assessing whether or not to initiate a performance improvement process.

- The initiation of the performance improvement process should not come as a surprise to the employee, as feedback and performance counselling form part of the planning and review process. However, in cases of sudden significant performance deficits and/or major conduct
problems, the improvement process is initiated immediately.

- A performance improvement strategy is developed by the employee and supervisor/manager within a maximum timeframe of 6 months. If the employee is absent for any period which would adversely affect the process the timeframe is extended accordingly.

- Monitoring of performance and the final review of the process is dealt with diligently and promptly as the process may be stressful for all stakeholders.

- In some cases, the performance deficits and/or conduct issues are so significant that disciplinary action is initiated immediately e.g. where performance is unlikely to improve within a reasonable period (maximum of 6 months) or in cases of misconduct.

Disciplinary Action

- Generica recognises the need to treat employees reasonably and fairly, thereby enhancing morale and performance. However, disciplinary action must be pursued in some situations and it is the responsibility of managers to take such action. Achieving a balance between these two responsibilities can sometimes be difficult and it is advisable to seek opinions from colleagues and specialist advisers for contentious situations, particularly when evidence is unclear and when the more severe penalties are contemplated.

- The Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) is informed of official misconduct (ie conduct which may constitute a criminal offence and/or a disciplinary breach that could result in termination of employment) and Departmental action is postponed until the CJC has concluded their actions.

- All classes of employees to whom this policy applies are treated similarly, except for those differences which are contained in legislation, in particular the non-application of disciplinary provisions in the Public Service Act 1996 to temporary and general employees.

- The two essential principles of disciplinary action are:
  - the evidence, on the balance of probabilities, clearly supports the case against the employee; and
  - natural justice (procedural fairness) is applied.

- Assuming that sufficient evidence is available and natural justice is applied, decision making takes the following into account: severity of the situation, effect on Generica and the public sector, willingness of the employee to address the issues, frequency of the occurrence, employee’s work record, nature of the employee’s duties and any mitigating circumstances.
CONFIDENTIALITY AND STORAGE OF DOCUMENTS

- The performance and competency development plans and associated documents such as reviews, feedback and performance improvement plan (where applicable) are confidential documents between the parties and are stored securely in the work unit. At the conclusion of the cycle, the documents are securely stored for at least 12 months but no longer than 3 years, after which they are destroyed.

- In the case of an unsuccessful performance improvement process and/or disciplinary action the documents are held on a confidential file separate from the personnel file. The only information placed on the personnel file is a note that this separate file exists and the result of any disciplinary action (usually the final letter advising of penalty).

- A copy of the outcome of disciplinary processes where the findings are against the employee (usually the final letter advising of penalty), is forwarded to the Deputy General Manager, Corporate Capability Development Division for placement on the central personnel file.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE

The Employee Assistance Service provides confidential counselling and support in times of stress and employees should be made aware of the service when performance improvement or disciplinary action is initiated.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a grievance is lodged by an employee who is the subject of a performance improvement process, the performance improvement process is to continue whilst the grievance procedure is being followed. Employees are not entitled to lodge a grievance about a decision to discipline them, however, they may be entitled to lodge a fair treatment or discipline appeal with the Office of Public Service Merit and Equity.

ASSISTANCE

For assistance with any aspect of performance management or any questions or concerns about the intent or scope of this policy, contact Workforce Management Services.