



Employee Review and Development Process

2002 Guidance Notes

General description and statement of purpose

The main element of ERDP is a meeting of each employee with his/her immediate supervisor or manager. Together, they will review performance to date, and broadly plan the work ahead. They will agree what each can do to improve performance and achieve objectives. They will record their agreement on a Review Record Sheet and supplementary sheets, using whatever language and layout is useful to them. Manager and employee ('reviewer' and 'reviewee' respectively) each keep a copy. Both participants can then use the record, as a reminder and prompt for action, until the next review.

It is this *process* of **discuss, agree, do** and **review** that is important. The paperwork is just an aid. The Council's intention is that ERDP will:

- help managers plan and allocate work, and develop their team
- allow all employees to participate in planning their own work and development
- allow all employees to offer ideas about how to improve our practices and services

Not a once-a-year ritual

The matters discussed during ERDP can and should be discussed at any time. For example, progress can be checked monthly, weekly, even daily if necessary. Problems and issues should be addressed as they arise. Ideas and suggestions should be explored as they occur, when the creative spark is brightest. Participants need not wait until 'ERDP time' to discuss such things.

ERDP simply helps to summarise and consolidate matters, in a structured review and planning session.

The Review Record Sheet

This gives a framework for the discussion and the record. It provides a measure of corporate consistency of content and method. However, there is also scope for flexibility.

The equal space given to each section does not imply that all are of equal importance. The relative importance of each section will vary between services, jobs and jobholders. It is for participants to decide how much to use each section.

The use of plain supplementary sheets allows ERDP to be further tailored to the needs of particular jobs and services.

Some participants will need only brief discussion and be able to get all their commentary and agreement on the Record Sheet. Others may have much longer discussion and/or will need to use supplementary sheets. Others may choose to use plain sheets for the whole record. **In the latter case, participants should use a Review Record Sheet as the cover/signature sheet.**

The Guidance, Sections 1 to 6

This mostly comprises questions that suggest the areas to be covered. Depending on circumstances, some questions will be relevant, others less so. The questions are not exhaustive. Participants might have to discuss matters that are not covered in the guidance.

So participants need not try to answer every question, and should feel free to add their own. Participants should use the questions to guide their thinking to relevant matters.

Preparation

About a week before the main review meeting, reviewer and reviewee should **independently** draft rough comments for each section. A blank Review Record Sheet or plain paper will do for these rough notes; they will be discarded after the main meeting.

Both participants will refer to the previous ERDP Review Record. When no previous ERDP exists, participants can still review earlier performance using knowledge of existing standards and objectives. The Job Description is also relevant. Both can check if it still adequately covers the job content.

The reviewer will refer to Service and Team Plans, etc., and his/her objectives from his/her own ERDP.

A day or two before the meeting, it is a good idea for reviewer and reviewee to swap or compare notes. Each will then have some idea of the other's thinking. The meeting is then more likely to be useful from the outset.

Section 1 REVIEW: Progress on work to date.

Has reviewee completed planned tasks or projects, or achieved milestones? For recurring work, is productivity, turn-round times, etc. satisfactory? Are there relevant indicators? Is the quality what the customers expect? Is quality and workrate comparable to what others achieve? Are there less formal, qualitative standards, like dress and manner, that need attention? Timekeeping? Co-operation? What factors have affected output? What obstacles can be removed or lessened? What aids to good performance can be more fully exploited, or shared with colleagues?

While all of this is 'looking back', it is always with the future in mind. It's about what still needs to be done, and how we can do it better, quicker or both.

Section 2 WORK PLAN: Tasks or projects to be completed and any new objectives, prioritised.

What tasks, projects, etc. must be carried forward? Do action plans need revision? Were previous targets too easy, or too ambitious. (It's important to get the balance right.) Do any tasks need abandoned or 'shelved', in the light of new priorities? (This is often for the best, but people are often unduly reluctant to do it.)

In highly reactive jobs, it is sometimes thought there is little scope for planning. However, consider whether improvement in, e.g., response or process times, is achievable, *without affecting quality*. Do peaks and troughs in demand have a pattern that can be used to better target effort and resources?

In some jobs (e.g. some manual, support or care jobs), talk of 'targets, projects, etc' may seem less relevant. In such cases, have a more general discussion about quality and standards, and about whether they can *or must* be improved.

Section 3 IMPROVEMENT - IDEAS, PROPOSALS: How can things be done better? How can better things get done?

More junior employees are usually closer to the customers than managers. They are also often more familiar with systems and procedures. So employees should be encouraged to identify what they perceive to be problems. They can also offer ideas about how customers might be better served, or how the job can be done more comfortably. Of course, some suggestions will be more feasible than others. Also, a manager might be able to explain or justify something that the employee perceives as an unhelpful obstacle.

So, even if no major proposals come forward, a frank and creative dialogue here can only be helpful,

Section 4	TRAINING NEEDS: What are they?
<p>Does performance so far reveal any need for skill or knowledge improvement? Is there anything in the future (new equipment, legislation, policy, emerging practice) that indicates a training need?</p> <p>Managers should consider training that will lead to a very worthwhile and early improvement in service. For training with delayed or longer term benefits these must be substantial to justify expenditure. Training where benefits are modest or peripheral, while not ruled out, will always be a lower priority.</p> <p>Enthusiastic, ambitious and able employees will often offer training and personal development ideas, and these will often be helpful. Managers will always have to balance such proposals against the very limited public purse and the extent to which the public and the service will benefit.</p> <p>A reviewee may propose a longer programme (e.g. an HNC, diploma or degree) with a large personal or career development aspect. It is good to encourage such ambition and appetite for learning. Managers can consider discretionary modest support. However, this is not always possible. Bearing in mind the above guidance, the larger contribution in time and money will always come from the employee.</p>	
Section 4. a.	TRAINING NEEDS: What is going to be done about them?
<p>There are many ways to satisfy a training need. An expensive 2-week course at a distant location is not always necessary. Much <i>personal effectiveness</i>, <i>policy</i> and <i>supervisory</i> training can be provided in-house. Coaching, job rotation, shadowing, short courses, directed private study, on-line learning are all possibilities. Advice on training methods and opportunities is available from the Council's professional Employee Development Advisers.</p>	
Section 5 and 5.a.	SUPPORT NEEDS: What else might help you do your job better? AND What is going to be done about them?
<p>Here employees can discuss non-training support needs. It could be about more resources, e.g., tools, material, budget. The reviewee might seek help / guidance with a situation that is affecting their performance. Also relevant here would be any help the supervisor/manager can offer in improving the reviewee's relationships with co-workers or other council sections.</p> <p>While avoiding rash promises, the reviewer will undertake to respond to any matters noted here.</p>	
Section 6	SUPERVISION: Can your immediate supervisor help and guide you better?
<p>The reviewee will by now have received much performance feedback. He/she may now wish to offer his/her 'boss' some feedback on the availability and quality of the direction and guidance provided.</p> <p>As with all feedback, this should not be about personality. It should comprise constructive observations about the reviewer's behaviour <i>as a supervisor</i> that he / she can consider improving.</p> <p>If a reviewee has some comments in this area, reviewers are encouraged to note such feedback in an open-minded way, avoiding defensiveness.</p> <p>The reviewer's 'boss' may be interested in the broad sweep of this feedback.</p>	

The preparation, the meeting, the Review Record; these are all means to an end. The benefits of ERDP flow from what happens afterward.

So the reviewee's work should be guided by the standards and/or prioritised tasks/projects agreed at Section 2. And reviewers must follow-up on points noted in all sections. The Review Record hence becomes an action plan.

It may be that not everything will be implemented. Some ideas will not work out. The plan will need occasional adjustment.

But the process of Review, Follow-up, Review, can hardly fail to foster continuous improvement.