



1. Introduction

Employees should understand what the expectations are of their role and where any shortfall(s) are identified, they should be addressed as soon as possible. Tackling any shortfalls as soon as they arise can help to ensure that individuals are meeting the standards required.

2. Regular 1-1 conversations

Holding regular 1-1s can be a powerful way to maintain engagement and motivation levels. It is also a useful opportunity to discuss any performance issues as and when they arise. The sooner the discussion takes place the less likely it is that the identified issue will escalate to a more serious issue. The longer it is left, the worse the situation can get and the greater impact is on the performance culture of the wider team.

3. Setting Performance Standards

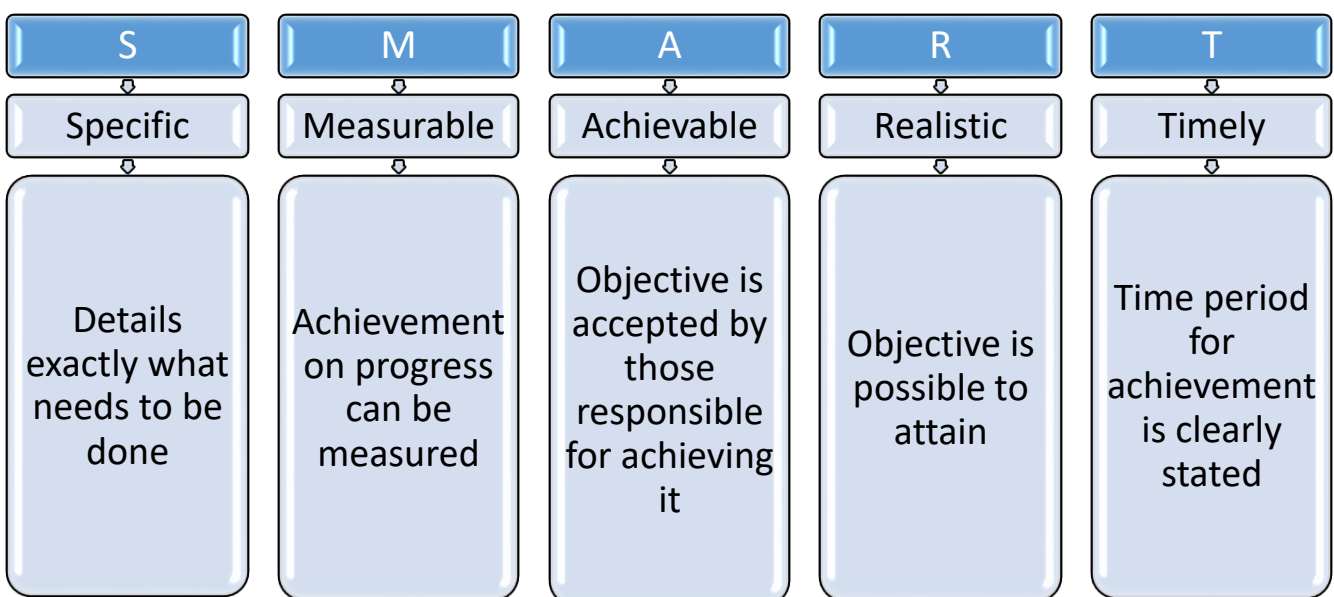
Setting performance standards for employees is important, establishing what is expected of that individual in the role they are undertaking. Standards should be linked to the University's strategic aims and the specific priorities of the Faculty/School or Department. Generally performance standards should be:

- Based on the position, not the individual.
- Observable, specific indicators of success.
- Meaningful, reasonable and attainable.
- Describe "fully satisfactory" performance once trained.
- Expressed in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness, cost, safety or outcomes

Where performance issues arise you should establish the overall performance required, it may be helpful to break down the objective into incremental goals, to enable progress against the overall objective to be reviewed regularly. This will enable the employee to see how they are progressing against the overall objective.

4. SMART Objectives

All objective set should be SMART achieving:





5. Examples of SMART Objectives

- To achieve an average SET score of X or less across all modules delivered throughout the reporting period.
- To generate £xxxxxx in revenue from research income over the financial year. To be monitored through University's finance data systems.
- To generate research outcomes and publications outputs equivalent to X* rating to be reviewed through number of publications generated and peer review.
- Train all employees in XYZ department on the new software, so that their transition to the new software is complete and they are using it effectively (less than 10% error rate, as evidenced by no more than 5 calls a day to the help line) by 1 October.
- Demonstrate proficiency in using PowerPoint by preparing and delivering Annual Budget Presentation by 15 August. Progress review at end of every month beginning April.
- Develop and implement an action plan to reduce error in cost accounting for departments, resulting in accurate accounting reports within two weeks of the monthly close.
- In consultation with Human Resources, develop an under performance corrective action plan for employee XYZ, so that within 90 days either the employee's performance meets and sustains agreed standards or employee is subject to action through the appropriate University procedure.
- Specify all project objectives and key deliverables, with milestones for XYZ project by 1 September.
- Develop a Benefits Realisation Plan for XYZ project for submission to MB by 30 September.
- Support the University's public engagement agenda by actively engaging in the University's work placement initiative. To be achieved through supporting a work placement and acting as a mentor in the workplace for six months.
- Balance staffing lists and reconcile budget to expenditure monthly by the 20 of the following month.
- Respond to all calls from the customer query line within two hours of receipt, and resolve or have a plan to resolve all complaints within 48 hours of receipt.
- Interpret monthly financial reports and analyse budget and expenditure data to identify imbalances and trends, and develop and implement strategies for resolving any problems so discovered.
- Maintain the University web site for the department, meeting with the team at least once a month to discuss enhancements and/or problems with the current sites, and ensuring that they are updated with appropriate information at least weekly.
- Conduct no less than quarterly one-to-one meetings with your staff and forward written summaries of topics discussed to me (line Manager).
- Ensure that all employees in your department receive timely performance reviews and all have Personal Development Plans and that all staff within your area of responsibility receive their PDPR annual review within the sign off period with no unauthorised delays.
- Manage staff and staff resources to ensure that there is adequate clerical and management staff within the allotted Full-time Equivalents (FTE) and budget for the department.
- Create and implement a development plan for each of your direct reports in an area which will further their effectiveness in their current position, to be reviewed with me twice during the year.
- Develop test and implement XYZ product to internal IS Standards by 1 August.
- Process all purchase orders to ensure that 100% of available rebate is secured. Monitoring quarterly against annual target.
- Produce a paper for the MB on the Programme Support Office by the end of July identifying related University risks and Issues and providing clear options and recommendations.
- Research, design and implement a service review based on the principles of the lean management. Deliver recommendations to the management team including evidence as to whether they will deliver real service delivery benefits by 31 August.
- Develop Customer Satisfaction Survey to measure performance of marketing across the University. Create a report detailing baseline position and develop an action plan to tackle under-performance. Deadline to be agreed.



5. The importance of continued monitoring

Regular reviews of progress against objectives are crucial, both in documenting progress against the objectives, reviewing the effectiveness of any support/interventions in place for the individual and recording the conversations/any actions arising from these conversations.

7. Additional Information

- [HR Employment Relations Team](#)
- [Performance at Work](#)
- [Professional Development](#)
- [Dignity at Nottingham](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: Index of Support](#)

Case study

Consider the following scenario, what might you do if you were the manager?

Stage one

You are a PI in a very successful and high performing research group. Jo Burn is on a 4 year fixed-term contract and usually her standard of work is very high. For the first two years Jo's performance was excellent and then for some reason the standard of work falls dramatically. She is failing to undertake the relevant experiments, failing to report results and seems to be away from the lab for lengthy amounts of time. You cannot think what has gone wrong, but realise that you have not really had a discussion with her for a long time and have not set her any specific objectives for at least 6 months.

What do you do?

- meet with Jo at the earliest opportunity – do not wait until the next appraisal meeting.
- discuss with Jo the issues relating to her performance and try to determine why there has been a change.
- Put meeting notes and any agreed outcomes in writing

Stage two

You discover in the meeting that Jo is finding work very dull and un-inspirational, she has become very demotivated. Jo feels unvalued and as if she is being ignored.

What do you do?

- Set Jo some more challenging and stretching targets.
- Discuss the possibility of additional responsibilities to help motivate her.
- Discuss development opportunities and possibilities that may lead to future promotion.
- Allocate a mentor to her.
- Put meeting notes and any agreed outcomes in writing.

Outcome

Jo's performance improves to her previous standard so no further intervention is required.