



**Goal:** To foster an environment of open communication at Swarthmore College, regular and periodic conversations with staff members and supervisors regarding job performance are encouraged.

Clear and open dialogues throughout the year allow an opportunity to recognize work well done, and to address concerns as they arise. Yearly conversations reinforce desired performance outcomes and provide opportunities for immediate improvement, development, and redirection.In addition, staff members are encouraged to proactively seek feedback and communicate any concerns with their supervisors. At the end of the year, supervisors must provide a written assessment of each staff member's job performance and summarize their work.

The following suggestions will aid you in conversations throughout the year.

**Plan and Prepare**

1. Be sure to have immediate access to the performance assessment documents on the [Performance Assessment & Coaching site](https://www.swarthmore.edu/human-resources/performance-assessments-coaching).
   1. Review the Performance Assessment Template. Staff members are asked to complete the template first, then, send an electronic copy to their supervisor for their written and verbal feedback.
2. Be prepared to set up the performance assessment conversation. All staff members should be adequately equipped with the necessary technology to work from home effectively. You can access ITS resources, support, and training at this link:  [kb.swarthmore.edu/display/remote/Working+Remotely](https://kb.swarthmore.edu/display/remote/Working+Remotely). And [Zoom Video Conferencing](https://kb.swarthmore.edu/display/ACADTECH/Zoom+Video+Web-conferencing) - Zoom Licensed (Pro) is available for all staff. If you need to be upgraded contact [support@swarthmore.edu](mailto:support@swarthmore.edu).
3. Review the job responsibilities, goals and priorities established for each staff member.
4. Assess progress against each goal and document examples, feedback or input from fellow colleagues or team members.
   1. Remember, the performance assessment is meant to summarize and evaluate performance over the past performance year, which for us was approximately July 2019 to June 2020.  That means approximately two thirds of the review year took place before COVID-19 and the shift to work-from-home took place approximately one third during COVID-19.  An option is to document goals, responsibilities, and priorities for the time before COVID and during COVID as two distinct parts of the review year.
   2. **For the Year-End Performance conversation: ratings are not documented for the 2019-20 year.**
5. Consider what has helped the staff member achieve their goals and what things might be getting in their way.
6. Ask each staff member to come prepared to discuss progress toward goals, what helps them to achieve these goals and what kinds of professional development may be of interest.
7. Document key points of the conversation to use as follow-up discussion points for the next conversation. These notes can aid in assessing progress going forward, too.
8. Schedule the conversation. **Year-end performance assessment conversations should take place by August 31, 2020.**

**Conversation with the Staff Member**

1. Have performance assessment copies available for the staff member and you. The copies should include the staff member and your feedback.
2. Start the conversation by getting input from the staff member. For example,
   1. Thank them for joining the call and ask how they are doing.
   2. Provide them a quick overview of what they can anticipate during the conversation. “We will use this time to discuss your performance throughout the year: what went well, where there is room for improvement and leave time to discuss development opportunities. Please know that we are not including ratings on performance assessments for this year. Do you have any questions before we begin?”
   3. Then ask, “To begin, share your overall assessment of your performance in 2019-2020.”
   4. What went well? “What accomplishments are you most proud of this year?” “What helped you to achieve your goals?” “Would you like to share other examples?”
   5. What roadblocks did they encounter this year? “What, if anything, got in your way of accomplishing goals?” “Share specifically about how things could have been different to ensure [better] success?” “Would you like to share another example?”
3. Share your honest assessment of the staff member’s performance for the year. Share examples of their work – both in getting work done as well as their behavior in working with you and others.
   1. Have readily available any documentation that will support the conversation [emails, metrics, data, feedback, project documents, etc.]
   2. Be sure to point out areas of accomplishment by reviewing each goal. Be direct, specific, and concise.
      1. What specifically went well?
   3. Any areas that require focus, attention, coaching or development.
      1. Also, if observing someone else to achieve better performance, make sure to follow-up and schedule a time for them to observe someone.
4. Discuss professional development interests and needs. Follow-up after this conversation about ways the staff member can engage in professional development opportunities.
5. Ask the staff member if they have any questions or would like to address a matter that has not been mentioned, yet.
6. Share a timeframe in which to follow-up: Establish and create [additional] goals and expectations for the upcoming performance year.
   1. Suggestion: Set up a day/time before this conversation ends.
7. For year-end assessment conversations:
   1. Ensure the performance assessment is signed and dated by the staff member and you.
   2. Provide a copy to the staff member and forward a copy to the Department Head and/or Vice President. You will keep a copy for your files.
   3. The Department Head or Vice President sends a final, signed copy to Human Resources at [humanresources@swarthmore.edu](mailto:humanresources@swarthmore.edu).

**Reflection**

1. What did you learn?
2. What surprised you in the conversation?
3. What were the benefits of having the conversation?
4. What aspects were challenging?
5. What will you do or say differently in future performance assessment conversations?
6. How will you maximize the possibilities that resulted from the conversation? How will you hold yourself accountable to achieve the team’s goals and help everyone professionally develop?
7. In what ways will you hold yourself accountable to achieve your goals and professionally grow?