

Quick Guide: Make the most of your appraisal

Formal appraisals or performance reviews can hold dread for some appraisees. Maybe it is a process you don't give much thought to until a few weeks before the meeting itself. Then you wander in saying how "fabulous" or "excellent" you are, and risk being knocked down. Or perhaps the alternative, where you assess yourself as "meeting expectations" only to find that, actually, you exceed them in some areas. So to help you prepare - *objectively* - for your next appraisal, here are the **top ten tips** :

- 1. Start filling in the form, today!** There is nothing to say you have to wait 12 months to do so. And the more you have on your form over 12 months, the better placed you will be to choose the best bits to submit.
- 2. Revisit your job description** and performance competencies. If you don't have a job description, make sure you get one, or write one yourself. Make sure you know what is expected of you, so you can meet – and beat - all of the expectations.
- 3. Ask for feedback regularly**, independent of the review process, especially if you are a locum, float or temp. Perhaps you could ask for feedback at the end of a new project or piece of work, or where you feel you have especially "gone the extra mile".
- 4. Create and use a Personal Development File.** This could be paper or electronic, and logs your learning and progress. So every time you do a new task, keep a note and a copy of it. At the end of the year, you will be able to compare the latest version and so demonstrate your improvement over the year.
- 5. Do a swot analysis** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) twice a year, to track improvements or changes in direction. Add the results to your personal development file.
- 6. Keep the evidence.** We tend to forget what we worked on and how well we did it by the time the review comes round. So make a note of what you do during the year, (and who said "thank you" for it!) so you can support your self assessment rating.
- 7. Take responsibility** for your own progress and career. Always be on the lookout for opportunities to learn new things, and make a note of them: the results, the learning and the application of them, in your personal development file.
- 8. Set at least two (smart) objectives** for yourself, for the coming year, before the meeting. This way you demonstrate your willingness to develop and have more chance of them being supported on a formal basis.
- 9. Challenge limiting expectations** - on a day-to-day basis as well at any review meetings. Ask them why they think you "couldn't do it " or "wouldn't want to".
- 10. Don't undersell yourself** at the meeting, for modesty's sake: use your evidence. If you can't blow your own trumpet in a review meeting, when can you?

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