

Quick Guide: Conducting Appraisals

The formal appraisal allows you to talk to individual members of your team about their performance: past, present and future. Many staff, however, see it as their annual "telling off", and not worth their while. If you have been managing performance well, on a daily basis throughout the year, the appraisal is made much easier. So here are the **top ten tips** for conducting the formal appraisal:

1. **Prepare well!** As in most things, "if you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail". So diary and confirm the important dates well in advance e.g. the appraisal deadline; the formal meeting; return of forms; sending out paperwork.
2. **Gather your information:** a copy of their job description; the evaluation framework; copies of the last review; other people's observations, if appropriate.
3. **Draft an agenda** after comparing the appraisee's completed form with your own evidence. If necessary meet or speak to anyone who should provide input on your appraisee's performance or other issues to be raised during the meeting.
4. **Set draft objectives** for the appraisee which will meet the needs of the business and your department's objectives. These objectives are designed to be the focus of what you want the person to achieve over the coming year.
5. Therefore **they must be SMART:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable/ Agreed, Realistic/Relevant and Time-bound.
6. **Conduct the formal meeting in three stages:** review past performance (briefly!); agree objectives for the coming year; consider and agree training and development needs. This will ensure the person has the knowledge and skills to achieve the level of performance and agreed objectives.
7. **Listen actively:** pay attention and avoid interrupting. Take notes, show interest, maintain eye contact, and remain calm! Above all, avoid **Labelling** – putting an appraisee into a category before hearing all the evidence.
8. **Build in an "open forum"** for your appraisee to raise anything not already on your agenda. But be prepared to postpone this if you cannot deal with it straight away or if you need to check anything.
9. **Remember that appraisal is an on-going process.** Don't file it all away in your bottom drawer until next year: it is a working document that is in use all year round.
10. **Bring it all out again** for the informal review three or six months later, together with this Quick Guide, and do it all again. Perfect!

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