

APPENDIX 18 – APPRAISAL

The Objectives

The objectives of the staff appraisal scheme are:

- (1) To integrate organisational objectives with the assessment of staff.
- (2) To enhance communication between managers and staff.
- (3) To assist the organisation to determine general training needs.
- (4) To review job descriptions.
- (5) To provide a vehicle for managers and individual members of staff to agree specific training requirements.

When Does It Happen?

Normally key targets and objectives are set during January/February for the year beginning 1 April. During the financial year, these objectives will be reviewed formally at least once, although it is expected that key targets and objectives will be the basis of frequent discussions through the formal supervision sessions as appropriate. The actual appraisal itself will take place in the year or at the end of the financial year, when the staff member's performance against objectives can be assessed. At this time, or shortly thereafter, key targets and associated objectives will be agreed for the coming year. Finally, action plans will be added to the objectives.

Who Appraises Whom?

Each member of staff will normally be appraised by his or her line manager.

Special Circumstances, ie Promotions, Transfers, Acting-up Awards, Secondments

By ensuring that all staff have agreed key targets and associated objectives, and specific performance standards, it should be possible to minimise problems caused by movement during the appraisal period. A member of staff, when changing his or her job internally, will agree with the receiving manager the objectives/performance standards that will be applied during the remaining period.

In normal circumstances these will be based on those originally agreed by the outgoing member of staff. In relation to the period assessed for transfers and secondments at the same grade, staff will normally be assessed in relation to the post in which they have spent most time during the year or by a combined assessment of two managers, whichever seems the most appropriate means to give a considered assessment of performance. After a job change, the staff member will be assessed in the job being carried out at the time of appraisal. In such circumstances it is unlikely that the first

appraisal in a new job will result in an assessment which is above satisfactory. In cases of maternity leave, members of staff should be appraised for their performance during the period when they were at work. In these and other cases of long-term absence, the appraisal should take place as soon as is practicable following the return to work.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff share an ongoing responsibility to monitor and review their performance and all line managers should, as a matter of course, observe and monitor the performance of their staff and offer feedback whenever appropriate in terms of recognition, praise or constructive criticism. This will be conducted through the formal supervision sessions.

The Appraisee/Postholder

All staff will be appraised by their line manager. The role of the appraisee is as follows:

- (1) To prepare adequately for the interview – a preparation form is available to facilitate this process (form can be obtained from Human Resources).
- (2) To be open in discussion of the performance and the context of that performance.
- (3) To participate in the process of setting key targets, associated objectives and action plans for the achievement of objectives.
- (4) To contribute to the process of drawing up a plan to address training or development needs.

The Appraiser

The process of appraisal is not meant to replace the normal process of managers and staff talking about work progress. Ongoing progress will be discussed through the formal supervision sessions. The appraisal is the opportunity to sit down to review performance over a longer period of time. The appraiser's role is to help ensure that the appraisee's past and current performance is jointly and fairly reviewed, based on evidence which describes what the person has actually achieved in the job according to the agreed objectives. The appraiser will:

- (1) Agree with the appraisee the date, time, location of the interview.
- (2) Give the appraisee a preparation form (form can be obtained from Human Resources).
- (3) Ensure both parties have details of the key targets and objectives agreed the previous year and discussed during the formal mid-year review.
- (4) Gather the information necessary for a meaningful discussion to take place, in particular, details of the appraisee's actual performance.

- (5) Manage the appraisal discussion so that both parties can effectively contribute.
- (6) Jointly agree key targets and associated objectives.
- (7) Complete the form after the interview and give it to the appraisee for confirmation of the content and to add any comments.
- (8) Pass the completed document to the Reviewing Officer for comments and signature.
- (9) Return the document to the appraisee for any final comments following review and signature.
- (9) Pass the final document to the Human Resources Officer.
- (10) Carry out agreed actions.
- (11) Monitor the appraisee's performance on an ongoing basis.

The Reviewing Officer

The Reviewing Officer will normally be the Director of Corporate Services. The role of the Reviewing Officer is to help ensure there is no unjustified bias, to help the overall system to work consistently across NICVA and to guard against appraiser inexperience. S/he will:

- (1) Read and sign the appraisal form and add further comments if appropriate.
- (2) Return the form for further comment by the appraiser and appraisee and for signature.

The Human Resources Officer

The Human Resources Officer will assist by:

- (1) Monitoring the scheme to encourage consistency of operation.
- (2) Providing advice on the operation of the scheme and completion of the documentation.
- (3) Providing the appropriate paperwork to managers and informing them of the agreed timetable for completion.

Confidentiality

All staff appraisal documents are treated as confidential. This includes the contents of preparation forms and the staff appraisal form together with any notes taken by either

party during the interview. Only the appraisee, appraiser, Director of Corporate Services or Chief Executive may have access to the information. The Human Resources Officer will review the documentation to ensure consistency across NICVA.

Openness

The system is designed to be open. This means that all information should be available to the appraisee.

Training

Every appraiser will be required to undertake appropriate training before appraisals can take place and all appraisees are entitled to have the process explained to them in detail. The Director of Corporate Services is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is made available.

Procedure for Dealing with Disagreements

An appraisee who is not satisfied with the appraisal report shall, in the first instance discuss the matter with their appraiser. In the event of the disagreement remaining unresolved, it shall be the role of the Reviewing Officer to decide the matter. The aggrieved appraisee, if not satisfied with the Reviewing Officer's response, may then refer the matter through the grievance procedure.

Guidance Notes on Appraiser Preparation

As with any effective meeting, success depends on careful preparation and planning.

Preparation

- (1) Employees must be given the employee's guidelines and the self-assessment form two weeks prior to the date of the appraisal interview and be informed of the time, place and venue of the appraisal interview.
- (2) At least two hours should be set aside for the interview.
- (3) Prior to the interview, ensure that you have the employee's job description, last appraisal form (if applicable), self-assessment form (if the employee has given this to you).
- (4) Study the individual's job description and consider his or her overall performance during the last year.
- (5) Note any points you particularly want to discuss. What have been his or her major achievements/shortcomings, etc, during the year.

- (6) Ensure you yourself know what levels of performance the postholder should be achieving and make notes of these.

The Appraisal Interview

The appraisal interview is above all a two-way joint communications session. There should be thorough frank discussion between the employer and their line manager. The appraisal interview itself will consist of two parts. Part one is primarily concerned with assessing performance and the appraisal should concentrate on:

- (1) The appraisee's work performance during the last 12 months.
- (2) The line manager's assessment of the employee's work performance.
- (3) The employee's own assessment of his or her work performance.
- (4) How work performance can be improved upon.
- (5) Identifying training and development needs and how these can be met.

A suggested format for this part of the meeting is as follows:

- (1) Review the current job description – is it still current?
- (2) Explain clearly the levels of performance expected.
- (3) Ask the employee to outline his/her work performance.
- (4) Introduce your review of their work performance and provide feedback of same.
- (5) Review targets and plan of action set during previous appraisal (if applicable).

This system should lead to an open discussion as to:

- (1) Why someone has performed well or badly.
- (2) What you/they think they have achieved.
- (3) How performance can be improved.
- (4) Strengths and weaknesses and how these can be improved.
- (5) Obstacles and barriers which affect job performance and satisfaction.
- (6) How training and personal development needs can be met.
- (7) Discuss an individual's longer term ambitions.

During the interview the manager should:

- (1) Listen.
- (2) Ask open questions.
- (3) Strike a balance between negative and positive.
- (4) Focus on performance not an individual's personality.
- (5) Deal with key points.
- (6) Encourage discussion.

- (7) Make notes highlighting key points that have been discussed.
- (8) Summarise at appropriate points.

Concluding Part One of the Interview

During the course of the appraisal interview you will have had the opportunity of telling the employee how you feel he or she is performing and if they are meeting the necessary levels of performance. Similarly the employee will be given the opportunity of making an assessment of his or her own performance. At the end of the interview the key points should be shared so that the appraisee is aware of what is being written down. This is useful as it helps to summarise the discussion which has taken place prior to moving on to the second part of the appraisal interview, ie the action plan.

The Action Plan

The second part of the appraisal interview consists of the drawing up of the action plan to assist employee development and job performance. In drawing up the action plan, the employee should be encouraged to think things out for him/herself. It should be the employee who is instrumental in setting the action plan. The action plan is vital to the success of performance appraisal as it contains the action required not only to assist employee development but also the steps required to improve work performance. The plan may therefore contain:

- (1) Action needed to improve employee work performance.
- (2) Action the employee may need to enable him/her to perform more effectively.
- (3) The setting and/or resetting of key targets and objectives.
- (4) The identification of training needs and how these will be met.
- (5) Dates when progress will be reviewed.

Appraisal Record Form

The purpose of this form is to enable a record of the appraisal to be written up. It must be completed after the interview and not during it. It is an important document especially for the appraisee and great care must therefore be taken in its completion. The notes taken during the appraisal interview will assist in the completion of the form. It is essential that both parts of the appraisal record form be completed as fully and comprehensively as possible.

Guidance Notes on Appraisee Preparation

This guide has been drawn up in order to assist you to prepare for your appraisal meeting. Your manager will inform you of the exact date, time and place of your appraisal interview. It is primarily aimed at developing you as an employee and as a person, assisting in improving your job performance. The appraisal interview is concerned with assessing your work performance over a 12 month period and drawing up a plan for the coming 12 months. The chief objectives of NICVA's appraisal scheme are:

- (1) To clearly identify and establish a job's content, scope and objectives.
- (2) To identify and establish the levels of performance expected in a job.
- (3) To provide feedback to individual employees of "How they are getting on" in relation to the required standards.
- (4) To allow individual employees the opportunity of assessing themselves.
- (5) To facilitate the individual's personal growth and development.
- (6) To agree a plan of action so that job performance and satisfaction can be improved and, if necessary, to reset standards and/or targets for the next 12 months.
- (7) To assist in the identification of training needs and plan how these needs can be met.
- (8) To provide a forum for the discussion and resolution of wider work related issues/problems.

The Appraisal Process

Two weeks prior to the appraisal interview, your line manager will inform you of the date, time and place of your appraisal interview and will give you a self-assessment form and a copy of your job description and specification.

The self-assessment form has been designed in order to help you to prepare for your appraisal interview. It is up to you how to use it. However, it is recommended you prepare as fully as possible for your appraisal interview in order to derive maximum benefit and, therefore, it is desirable that you make full use of the self-assessment form.

Your manager will also do some preparation work concentrating primarily on your overall performance over the last 12 months.

The Appraisal Interview

The appraisal interview will consist of two parts. The first part of the interview will concentrate on:

- (1) Your work performance in the preceding 12 months.
- (2) An assessment of your performance by your manager.
- (3) A self-assessment of your performance.
- (4) How your work performance can be improved upon.

- (5) Your training and development needs and how these can be met.
- (6) Your career aspirations.

Following discussion on the above, the second part of your appraisal interview will consist of the drawing up of an action plan for the future. The action plan is drawn up by you and your manager. Its purpose is to help develop you as an employee and an individual as well as assisting in improving job performance. The action plan may therefore consist of:

- (1) Action you may have to take to improve performance.
- (2) Action your manager may have to take to enable you to perform more effectively.
- (3) The future development of the job.
- (4) The setting and/or resetting of targets.
- (5) Training needs identified and how best these will be met.
- (6) When progress will be reviewed.

Following your appraisal interview, the formal 'Staff Appraisal Record' will be completed and sent to you by your line manager. Part 1 of the form will include a written record of

your line manager's assessment of your performance during the last 12 months. You will be asked to sign this, confirming that you have read and understood its contents. Additionally, you will be given the opportunity to add your own comments.

The second part of the form will consist of the action plan drawn up by your line manager. You will be asked to sign this, confirming that you have read and understood it and that you agree with its contents. The form is then returned to your line manager who will sign it. The form is then passed on to the Reviewing Officer for agreement and signature. Once this has been done, you will receive a copy of the signed form.

One copy will be held by your line manager so that the action plan agreed to can be implemented during the next 12 months. Finally, a copy of the Appraisal Record form will be held in your personal file. All documents relating to appraisal will be kept by Human Resources.