

COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

GUIDELINE

for the South Australian Public Service

Individual Performance Development

MARCH 2001



Government
of South Australia

INTRODUCTION

Performance development is an integrated and planned system for continuously improving the performance of all people in an agency. It is a way of defining work goals and standards, reviewing performance against these standards, actively managing all levels of performance, and maximising learning and development.

Performance development can achieve:

- a stronger focus on the purpose and outcomes of the agency
- clarification of work roles, tasks and outcomes for individuals and work teams
- fair recognition of the contribution of individuals and teams to the success of the agency
- systematic provision of development and career planning opportunities
- a positive approach to the management of people and increased job satisfaction.

This Guideline provides a basis for the introduction and maintenance of performance development systems based on best practice standards. From this each agency can develop its own approach to best suit its own context and people and to integrate the performance development system with existing systems.

KEY RESULT AREA

This guideline is linked to the Managed Performance key result area of the Strategic Human Resource Management Framework for the South Australian Public Sector.

Managed Performance

Define fair performance requirements and standards of ethical conduct for all employees, provide support for their achievement of identified goals, review performance and provide clear feedback, and agreed rewards and sanctions where appropriate.

(eg ethical conduct standards, whistleblowers policy, performance development, disciplinary processes)



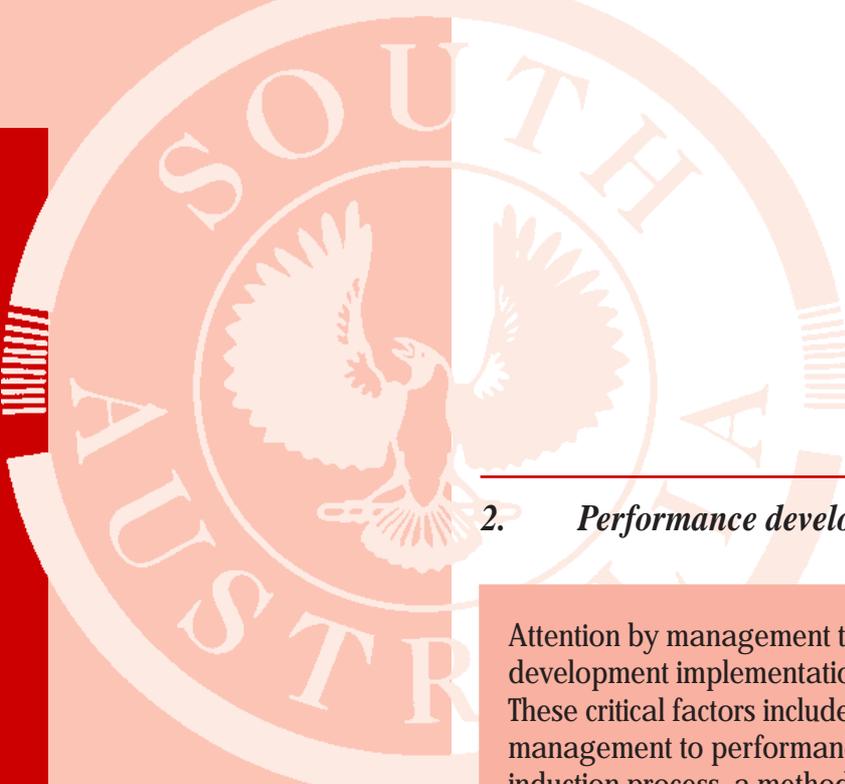
PRINCIPLES

1. Individual performance is aligned to agency strategy

A clear connection between an agency's strategic or corporate plan and its performance development objectives will ensure that the work performed by all staff and the development of staff areas is clearly aligned to the agency's outcomes.

Agencies should:

- (a) create a clear link between strategic or corporate planning goals, workforce plans and performance development for individuals
 - (b) consider how the performance development system will contribute to the development of the agency's culture.
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2. *Performance development system is actively managed*

Attention by management to the key success factors for performance development implementation will increase the success of the system. These critical factors include a stated commitment from senior management to performance development, a planned and resourced induction process, a method for ensuring confidentiality of information, resources and support to managers and employees, and a means to resolve conflict.

Agencies should:

- (a) Establish a clear action plan which sets realistic time frames and identifies appropriate resourcing for the maintenance of a performance development process in the agency
 - (b) conduct skill development activities both prior to the introduction of the system and for skill maintenance and improvement over time
 - (c) develop a process which can support managers and staff, especially for resolving disagreement or conflict if it arises
 - (d) design a method for recording and storing performance agreements which both ensures their confidentiality and enables their ongoing use in that performance development period and in integrated personnel management systems
 - (e) develop an annual calendar of performance development activities for use by staff and managers in planning
 - (f) co-ordinate performance development evaluation and reporting.
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3. Employees are involved in system development and maintenance

The involvement of an agency's employees in the design and maintenance of performance development systems and processes can encourage their commitment and involvement in those processes.

Agencies should:

- (a) establish a consultative mechanism whereby all employees are provided opportunities to be involved in developing and reviewing the performance development system.

4. Performance development processes are clearly articulated

Clearly documenting common principles for a performance development approach will ensure that a common understanding exists while enabling implementation to be tailored to suit work groups.

This should include documenting:

- (a) the method(s) by which agency principles, values, objectives, and outcomes, will be agreed upon with work groups or individuals
 - (b) the method(s) for measuring and developing performance
 - (c) the performance development responsibilities of managers, employees, work teams, and the agency co-ordinator of performance development and how they interact
 - (d) the method(s) by which identified development plans will be implemented, balancing individual and organisational development needs
 - (e) the approach which will be taken to the ongoing process of feedback on individual and team performance
 - (f) the approach which will be taken to, including the frequency of, reviewing performance.
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5. All levels of performance are managed

Clear processes for managing all levels of performance will assist managers and staff to identify and appropriately manage a range of performance levels, acknowledging the contribution of individuals to the agency's outcomes and preventing longer term problems emerging.

Agencies should:

- (a) promote an understanding which emphasises a continuum of levels of performance, from exceptional to under-performance, acknowledging that individuals move across this continuum during a career as new professional challenges present themselves
 - (b) establish both formal and informal methods for ensuring all employees receive recognition for their work achievement
 - (c) encourage the provision of ongoing informal feedback to employees so they are continuously aware of their current performance level, are provided with timely rewards, and opportunities to address any concerns with their performance
 - (d) identify any rewards which will be associated with performance and how they will be allocated and monitored
 - (e) assist managers and individuals in the early identification of diminishing performance and ensure positive strategies are put in place to support staff to improve and develop performance.
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OTHER INFORMATION

Legislation

Public Sector Management Act 1995

- Part 2 General Public Sector Aims and Standards
- Part 4 Chief Executives, Section 14, Chief Executive's general responsibilities
- Part 5 Commissioner for Public Employment
- Part 7 Public Service Appointments (Apart from Chief Executives), Division 1 – Executive Positions, Section 37 Executive's general responsibilities
- Part 8 General Public Service Employment Provisions: Division - 5 Mental or Physical Incapacity; Division 6 - Unsatisfactory Performance; Division 8 - Conduct and Discipline; and Division 9 - Appeal Against Administrative Decisions.

Publications issued by the Commissioner for Public Employment

- PSM Act Determination 10 – Managing Performance and Conduct
 - Background Briefing Paper: Managing Performance and Conduct (Discipline)
 - Background Briefing Paper: Current Directions in Competency Standards, and Competency Based Training and Assessment
 - Background Briefing Paper: Recognition of Employee Performance
 - Background Briefing Paper: Recognition of Skill Development
 - Guideline for a Planned Workforce
 - Guideline for Planned Human Resource Development
 - Guideline for the Protection of Merit and Equity
 - Guideline for the Recruitment and Employment of Non-Executive Employees
 - Performance Management Implementation: Managers' Guide
 - Performance Management in the South Australian Public Service: Information for Staff
 - Performance Management Resource Manual
 - Performance Management Training Kit
 - Executive Employment Policy Handbook
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About Guidelines

The Commissioner for Public Employment issues guidelines in accordance with Section 22 of the Public Sector Management Act 1995.

The guidelines detail the principles underpinning the eight key result areas of the Strategic Human Resource Management Framework for the South Australian Public Sector.

This guideline has been prepared in consultation with agencies with a view to facilitating agency level decision making. Where a requirement exists under legislation, or in government policy, the guideline indicates this.

Where necessary, the Commissioner issues PSM Act Determinations and supporting material. The determinations are binding, so as to ensure the effective implementation of Government public sector workforce policies and the personnel management standards of the Act, and the protection of key employment conditions. The supporting materials explain best practice in human resource management and provide additional information to agencies.