

Reference No: E109/1/84; **Date:** 15/06/84

Circular 18/1984:- Performance appraisal for grades represented by the Association of Higher Civil Servants (AHCS)

A Dhuine Uasail

I am directed by the Minister for the Public Service to say that, following discussions with the AHCS, he has approved a scheme of performance appraisal which has been agreed with that Association. A copy of the relevant appraisal form is attached as Appendix 1. Appendix 2 outlines the principal stages involved in the appraisal process. (Please study this Appendix carefully before carrying out an appraisal).

2. The main features of the scheme are as follows:

- * it will apply to grades represented by the AHCS.
- * it will be compulsory on all members of the grades concerned. In the event of an individual refusing to participate in the appraisal discussions, the supervisor will carry out the appraisal and brief him/ her on the results.
- * the main purpose of the scheme will be the development of staff in the context of improving work performance. The scheme will also be used to give management in Departments information for use in their assessment of staff for promotion purposes.
- * appraisal of staff will be based on job performance, and will take place annually.
- * the development review and performance appraisal scheme will be an open one. Appraisals will be carried out by the first supervisor and will be shown to and discussed with the appraisee (Section B of form). The personal development plan will be agreed between the appraisee and the first supervisor (Section C). If the appraisee so wishes, discussions will be held between the appraisee and the second supervisor (Section D).
- * Section E provides for an overall assessment of the appraisee's performance (to be completed by the first supervisor) and an assessment of future potential (to be completed by the second supervisor). Information here will provide an input into the promotion process and, in accordance with normal practice, will be confidential to management. The appraisee, however, will be informed if it is considered that he/ she is not at present qualified for promotion (on this general question, Departments/Offices are reminded of the desirability of ensuring that officers in all grades are advised of any adverse reports which might affect their advancement - see General Council Report 941).
- * progress on achievement of actions specified in personal development plans and of objectives set for the appraisee will be regularly monitored.

3. In operating the scheme the following general points should be borne in mind:

- * because the scheme will be linked to promotion, supervisors should make every effort to ensure that assessments of staff reflect adequately and fairly their performance on the job. In completing Section B of the appraisal form, the supervisor should call to mind concrete examples of the appraisee's performance under the various categories indicated.

* while some supervisors involved in appraising staff under the scheme may not have attended a specific training course on appraisal, they will have developed appropriate skills in this area over the years in the normal course of their duties. The guidelines for officers carrying out appraisals, which are attached as Appendix 3, are intended to supplement these skills and to ensure a fair and impartial appraisal. If necessary, training courses on appraisal will be held.

* a central element in the scheme is improvement of work performance through development of people to their full potential. Supervisors, therefore, should discuss frankly with appraisees their perception of the latter's strengths and weaknesses. They should take full account of views expressed in drawing up an agreed personal development plan which should set specific and realistic actions needed to develop the appraisee and to optimise job performance.

* it is important that all documentation under the scheme be treated on a confidential basis.

* it is a matter for each Department to ensure that the scheme is run fairly and equitably in their areas. In addition, it is intended to review the scheme generally from time to time to ensure, inter alia, consistency of operation across the civil service and to take account of major changes in circumstances as they arise.

4. This Department will be pleased to advise, as necessary, on the general application of the scheme and on relevant issues arising in this regard. Enquiries should be addressed to Mr Cyril McHugh (Extension 214).

5. Please ensure that this scheme is brought into operation in your Department at the earliest possible date but, in any event, not later than 30 September 1984. Please bring this Circular to the attention of all officers in your Department to whom the scheme applies and to all officers who will be involved as supervisors.

Mise le meas
K MURPHY
Secretary

Appendix 1 to Circular 18/84 (PC 35)
Development Review and Performance Appraisal

Period Covered: From To

Section A - Facts

Name _____ Section _____

Grade _____

Date of appointment to grade _____

Date of appointment to present post _____

General purpose of officer's job _____

Main objectives assigned to job in review period (see Part C of last appraisal)

Notes on completing Section B (see next page)

It should be noted that:

- (i) all categories should be marked (except in cases arising under (ii) below);
- (ii) the only exception to this would be where a category e.g., numerical ability, had no relevance to the appraisee's job (the number of such instances should be extremely small);
- (iii) the numerical evaluations indicate a range of performance by reference to each category's statement, from 1 (outstanding) to 5 (disappointing).

Section B - Performance

Please tick appropriate box

	Outstanding			Disappointing	
	1	2	3	4	5
Supervisor should rank the four most important categories for the performance of the appraisee's job.					
CREATIVITY/OPENESS TO IDEAS Thinks about job and initiates worthwhile new ideas; open to others' good ideas.					
KNOWLEDGE/AWARENESS Has a thorough knowledge of job and its requirements and of current developments - economic, social etc - impacting on the job.					
ANALYTICAL ABILITY Consistently excellent in getting straight to the heart of a problem and in teasing out its complexities.					

INTERPRETATION/USE OF DATA
Real ability in interpreting statistical information and in marshalling relevant and accurate data.

JUDGEMENT
Advice consistently sound and reliable.

WORK OUTPUT
Consistently very high, much greater than normally expected.

WORK QUALITY
Consistently high quality, dealing effectively and comprehensively with issues.

INITIATIVE AND RESPONSIBILITY
Regularly takes lead in seeing tasks through and in accepting responsibilities appropriate to his/her level.

PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE
Consistently supportive in times of heavy pressure; the type of officer to have around when the "chips are down".

ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES
Regularly meets assigned objectives (see Part A) and other major priorities.

COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY
Consistently presents ideas clearly and persuasively, getting straight to the issues involved.

MANAGEMENT OF STAFF
Excellent manager, getting best out of staff through effective work organisation, leadership, and by showing a real interest in their development.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS
Very effective working relationships with superiors and colleagues.

Supervisor's signature

Grade

Date _____

Comments (if any) of appraisee

The above should be shown to and discussed with the appraisee. The appraisee may wish to comment on certain aspects highlighting, for example, relevant factors which, in his/her view, had a bearing on performance. If so, these comments should be indicated below:

Appraisee's signature

Date

Section C - Development Review

Note

The basic aim here is to draw up an agreed development plan for the appraisee and set work objectives to be achieved by him/her over the next period. These will derive mainly from discussions under Section B but may also reflect other relevant aspects raised by the supervisor/appraisee. It should again be emphasised that the basic objective of the scheme is to help people realise their full potential. The personal development plan should indicate, therefore, the specific action proposed covering, as appropriate, the following:-

- * on-the-job training
- * formal training
- * skills development
- * job rotation
- * staff exchanges (public/private sectors) etc.

In drawing up the personal development plan with the officer, reference should be made to the plan set for this period at the last interview. Actions not yet implemented should be indicated below and the reasons therefor stated:-

Action not yet implemented

Reason(s)

Personal Development Plan For Next Period

Specific action proposed

By whom

By When

Main Objectives To Be Achieved In Next Period

Responsibility area

Results to be achieved

Relative importance*

* On a scale 1 (extremely important), 2 (quite important) and 3 (important).

Supervisor's signature _____ Date _____

Appraisee's signature _____ Date _____

Comments (if any) of appraisee

Appraisee should indicate any comments he/she may wish to make on above:

Appraisee's signature _____ Date _____

Section D - Discussion with Second Supervisor

The appraisee may wish to discuss aspects arising under Sections B and C with the second supervisor. If so, these discussions should be held and the latter should record their substance below:

Second Supervisor's signature _____ Date _____

If the appraisee has any views on the above, these should also be recorded:-

Appraisee's signature _____ Date _____

Section E - Assessment of Future Potential

Overall assessment of performance (to be completed by first supervisor)

Please tick one of the boxes below

		Expected average across civil service
1.	OUTSTANDING Fully on top of the job, consistently giving much more than normally expected	10%
2.	VERY GOOD Very proficient performer, often exceeding job requirements.	20%
3.	GOOD Fully satisfactory performer who meets job requirements.	40%
4.	SATISFACTORY Generally satisfactory performer, sometimes not meeting job requirements.	20%
5.	UNSATISFACTORY Often disappointing in measuring up to requirements of job.	10%

*Please tick box below (otherwise leave blank) if you consider that the officer, in addition to being outstanding in existing performance, has that something special which makes him/her stand out exceptionally in the grade as a person who will obviously go places.

Note: It would not be at all surprising if nobody in a Department got this rating; certainly it would be expected that, at best, not more than 1% across the civil service would receive it.

First Supervisor's signature _____ Grade _____

Date _____

Assessment of promotion potential (to be completed by second supervisor)

Qualified for promotion

1. Exceptionally well qualified.*
2. Well Qualified.
3. Qualified; able to do the higher job adequately.

* Please tick box below (otherwise leave blank) if, in addition, you consider that the officer has that something special which makes him/her stand out exceptionally in the grade (see overall assessment and explanatory note).

Not qualified for promotion

4. Likely to qualify in time; not able for higher job now but should qualify after more experience.
5. Unlikely to qualify; shows little or no promise.
6. If this officer were promoted to a higher grade and assigned to me, I would be:

very satisfied
satisfied
unhappy

Signature: _____ Grade: _____
Second Supervisor

Date: _____

Notes:

1. These questions should be answered by the second supervisor following discussion with the first supervisor.
2. They should be answered by reference to the officer's experience at present. They are not intended to reflect an immutable view. For example, a promising officer of limited experience might initially be rated 3 and subsequently be rated 2 or even 1.
3. The second supervisor should send this form to the Personnel Officer and receive his approval before advising the individual of rating under note 4.
4. An officer marked at either 4 or 5 should be told by the second supervisor that he/she could not be considered for a promotion at this stage of his/her career and the main reasons for this should be explained. Where feasible, the action plan should specify practical steps which would assist the officer in overcoming deficiencies.

Appendix 2 - Main Stages in Appraisal Process

STAGE 1 Personnel Unit sends out appraisal form to first supervisor and a note to the appraisee informing him/her that this supervisor will arrange to carry out an appraisal interview within the next two weeks.

STAGE 11 Appraisal Interview takes place

The outcome of this interview is the completion of Sections A-C (see note below) of the appraisal form. This form is then signed by the first supervisor and the appraisee and a copy is retained by each.

STAGE 111 Assessment of Future Potential

First supervisor completes "Overall Assessment of Performance"(Section E* part 1) and forwards all appraisal documentation to second supervisor who then completes "Assessment of Promotion Potential 'I' (Section E part 11). Second supervisor forwards appraisal documentation, under cover, direct to the Personnel Officer. Section E is then placed on the officer's personal file. The appraisee will be informed if it is considered that he/she is not at present qualified for promotion.

STAGE IV Follow up

Both the Personnel Unit and the supervisors will follow up the recommendations as appropriate.

* Section E is confidential and is not seen by appraisee.

Note

The appraisee may wish to discuss aspects arising under Sections B and C with the second supervisor. If so, this discussion should be held on receipt of the appraisal documentation by the latter.

Appendix 3

Guidelines for supervisors carrying out appraisal discussions

A. Preparation for appraisal discussion

1. In preparing for the appraisal discussion, you should bear in mind that the basic aims of appraisal are to develop the full potential of the appraisee in the context of improving work performance. Appraisal will also help you to assess the overall performance of the appraisee in the job.

2. For your part, it would be of considerable help in this process to consider carefully:

- the particular requirements of the appraisee's job.
- the performance of the appraisee in that job.
- the specific actions needed to improve performance.

3. This will help you to judge what needs to be done to develop the appraisee further and to improve job performance. You might, for example, consider that action needs to be taken to:

- build on the appraisee's strengths which have particular relevance to the job being done.
- eliminate certain weaknesses which inhibit fully effective performance.
- develop specific skills which are of special significance to the job.

This list is illustrative only. The particular actions considered necessary will depend on the circumstances of each case.

4. In considering the requirements of the job, the appraisee's performance, and development needs, it is advisable to be as specific as possible. For example, it is best to assess performance by reference to specific work carried out by the appraisee. This will help you to concentrate on essentials and to avoid the danger of subjective judgments which can arise in a general evaluation.

5. You should give sufficient time before the discussion to the points indicated. This will help your preparation for the discussion by giving you a good picture of the appraisee's performance and by indicating to you the basis for the personal development plan. You also owe it to the appraisee to ensure that your judgement is based on a fair and impartial consideration of the relevant facts.

B. The Appraisal Discussion

6. You should keep the following key points in mind at the discussion:

* be frank. The discussion will achieve no worthwhile purpose if you try to evade issues and do not clearly tell the appraisee your views;

* at the same time, ensure that the discussion is carried out in a constructive manner. Positively recognise good work performance. If criticisms have to be made, use the normal conventions of courtesy to do so;

* remember that the interview is a two-way process. The appraisee will have his/her own views on work performance and development needs. Listen carefully to them and discuss them fully with the appraisee.

* nobody is infallible. If the appraisee's views cause you to review some of your earlier conclusions, be prepared to do so.

* make sure that, at the conclusion of the discussion, both you and the appraisee are fully clear on what has been agreed and that there are no "loose ends".

The ideal appraisal discussion would be one in which two reasonable people frankly exchanged views in a constructive and friendly manner. To a large extent, the onus is on you as supervisor to ensure that the right atmosphere prevails for this purpose.

C. After the appraisal

7. Formal appraisal takes place once a year but the appraisal process is an ongoing one. Between appraisals, you should review from time to time progress of actions which you and the appraisee have agreed in the personal development plan. You should also consider the general progress which the appraisee is making in work performance in the light of your last appraisal discussion and of other matters which arise. In the nature of things, you will probably need to have periodic discussions with the appraisee on these matters.

D. General

8. The appraisal scheme will impact mainly on the appraisee. It is as well to remember, however, that it will also reflect on your skills and abilities as a supervisor. Approaching the scheme in a planned, constructive, fair and open manner will generally result in improved working relationships, productivity and performance. The converse, however, will certainly apply if supervisors don't play their part in the scheme or don't give it the attention it deserves.