

GPS Performance Management Glossary of Terms



Accountabilities – A key accountability is a major ongoing responsibility or outcome that you must achieve in your position. They describe “what” you are expected to deliver, perform, and/or deliver as a regular function of your role in the department. Position accountabilities were clarified by the supervisor and incumbent during the Staff Compensation Project in 2004. Most positions have between two to six key accountabilities listed in priority order and detailed on the position description.

Career Development – A process by which an employee participates in one or more of the many possible learning activities that enrich his or her current job, or that prepare him or her for either transfer or promotion to another job. The *Staff Career Development Program* exists to provide both the tools and the coaching to help staff members develop skills in their current position and/or advance their careers at Lehigh University.

Central Tendency – Central tendency describes what happens when an evaluator rates everyone as “fully successful” regardless of actual performance. In any normal distribution, one would expect to find more people rated closer to the mean than to any other point in the performance range. It becomes a type of rating error when an evaluator avoids assigning high or low ratings resulting in ratings that do not reflect an accurate evaluation of performance. The problem with this tendency is it fails to differentiate between high and low performers and offers little information for subsequent decisions

Compass – This project was targeted to address career opportunities for Lehigh’s staff members with emphasis on clarifying the concept of job families, organizing accountabilities, identifying opportunities within and across job families, and developing resources for professional development and career management.

Goals – A statement of results to be achieved. Individual goals are usually aligned with departmental and institutional goals and provide clear direction and focus to guide activities throughout the year. They are used to assess performance at the end of a review cycle. There are three types of goals:

- *Performance Goals* – Are related to basic job accountabilities and reflect a staff member’s support of the department, stem, and/or university.
- *Developmental Goals* – Enhance a staff member’s performance in the current role (i.e., increase depth of knowledge or skills) and/or help prepare the staff member for new or future roles
- *Special Project Goals* – Special projects are based on departmental plans and/or organizational needs. They are often assigned to take advantage of an incumbent’s particular strengths. As such, special projects provide opportunities beyond the incumbent’s normal role and may include “stretch” assignments aimed at building experience. Special project goals may be accomplished within the department or elsewhere in the university.

Goals – S.M.A.R.T. Goals – An acronym to help recall the basic elements of a goal and associated objectives. Effective goal setting includes creating goals that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.

GPS – *GPS* is the name of the project that focuses on performance management. In the field of navigation, global positioning systems (GPS) have exponentially increased our ability to navigate the world more quickly and with greater ease. Performance management *GPS* is designed to help supervisors and staff members manage workflow and outcomes by focusing on defining and aligning goals and tracking and measuring results. In performance management, *GPS* is an acronym for:

Goals → Performance → Success

Halo Effect – A type of rating error that occurs when the impression an evaluator forms about an individual on one dimension inappropriately influences (either positively or negatively) his or her impressions of that individual on other dimensions. This problem often occurs with employees who are especially friendly (or unfriendly) toward the supervisor or especially strong (or weak) in one skill.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) – A form that helps guide individuals through the *Compass Guide* and allows them to systematically develop a roadmap to enhance knowledge, skills, and abilities for their current position or to help prepare them for the next level of work or different work.

LASER – *Lehigh All-Staff Employment Rewards* was introduced in early 2004. This was the first initiative involving the redesign and change of the staff salary compensation structure and system.

Leniency or Harshness Factor – A type of rating error that occurs when the evaluator has a tendency to rate all their subordinates consistently high or consistently low. When evaluators see everything as "good," they are lenient raters. When they see everything as "bad," they are harsh raters. This type of error is a problem because it produces inaccurate evaluations of performance, inconsistent performance ratings (as compared to ratings from other evaluators), and it fails to distinguish between high and low performers.

Objectives – Part of a goal. The goal statement describes intended outcomes in general terms whereas an objective defines an intended outcome or result in specific, measurable terms.

Overall Assessment – The final performance evaluation based on performance of all aspects of the job... delivery of key accountabilities, achievement of goals, handling of special projects, demonstration of success factors, etc. The overall assessment also takes into account priorities so that performance on the most important aspects of one's job carries the greatest weight in the final evaluation.

Performance Appraisal – The annual process that formally reviews, summarizes, and documents employee performance during the previous year and establishes expectations (goal setting) and skill development for the upcoming year. Employees evaluate their own performance (self appraisal) and identify goals and skill development activities for the upcoming year. The super-

visor and the employee reflect on employee performance, agree on new goals and plan skill development activities. Currently at Lehigh, most performance appraisals focus on previous performance more so than looking to future performance.

Performance Assessment Descriptors – In the new *GPS* performance appraisal form, performance assessments are plotted along a sliding scale. The sliding scale is anchored to five performance assessment descriptors. The descriptors are designed to differentiate various levels of performance along the sliding scale. These descriptors are described below:

- **Exceptional (EXC)**... Results are above and beyond expectations in a manner that is *significant, extraordinary, and rare*
- **High Contributor (HCN)**... Results are consistent with complete mastery of all key accountabilities; *regularly exceeds most expectations*
- **Fully Successful (SCF)**... Results meet expectations of all key accountabilities; *a reliable and competent employee*
- **Needs Improvement (NIM)**... Results demonstrate potential to become successful; *some development and/or improvement is needed*
- **Unsatisfactory (UNS)**... Results significantly miss achievement of the key accountabilities; *immediate improvement is required.*

Performance Management – Performance management is an annual cycle that includes *setting expectations, ongoing tracking and feedback, and reviewing results*. It is an ongoing process that begins with establishing clear job expectations, goals, and objectives that are aligned with department and University goals. The process continues with regular feedback and tracking progress toward established goals. Employees are held accountable for results through feedback and tracking progress. Skill development plans are implemented and monitored throughout the designated time frame.

Position Description – A position description (PD) is a summary of a person’s job functions, requirements and qualifications, level of authority and independence, and work environment. In order to view your position description in the online PD tool, you first need to have your position number and password. Then:

- Sign on to the *Campus Portal* (using your email and password)
- Select the “Employee” tab
- Select the “Position Description Information” link
- Select the “Position Description On-Line Tool” link
- At the prompt (on the first time in this session), enter your email and password again
- Then you will be in the PD tool.

Review Cycle – Departments will complete performance assessments any time between October and February depending on the work schedule. The *review cycle* refers to the period of time between *setting expectations* and *reviewing results*. The review cycle will vary depending on the time frame selected by the area.

Self-Appraisal – In the *GPS* appraisal process, each staff member is responsible for 1) populating the form with the performance elements to be evaluated and 2) doing a self-appraisal of his/her performance based on actual vs. expected outcomes and results. The self-appraisal is an integral part of the annual performance appraisal process and occurs prior to the supervisor’s performance assessment.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals – An acronym to help recall the basic elements of a goal and associated objectives. Effective goal setting includes creating goals that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.

Success Factors – Success factors refer to observable behaviors or competencies that define “how” work is to be done. Core and managerial success factors were developed by Lehigh’s Senior Leadership and reflect the University’s values. Functional success factors were developed by and for each job family during the *Compass Initiative*.

Supervisor – For the purposes of Performance Management, the term “supervisor” is used as a generic term for anyone who has the responsibility of directing and guiding the performance of one or more staff members in a direct reporting relationship. This role includes setting expectations, ongoing tracking and feedback, and formally reviewing results in an annual appraisal.

Weighting Factors – Estimated values within a series or group of accountabilities and/or goals indicating the relative impact of each item as compared to the other items in the group. Weighting factors are used to help establish priorities and assist in developing an overall appraisal. The factors are usually based on the importance to the position, department, college or stem, and/or the University. The impact of expected outcomes is also a factor – i.e., the bigger the impact, the higher the weighting.