Performance Advancement - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in this document provide guidance and clarity to university staff on various practical and technical aspects related to performance advancement, enabling them to understand the performance advancement process.

What is Performance Advancement (PA)?

The process of improving employee skills, productivity and effectiveness through targeted development initiatives, feedback and opportunities for growth within the university.

What is performance evaluation?

The process of evaluating an employee's performance over a specific period (cycle) based on their agreed-upon key performance areas as detailed in their Performance Work Agreement (PWA).

What is a Performance Work Plan (PWP)?

A plan between a staff member and their manager outlining the performance expectations for the cycle under review. It provides the basis for performance evaluations (and feedback discussions) between a staff member and their line manager.

What is a personal development plan (PDP)?

A staff member's action plan outlining the specific competency or competencies to be developed to achieve the set objectives, and to identify career aspirations and development activities to meet individual goals.

What is a competency?

The skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviours, and attributes required for an individual to effectively perform in a particular role. These serve as measurable performance indicators and are aligned with the institution's strategic objectives.

What is a Key Performance Area (KPA)?
The core responsibilities and objectives of a role required to achieve the university's strategic goals. They serve as measurable targets to evaluate performance and contribute to the success of the environment.

What are objectives?
Objectives of a Key Performance Area (KPA) are measurable goals in a particular cycle that define the desired outcomes for a particular role.

What is a SMART measurement indicator?
A SMART Indicator is a measure used to evaluate the success of an individual in meeting specific objectives, or performance targets. It can be qualitative or quantitative.
It should be:

- **S**pecific (precise),
- **M**easurable,
- **A**ttainable (achievable),
- **R**elevant (to objective) and
- **T**ime-bound (time target) e.g., Successfully resolving 15 client query tickets per day.

What is a job cluster?
A grouping of jobs that share similar Key Performance Areas (KPAs), skills, tasks, functions, and responsibilities.

What is a job description?
Outlines the duties, responsibilities, functions, competencies, and qualifications required for a particular role.

What is a competency framework?
A competency framework clearly defines the skills, knowledge, and behaviours required for effective job performance across specific job clusters, and different job grades. It may

guide recruitment activities, performance evaluations, professional development, and career progression.

What is the Formal Annual Review?

The Formal Annual Review is an official evaluation of an employee's performance over the performance cycle, assessing their achievements and areas for improvement.

What is the role of ongoing feedback and coaching?

Regular feedback and coaching help employees to stay on track with their performance goals, to promptly address any issues, and to develop their skills.

What are the grounds for appealing a performance rating?

Employees can appeal their performance rating if they disagree with the final rating or if they believe there were procedural irregularities during the evaluation process.

Who can help me if I have more questions?

Additional questions or concerns not addressed in these FAQs can be sent to: HR Service Desk or email the HR Client Service Centre: sun-e-HR@sun.ac.za.

Further details on specific topics discussed in the FAQs can be found in the following documents:

- Policy for Performance Advancement (currently being finalised)
- Performance Advancement Resource Guide (currently being finalised)
- Transformation Resource Guide (currently being finalised)
- SU Competency Framework

The FAQs will be periodically reviewed and updated, as necessary, to address additional questions, and any changes to the performance advancement process or related documentation.