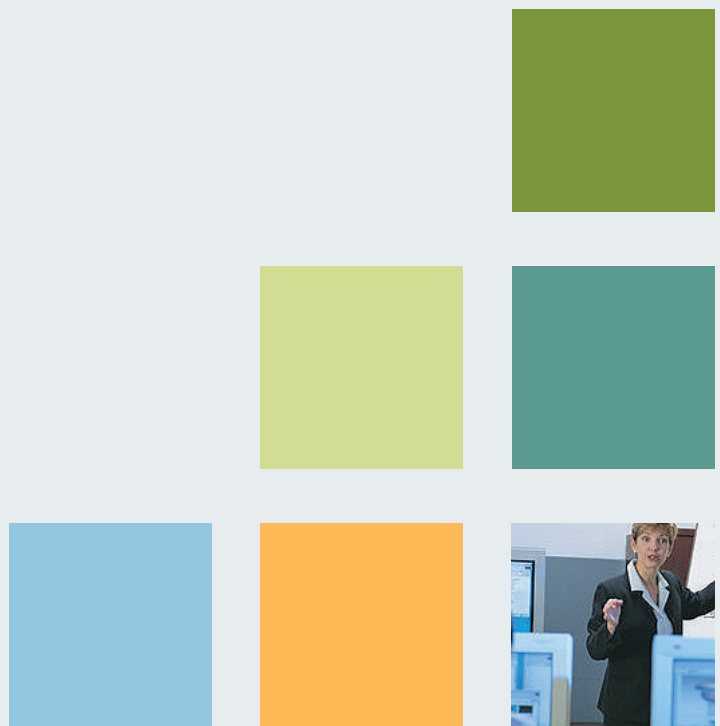




# Southwood School—A Case Study Performance Management Systems

By Fiona Robson

Instructor's Manual



## STAFFING



## Case Study: Southwood School

This case study examines the implementation of a new performance management system designed specifically for support staff at a school in the United Kingdom.

### Background

- This fictionalized case study is based on a real organization. The school is a public, mixed comprehensive secondary school located in the United Kingdom with an average annual turnover in excess of £1 million. Because it is government funded, it is a non-profit organization.
- Although the case study is in a school setting, many of the issues identified are the same across different countries and different industries—for example, the tension between the exempt employees and support staff.
- There are 120 employees: 80 teaching and 40 non-teaching employees. The school has more than 800 students aged 13-18.
- The case study's author was the school's HR manager.
- The actual events took place in 2004-05.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this case study, students will:

- Understand the components of an effective performance management system.
- Appreciate the complexities involved in designing a performance management system.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the practical issues surrounding implementation of a new performance management system.
- Understand the benefits of performance management to different stakeholders.
- Recognize the importance of training and continuous feedback.

### The Case Study

Five years earlier, Southwood School, located in the United Kingdom, implemented a performance management system for all school employees. The performance management system was designed for teachers by the British Department for Education and Skills (DfES), but was used to evaluate school support staff as well because there was no system specifically geared toward support staff. The school had no HR personnel to custom-design a system for support staff; and at the time, most of the emphasis in terms of performance management was paid to teachers. Because few support staff members were classified as exempt employees, a specialized performance management system was not perceived to be a priority.

School support staff roles include:

- Administrators
- Teaching assistants
- Learning mentors
- Science technicians (who support the work of Science teachers)
- Computer technicians
- Finance managers

*(For more information on what some of these jobs entail, please see the job descriptions provided in Work tool #3.)*



## **The DfES system required employees to:**

- Agree to 3-6 performance objectives for the upcoming performance period. One of the objectives that must be included requires that teacher performance encompass “pupil progress as well as ways of developing and improving teachers’ professional practice.” Another objective must be related to meeting School Development Plan goals.
- Undergo at least one classroom observation annually.
- Conduct a formal performance review focused on the identified performance objectives. The meeting should also include the following:
  - Review, discussion and confirmation of the teacher’s essential tasks.
  - Identification of employee strengths and achievements.
  - Identification of developmental areas and an action plan on how they will be met.
  - Agreement to future performance objectives and an action plan for the upcoming year.

Support staff members were assigned teacher appraisers. Teacher appraisers had been trained to use the system; support staff members had not. As a result, support staff employees were appraised by someone who had little knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

## **Review of the DfES Performance Management Process**

An HR manager was hired at the school. Because of concerns raised by support staff about the DfES performance management system, the HR manager reviewed the system.

During the review, the following issues were raised:

- A large percentage of staff members did not meet the annual deadline to complete the appraisal process.
- There was confusion among staff about what exactly needed to be completed and when.
- Staff members thought the system was a ‘waste of time’.
- A trade union representative thought the system was not appropriate for all staff members.
- The DfES system was irrelevant to support staff. For example, support staff members could not set objectives in pupil progress or have lessons observed.
- Little attention was paid to identifying training needs and further, when needs were identified, there was no follow-up with appropriate actions.
- Appraisals were led by teachers who had little knowledge of the support staff member’s job.
- Performance meetings were a one-way process with some performance objectives established before the meeting started.

## **New System Design**

It was crucial in designing the new system that the HR manager address the concerns raised about the DfES system. Involving support staff and relevant trade union representatives in the process was critical to gain support of the new system and to ensure transparency, a key organizational goal.



Table 1 shows how some of the practical issues were addressed.

<b>Table 1. Practical performance management issues.</b>	
<b>Issues with the old system</b>	<b>How it was addressed in the new system</b>
Meetings were held on short notice.	Both parties must agree to the date of the meeting at least one week in advance.
Employees didn't know what to talk about.	Employees must complete a pre-meeting document highlighting proposed areas of discussion. The completed document must be sent to the appraiser in advance of the meeting.
Job descriptions were out-of-date, making performance expectations ambiguous.	Job descriptions are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they are accurate.
There was too much documentation required in the old system, some of which was confusing.	Required documents are kept to a minimum, are written in plain terms and avoid unnecessary jargon.
Appraisers were not knowledgeable in training issues.	All appraisers are given information on available local training programs and are expected to help the appraisee identify the most appropriate training intervention.
Both parties were under-prepared.	Training is provided to all staff members so everyone is clear about expectations. Performance appraisal checklists are also distributed to both parties.
Reviews were conducted in public areas.	A private meeting room is available for all review meetings.
Appraisers not matched to appraisees.	The appraisers and appraisees are scheduled so that the most appropriate person conducts the review.

## **New System Content**

The new system allows the appraiser and employee to review past performance; set goals and objectives for the upcoming year; and identify training and development needs. Performance review meetings occur annually, but both parties are encouraged to meet at regular intervals throughout the year to discuss progress.

In the new system, most support staff employees' performance reviews are conducted with their direct line manager (usually another support staff member). This way, the appraiser understands the employee's job and can fairly assess the employee's performance. In some cases, though, the most appropriate appraiser may be a teacher. For example, the best person to appraise a Chemistry class science technician is the teacher in charge of the classroom, since the teacher works with the technician on a daily basis.



## Reviewing Performance

Appraisers and employees must independently complete the *Performance Review Meeting* form (Work tool #2) before the performance review meeting. The new system does not use a formal rating scale; this approach was too closely associated with the DfES system. Instead, the system is designed to assess general performance and then employee-specific projects and/or tasks. The new system is also designed so that the appraiser can evaluate if the employee has met the objectives identified during the last performance review.

The new system also requires annual review of job descriptions to make sure they are up-to-date. Support staff jobs have changed significantly during the last few years; support staff members are increasingly asked to complete tasks traditionally performed by teachers. Today, many support staff employees prepare learning materials and work directly with students to meet their learning needs. It is important, then, that job descriptions are reviewed regularly so that both parties understand employee roles and responsibilities and can avoid misunderstandings. Job description changes must be approved by line managers to ensure there are no negative implications for the organization or other employees.

Another issue employees raised in regard to the DfES system was that it was a one-way communication process where the appraiser often identified goals and objectives before meeting with the employee. To ensure that the new system is a two-way communication process, employees must complete the *Preparing for the Performance Review* form (Work tool #1) before the meeting. This form helps employees identify issues and areas they would like to discuss with their appraiser.

Finally, the new performance review system requires appraisers and employees to document any agreed actions so that everyone understands the action plan for the upcoming year. This documentation can also be used to monitor progress throughout the year.

## Setting Goals and Objectives

The new system is designed to help employees understand how their jobs contribute to the wider objectives of their team, unit and the overall organization. To achieve this, employee goals and objectives must be specific and achievable, and not phrased in broad strategic terms. To help, employees are asked to complete the *Performance Review Meeting* document (Work tool #2).

The new process uses the SMART system to help employees define their goals and objectives. In the SMART system, goals can be monitored and reviewed objectively as part of next year's review process. Using the SMART method means that objectives are:

**Specific.** The objective must be clear and unambiguous.

**Measurable.** The objective must be quantifiable in some way in terms of quantity or quality.

**Achievable.** The objective should be challenging but also realistic.

**Relevant.** The objective should be related to the employee's job or organizational goals.

**Time framed.** The objective should clearly state the date for completion.

## Identifying Training and Development Needs

In the final step, appraisers and employees identify training needs. Training should be linked to the goals and objectives set for the coming year. Employees can request additional personal or professional development that they feel would benefit them. The appraiser then works with the HR manager to create a training and development action plan. The appraiser is responsible for monitoring the employee's progress toward the training and development goals throughout the year.

## Supporting the System

To successfully implement the new system, all employees had to be trained. With agreement from support staff employees, two training courses were created—one for appraisers and one for appraisees. The HR manager who designed the new system led the training. Table 2 shows key areas that are explored and discussed in both sessions.



**Table 2. Key areas covered in performance management training.**

Benefits of performance management to staff, managers and the organization.  
Characteristics of a successful performance review.  
How to prepare for a performance review meeting.  
General communication skills, with an emphasis on effective listening.  
Understanding and setting SMART goals and objectives.  
Identifying training and development activities.

The training for appraisers included how to provide effective feedback. The following points were emphasized:

- Feedback should be constructive and provide potential solutions.
- Emphasis should be on the positive and acknowledge strengths.
- Feedback should be based on facts rather than opinions and backed with evidence.
- The goal should be on moving forward in a positive way.

### **Embedding Performance Management**

To ensure the new system is an ongoing process rather than an annual event, regular reviews were built into the design. Six months after the annual performance appraisal, the appraiser and employee meet again to review the status of performance objectives and take any necessary action. There is also flexibility in the system so that reviews can occur more often if desired. Because effective feedback is critical at each step in the performance review process, delivering effective feedback is highlighted in the managers' training program. Refresher training on the performance management system will be held annually for all staff and will be required for all new staff with line management responsibilities.

### **Conclusions**

Southwood School recognized that their existing performance management system was not meeting all employees' needs, undertook a comprehensive review to assess where it was coming up short, and introduced an improved process. The new system reflected support staff input, allowing them to feel more engaged in the new system and gain ownership. Since the new system was launched, there has been more employee participation; training and development activities have increased by more than 200 percent, bringing new skills into the organization.

Although this case study is a success story, it is important to recognize that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to designing a new performance management system. It is important to take the context and culture of the organization into consideration.



## **Notes for Teachers**

This case study is intended to promote learning and understanding in the area of performance management and feedback. The case background and learning outcomes appear on page 2.

### **Purpose of the Case Study**

This case study will allow students to understand the complexities involved in the design and implementation of a new performance management system.

### **Use of Resources**

This case study is intended to give instructors flexibility; you can use all or part of the activities. The PowerPoint slides should be presented before students read the case study. Instructors can choose from a selection of discussion areas and group activities, depending on the session's learning objectives and student learning styles. For your convenience, suggested responses are included for student tasks. The responses cover key areas students should identify through their work.

A separate Student Workbook accompanies this Instructor's Manual. Only the Student Activities shown in Part A of this Instructor's Manual are included in the Student Workbook. Please note that Part A, optional items 2a and 2b do not appear in the Student Workbook; nor does Work tool #4 referenced in items 2a and 2b. All optional activities are presented only in the Instructor's Manual to allow maximum flexibility to the instructor. If you choose to use the optional activities shown in Part A, 2a and 2b or in Part B, please photocopy the activities from the Instructor's Manual to distribute to each student. Possible answer keys appear on separate pages so that you may distribute only the activity pages to students.

### **Accompanying Resources**

- PowerPoint presentation
- Case study
- Student activities
- Preparing for Performance Review document
- New performance review document
- Sample answers to student activities



## Recommended Resources

### Books

- Armstrong, M., and Baron, A. (2005). *Managing Performance: Performance Management in Action*. CIPD.
- Dessler, G. (2005). *Human Resource Management*. 10th edition. Prentice Hall.
- Ivancevich, J.M. (2006). *Human Resource Management*. McGraw-Hill.
- Milmore, M., Lewis, P., Saunders, M.N.K., Thornhill, P., and Morrow, T. (2007). *Strategic Human Resource Management: Contemporary Issues*. Prentice Hall.

### Contemporary Journal Articles

- Brown, M., and Benson, J. (2003). Rated to exhaustion? Reactions to Performance Appraisal Processes. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 34(1), 67-81.
- Catano, V.M., Darr, W., and Campbell, C.A. (2007). Performance appraisal of behaviour based competencies: A valid and reliable procedure. *Personnel Psychology*, 60(1), 201-250.
- Cunneen, P. (2006). How to improve performance management. *People Management*, 12(1), 42-43.
- Den Hartof, D.N., Boselie, P., and Paauwe, J. (2004). Performance Management: A model and research agenda. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 53(4) 556-569.
- Denisi, A.S., and Pritchard, R.D. (2006). Performance Appraisal, Performance Management and improving individual performance. *Management and Organization Review*, 2(2), 253-277.
- Fletcher, C. (2001). Performance appraisal and management: The developing research agenda. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. 74(4), 473-487.
- Kurtzberg, T.R., Naquin, C.E., and Belkin, L.Y. (2005). Electronic performance appraisals: The effects of email communication on peer ratings in actual and simulated environments. *Organization Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. 98(2) 216-226.
- London, M., and Edward, M. (2004). Performance management and assessment: Methods for improved rater accuracy and employee goal setting. *Human Resource Management*. 43(4), 319-336.
- Mushin, L., and Byoingho, S. (1998). The effects of appraisal review content on employees' reactions and performance. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. 9(1), 203-214.
- Pettijohn, L.S., Parker, R.S., Pettijohn, C.E., and Kent, J.L. (2001). Performance appraisal: usage, criteria and observations. *Journal of Management Development*, 20(9), pp. 754-771.
- Stiles, P., Gratton, L., Truss, C., Hope-Hailey, V., and McGovern, P. (1997). Performance management and the psychological contract. *Human Resource Management Journal*. 7(1), pp. 57-66.
- Wiese, D.S., and Buckley, M.R. (1998). The evolution of the performance appraisal process. *Journal of Management History*. 4(3), pp. 233-249.





## Activities

Review the PowerPoint presentation and make notes if appropriate.

Read the Southwood School case study and clarify any unfamiliar terms.

Now that you are familiar with the organization and the concepts of performance management, review Work tools #1 and #2. These are copies of the actual forms used at the school. A sample of Work tool #1 is provided to guide your thinking. Next, please review the sample job descriptions (Work tool #3) to understand some of the support staff job responsibilities.

- a) What are the advantages of using the Preparing for the Performance Review document (Work tool #1)? Are there any other areas you think should be added to the document?
  
- b) List some strengths and weaknesses of the Performance Review Meeting (Work tool #2). Is the document's length appropriate? Is it easy to understand and complete?



## Work tool #1

<b>Preparing for the Performance Review</b>
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Name:

Job Title:

1. What parts of my work have I been particularly pleased with or proud of since my last review meeting?
2. What parts of my work have not been as good or successful as I would have liked?
3. Has my job changed since my last review (duties, responsibilities, working relationships, etc.)?
4. What training and development have I had since my last review (coursework, working with other staff members, observing other staff members, projects, visits, staff meetings, etc.)?
5. Was this training effective? Why or why not?
6. What changes would I suggest for my job (for example, duties, responsibilities, work hours)?
7. What objectives have I set for myself for the next 12 months?
8. What training and development needs do I think I have?
9. Are there any other points I want to discuss at my review meeting?

Signature:

Date given to line manager:

Date scheduled for performance review meeting:



## Work tool #2

### Performance Review Meeting

Please review all of the following:

- Last year's performance [ ]
- Current job description [ ]
- Issues highlighted in personal review [ ]
- Plan for the upcoming year (including training and development) [ ]

*Review last year's performance*

General review

Review specific objectives set last year

*Review current job description*

Please record any tasks or job responsibilities that have changed. Please note that all changes must be approved in writing by your line manager.

Tasks or Job Responsibilities	Agreed?

*Discuss issues highlighted in personal review*

Please record any issues discussed and actions agreed upon, if appropriate.

Issues	Actions required



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## *Plan for the upcoming year (including training and development)*

Identify objectives during the performance management review. Employees can delineate how the objectives will be achieved after the meeting.

At least one objective should be job-specific and one should be related to career development.

	Define your objective (be as specific as possible).	How will you achieve this?	What support will you need?	Target date for achievement	Details of training identified	Review of progress
Objective 1						
Objective 2						
Objective 3						

Do you have any additional developmental needs you would like the organization to support? This could include personal or professional development. Please note areas you would like us to consider in the box below. The HR manager will contact you to discuss this in more detail and help you make arrangements where appropriate.

Additional development needs



## Student Activities

### Part A

1. Review the PowerPoint presentation and make notes if appropriate.
2. Read the Southwood School case study and clarify any unfamiliar terms.

**Note to instructors: If students are familiar with all the terms used in the case study, the following activities can be substituted:**

- a) Read the case study to the section entitled “New System Design”. Next, please review the previous performance management system (Work tool #4). Work in small groups to design your own improved performance management process. Be sure to address the issues encountered in the previous system.
  - b) Read the rest of the case study and discuss whether it is similar to the ideas you generated for activity 2a.
3. Now that you are familiar with the organization and the concepts of performance management, review Work Tools #1 and 2. These are copies of the actual forms used at the school. Next, please review the sample job descriptions (Work tool #3) to understand some of the support staff job responsibilities.
    - a) What are the advantages of using the Preparing for the Performance Review document (Work tool #1)? Are there any other areas you think should be added to the document?
    - b) List some strengths and weaknesses of the Performance Review Meeting document. Is the document’s length appropriate? Is it easy to understand and complete?



## Part B—Optional Student Activities

The following activities are provided to allow the instructor to select those that are appropriate for their students.

### 1. Discussion Questions

These questions can be completed individually, in a small group or a class-wide debate.

- 1.1 Do you think support staff employees were right to complain about the previous performance management system?
- 1.2 What are some potential barriers to the successful implementation of the new system and how would you overcome these barriers?
- 1.3 How should managers prepare before conducting performance review meetings?
- 1.4 Is it appropriate to use measurable outputs as goals? If so, please give some examples.
- 1.5 How should employees prepare for their performance review meeting? What areas do you think they should consider and why?
- 1.6 Should the organization use a rating method so each employee receives a score? Explain your answer.
- 1.7 Why does the HR manager need the buy-in of appraisers and appraisees?
- 1.8 What types of training and development opportunities could be offered to employees?

### 2. Group Tasks

These tasks function well when small groups work in teams. Students can share their ideas in the form of a brief presentation.

- 2.1 Write an e-mail to all support staff to tell them about the new performance management system.
- 2.2 Define the specific criteria you would use to assess the performance of an office manager. Use the sample job description provided in Work tool #3 to help you.
- 2.3 You have been asked to give a presentation to all support staff to discuss the practical details of the new system. What areas will you cover?
- 2.4 What five tips would you give managers to help them deliver an effective performance review meeting?
- 2.5 The organization has decided to review next year's criteria and wants to add measurable core skills and knowledge. Complete the following table using the example provided for guidance.



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Competence	Benefit of using this competence in the process.	Are there any potential issues in using it?	How could you measure it?	How could you break down this competence further?
<b>EXAMPLE</b>  <i>Excellent communication skills</i>	<i>All employees use this skill daily. Excellent communication skills reflect positively on the organization.</i>	<i>This is a subjective area and could be prone to bias from the appraiser.</i>	<i>Collect evidence. Speak to colleagues for positive and negative feedback.</i>	<i>Written Verbal Listening Formal Appropriateness of methods</i>
Effective working relationship with colleagues				
Time management				
Initiative				
Flexibility				
Computer skills				



- 2.6 What other criteria should be included in the table?
- 2.7 You have been asked to assess the effectiveness of the new system. Write five questions you would include in a questionnaire to be completed by appraisees.
- 2.8 Working in pairs, conduct a performance review meeting. One person will be the administrative assistant and the other person will be the appraiser. Use the information in Work tool #4 as the basis of your performance review discussion. Complete a copy of the performance review documents (Work tools #1 and #2) based on the information you have (you may have to add a few details). At the end of the role play, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your meeting.

## Additional Activities

These activities are suitable for undergraduate students who want to further develop their knowledge and skills in this area. These tasks could also be used as independent learning activities.

- 3.1 Explore how the use of a 360° appraisal system could be beneficial to Southwood School.
- 3.2 Identify the pros and cons of introducing a performance-related pay option into the organization's performance management system. What would you recommend?
- 3.3 What improvements would you make to Southwood's new performance management system?
- 3.4 How would you ensure that the organization's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity is embedded into the performance management process?
- 3.5 You are the HR manager of a new organization; one of your first tasks is to develop and implement a new performance management process. Discuss how you would do this. You may find the following steps helpful in designing your new system:
  - Identify and consult with all relevant stakeholders
  - Determine key areas of performance
  - Define employee performance criteria
  - Set timelines
  - Select appraisers
  - Ensure appropriate training and development opportunities
  - Monitor the system





# Southwood Schools—A Case Study

## Suggested answers to questions—Parts A and B

Please note that these answers are not intended to be exhaustive.

Question	Key areas to cover
<b>Part A</b>	
<b>2a</b>  <b>Suggested answer</b>	<p>Read the case study to the section entitled “New System Design”. Next, please review the previous performance management system (Work tool #4). Work in small groups to design your own improved performance management process. Be sure to address the issues encountered in the previous system.</p> <p>Students should reflect the following in their plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the documents are suitable for support staff.</li> <li>• Ensure the criteria are appropriate for support staff.</li> <li>• Choose appraisers who understand support staff roles.</li> <li>• Emphasize training.</li> <li>• Make it a two-way process.</li> <li>• Clearly define what needs to be done by both parties.</li> </ul>
<b>2b</b>  <b>Suggested answer</b>	<p>Read the rest of the case study and discuss whether it is similar to the ideas you generated for Activity 2a. Students should compare their plans with Southwood’s new performance management system. Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that performance review meeting dates are arranged in advance.</li> <li>• Ask employees to complete the pre-meeting document.</li> <li>• Review job descriptions on an annual basis.</li> <li>• Avoid using jargon in all documents.</li> <li>• Provide training for all parties.</li> </ul>
<b>3a</b>  <b>Suggested answer</b>	<p>What are the advantages of using the Preparing for the Performance Review document (Work tool #1)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees can raise issues they want to discuss that otherwise might not be included by their appraiser.</li> <li>• Employees feel they gain some ownership of the process.</li> <li>• It focuses employees to think about relevant areas.</li> <li>• It enables the process to be two-way rather than appraiser-led.</li> </ul> <p>Are there any other areas you think should be added to the document?</p> <p>Employees could be asked about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working relationships.</li> <li>• Any specific performance indicators they want to discuss (e.g., attendance record).</li> <li>• Any comments they have received from colleagues they would like to share.</li> </ul>



<p><b>3b</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>List some strengths and weaknesses of the Performance Review Meeting document. Is the document's length appropriate? Is it easy to understand and complete?</p> <p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is easy to follow.</li><li>• It is well-structured.</li><li>• It is relevant for employees who will use it.</li><li>• It is not so long as to appear too onerous or threatening.</li><li>• The language is fairly clear and avoids jargon.</li><li>• Check boxes make it easy to ensure all sections are completed.</li><li>• It ensures that the performance review meeting is a two-way process.</li></ul> <p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Few instructions are provided on the actual document. New employees who have not participated in training may have questions.</li><li>• Some employees may find it easier if examples were provided in the document.</li><li>• For some employees, it will look like a lot of paperwork.</li><li>• The lack of ratings could make the assessment subjective.</li></ul> <p><i>Document Length</i></p> <p>The preparation document is one page, which seems about right. It encourages employees to think about key issues, but they are not required to write too much.</p> <p>Two pages is quite short for the actual performance review document and is manageable for the majority of appraisers and employees. Some employees may find that there is not enough space to record all of their views; the space can be expanded, so that should not be an issue.</p> <p><i>Easy to Understand and Complete</i></p> <p>The language is consistent with that used by the organization and avoids using too much HR jargon. Additional instructions could be provided on the actual forms to supplement what is presented during training.</p>
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Part B Discussion Questions	
<p><b>1.1</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Do you think support staff employees were right to complain about the previous performance management system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. The previous performance management system was developed for teachers and was not tailored to assess support staff job performance. Consequently, support staff were not being evaluated based on their performance as it reflected their roles, responsibilities and contribution to the organization.</li> <li>• Some staff may want to participate as part of their professional development, particularly if they are interested in up-skilling or being promoted.</li> <li>• Many support staff members received no training or development for a number of years because of the failures of the previous system.</li> <li>• The previous system caused bad feelings between teachers and support staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Discuss the potential barriers to the successful implementation of the new system. How would you overcome these barriers?</p> <p><i>Potential barriers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff members may have negative perceptions because of their experiences with the previous system.</li> <li>• Time can be an issue when both the appraiser and appraisee have busy jobs.</li> <li>• If the appraiser is not committed to carrying it out properly, the performance review meeting (and the entire process) becomes meaningless.</li> <li>• The system's effectiveness relies on the appraiser's communication skills.</li> <li>• If employees do not embrace the system, it will not be as useful as it could be and will have fewer benefits for all stakeholders, including the organization as a whole.</li> <li>• Practical issues, such as not having appropriate place in which to meet.</li> <li>• If there is low participation in training, the system may not be used correctly.</li> <li>• Lack of funding to provide the requested training and development activities will hamper the success of the system.</li> </ul> <p><i>Overcoming the barriers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the feedback received about the previous system in designing the new system.</li> <li>• Consult with employees about the new system and emphasize that their concerns about the previous system have been addressed in the new system.</li> <li>• Ensure that senior management is committed to the new system and shows that commitment to their employees.</li> <li>• Work with trade union representatives to gain their support for the new system.</li> <li>• Resource the new system appropriately in terms of time and money.</li> <li>• Ensure that suitable accommodation is made available for review meetings.</li> <li>• Provide training to all parties.</li> <li>• Make the training mandatory.</li> </ul>



<p><b>1.3</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>How should managers prepare before conducting performance review meetings?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers should collect any relevant evidence before the meeting.</li> <li>• If the appraiser is not the employee’s direct line manager, the appraiser should speak with the line manager to help assess the employee’s job performance.</li> <li>• Managers should collect all of the required paperwork, including last year’s objectives.</li> <li>• Managers should arrange a convenient date and time for the review.</li> <li>• Managers should find a private meeting space for the review.</li> <li>• Managers should note specific areas to be discussed during the meeting.</li> <li>• Managers should read the pre-performance review document completed by the appraisee before the meeting.</li> <li>• Managers should research available (and within budget) training and development activities.</li> <li>• Managers should become familiar with the new system and all required documentation.</li> <li>• Managers should consider appraisee feedback and be sure to highlight performance strengths.</li> <li>• Managers should prepare possible performance objectives but should be flexible as the employee has an input into the final performance objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.4</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Is it appropriate to use measurable outputs as goals? If so, please give some examples.</p> <p>There are two points of view.</p> <p>Arguments for the use of measurable outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is easier to be objective and reduces the possibility of appraiser bias.</li> <li>• Employees are clear about what they need to do to successfully meet their goals.</li> <li>• There is more consistency among employees, because they are assessed on a more level playing field.</li> </ul> <p>Arguments against the use of measurable outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are not appropriate for all types of jobs (for example, an employee who is responsible for a young child with learning problems).</li> <li>• They may encourage employees to focus on one area at the expense of other areas.</li> <li>• Some of the key skills required in schools cannot be measured—for example, flexibility, initiative and innovation.</li> </ul> <p>Examples of possible measurable outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Punctuality</li> <li>• Performance in gaining qualifications</li> <li>• Percentage of students who pass tests</li> <li>• Percentage of teachers and parents who rate the work of the employee highly</li> </ul>



<p><b>1.5</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>How should employees prepare for their performance review meeting? What areas do you think they should consider and why?</p> <p>Employees are required to complete a document before their meeting to help them think about their job performance and identify issues they want to discuss during their meeting.</p> <p>Employees should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure they allot time for their meeting.</li> <li>• Collect evidence of their performance (for example, thank-you letters from parents or examples of good work).</li> <li>• Become familiar with the meeting format by reviewing relevant documents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.6</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Should the organization use a rating method, so each employee receives a score? Explain your answer.</p> <p>There are advantages and disadvantages of using a rating system.</p> <p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If well-organized, a rating system can help employees see exactly what is required of them to achieve particular scores.</li> <li>• Rating systems facilitate comparisons between employees.</li> <li>• Rating systems may motivate employees who score well.</li> <li>• Rating systems facilitate the goal-setting for future years.</li> </ul> <p><b>Disadvantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rating systems can be subjective.</li> <li>• Rating systems may not be in line with the organization’s culture.</li> <li>• Rating systems may harm the relationship between appraisers and appraisees.</li> <li>• Rating systems may discourage employees who do not score well.</li> <li>• Job content may not lend themselves to a rating system if there are not measurable outputs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.7</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Explain why the HR manager needed the buy-in of appraisers and appraisees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without the buy-in of both parties in the process, performance management will not meet its goals and objectives.</li> <li>• Without the support of all parties, time and effort is wasted.</li> <li>• If only one party is effective, this can have a negative impact on the whole system and make it a paper exercise.</li> <li>• Involving both groups in the design and implementation of the new system may make all employees more engaged in the final system.</li> </ul>



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<p>1.8</p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>What types of training and development opportunities could be offered to the employees?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Formal v informal.</b> Some employees may benefit from informal training, such as observing an employee in a position they may want in the future. IT skills could be improved informally by participation in different tasks on the job. In a formal training opportunity, an employee could seek a job-specific certification.</li> <li>• <b>On-the-job v off-the-job.</b> There are pros and cons to both approaches. Traditionally, support staff members have participated in on-the-job training because it is free and within the context of the organization where the skills would be used.</li> <li>• <b>Accredited v non-accredited.</b> This may depend on the nature of the training and the level required. For example, it would not be appropriate for all staff to enroll in a degree program.</li> <li>• <b>Key skills (generic).</b> These are skills that are required by all staff in the organization. This may include customer service and basic IT skills.</li> <li>• <b>Communication skills.</b></li> <li>• <b>Administrative matters.</b> Most new recruits require training on the administrative processes at the organization.</li> <li>• <b>Education related.</b> Health and safety, data protection, IT.</li> <li>• Training may be part a <b>professional or personal development</b> plan and can be a good retention tool.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group Tasks</b></p>	
<p>2.1</p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Write an e-mail to all support staff to tell them about the new performance management system.</p> <p>The e-mail could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A thank-you to everyone who provided input (to reinforce their participation in the process).</li> <li>• A list of the personal advantages of taking part of the new system.</li> <li>• Outline of the advantages to the organization as a whole.</li> <li>• The estimated timeframe to complete the appraisals.</li> <li>• Information about the training that will be provided (to allay any fears of not knowing what to do).</li> <li>• A note to contact you with any questions.</li> </ul>
<p>2.2</p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Define the specific performance criteria you would use to assess the performance of an office manager. Use the sample job description provided in Work tool #3 to help you with this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT skills – could be more specific by referring to the exact software required to perform the job. This skill may be verifiable by certifications they should pursue or will be expected to pursue in the future.</li> <li>• If the officer manager has supervisory duties, include criteria specific to being a manager.</li> <li>• Does the organization have any core competencies expected of all staff? – If so, these would need to be explored.</li> <li>• Time management skills, flexibility, and the ability to delegate.</li> <li>• Customer service skills.</li> <li>• Are there any deliverables for this position? If so, have these been met?</li> <li>• The extent to which they have met their objectives from the previous year.</li> <li>• The contribution they have made to the overall organization development plan.</li> </ul>



<p><b>2.3</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>You have been asked to give a presentation to all support staff to discuss the practical details of the new system. What areas will you cover?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rationale behind the new system design and why it is an improvement over the previous system.</li> <li>• The benefits of the system to the various parties.</li> <li>• How or if it will link to pay.</li> <li>• Practical information such as how much time it will take, how much notice must be given and who the appraiser will be.</li> <li>• How employees should prepare for their meetings.</li> <li>• The various documents required in the new system, including how they were designed, what their advantages are and how they should be completed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.4</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>What five tips would you give managers to help them conduct an effective performance review meeting?</p> <p>The following are just a few examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set aside time to prepare for and carry out the meeting.</li> <li>• Ensure that feedback is constructive.</li> <li>• Make sure you have all of the necessary documents.</li> <li>• Be positive about the process so the appraisee responds positively.</li> <li>• Be positive about the employee’s job performance. The performance review meeting is not the appropriate setting to present concerns about job performance for the first time. Feedback about an employee’s work or behavior should be directly linked to performance expectations and not be presented in the form of complaints about their work or behavior.</li> <li>• Listen to what the employee is saying.</li> <li>• Ask for clarification if you are unsure about anything.</li> <li>• Encourage the meeting to be a two-way process rather than the manager “telling it how it is”.</li> <li>• Follow up on any agreed actions.</li> <li>• Review progress after a few months to ensure that performance management is an ongoing process.</li> </ul>



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2.5 The organization has decided to review next year's criteria and wants to add measurable core skills and knowledge. Complete the following table using the example provided for guidance.

2.5 – Some suggested answers					
Competence	Benefit of using this competence in the process.	Are there any potential issues in using it?	How could you measure it?	How could you break down this competence further?	
<b>EXAMPLE</b> <i>Excellent communication skills</i>	<i>All employees use this skill daily. Excellent communication skills reflect positively on the organization.</i>	<i>This is a subjective area and could be prone to bias from the appraiser.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Collect evidence.</i></li> <li>• <i>Speak to colleagues for positive and negative feedback.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Written</i></li> <li>• <i>Verbal</i></li> <li>• <i>Listening</i></li> <li>• <i>Formal</i></li> <li>• <i>Appropriateness of methods</i></li> </ul>	
Effective working relationship with colleagues	This is an essential skill that increases productivity of the appraisee and others.	This is a subjective area and could be prone to bias from the appraiser. Co-workers should be asked for input to ensure accuracy. There is the potential to raise issues that could be grievance-related and not appropriate for this platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe the employee during a workday.</li> <li>• Ask them to provide examples to substantiate what they said.</li> <li>• Ask colleagues to do a 360° system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with line manager.</li> <li>• Relationship with senior managers.</li> <li>• Relationship with teaching staff.</li> </ul>	
Time management	It is essential for all employees to manage their time effectively to complete their work.	Could be subjective. Could be misrepresented if judged on a 'non-average' week. Should be carefully defined so employees know what is being asked of them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask employees to keep a diary.</li> <li>• Observation.</li> <li>• Look at whether key targets have been met.</li> <li>• Punctuality records.</li> <li>• Complaints/compliments from members of staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On a daily basis.</li> <li>• On specific projects.</li> <li>• When working with others.</li> </ul>	
Taking initiative	This is an essential skill for employees who work on their own or who do not have close supervision.  Because teachers must concentrate on educating their students, support staff must frequently use their own initiative.	This may not be relevant for all positions. For example, in heavily repetitive manual jobs.  A subjective process – would need to be clear about the context in which examples are provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask employees to provide examples.</li> <li>• Ask for feedback from other managers.</li> <li>• Identify a specific task and ask them how they would complete it.</li> </ul>		





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Flexibility	<p>Support staff members are often required to help out in a number of different areas.</p> <p>The welfare of students is a priority, and staff members must react appropriately in a variety of situations.</p>	<p>This is a subjective process.</p> <p>Some roles have more opportunities for this than others.</p> <p>Some laws may present barriers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask employees to provide examples.</li> <li>• Ask for feedback from other managers.</li> <li>• Identify a specific task and ask employees how they would complete it.</li> </ul>	
Computer skills	<p>These skills are required by all staff within the organization.</p>	<p>Although this is becoming a core competency in many organizations, it may not be currently relevant in all positions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect evidence of their work.</li> <li>• Participation in training courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific programs - e.g., Microsoft Word</li> <li>• Skill levels - e.g., “Expert”</li> </ul>



<p>2.6</p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>What other criteria should be included in the table?</p> <p>Additional criteria could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with students.</li> <li>• Participation in required training (for example, child protection and health and safety).</li> <li>• Ability to work under pressure.</li> <li>• Ability to work without supervision.</li> <li>• Dealing with members of the public.</li> <li>• Prioritizing workload.</li> <li>• Supporting the work of others.</li> <li>• Following organizational policies.</li> <li>• Contributing to the school development plan.</li> </ul>
<p>2.7</p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>You have been asked to assess the effectiveness of the new system. Write five questions you would include in a questionnaire completed by appraisees.</p> <p>Examples could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How satisfied are you with the new Performance Review process?</li> <li>• How would you rate your appraiser's skills?</li> <li>• How would you rate this system compared to the previous one?</li> <li>• Did you feel comfortable during your meeting?</li> <li>• How would you describe the process?</li> <li>• Did you achieve everything that you set out to?</li> <li>• Do you have any suggestions to improve the process?</li> <li>• Would you recommend this system to support staff in other schools?</li> <li>• How easy was it to follow the documentation?</li> <li>• Do you feel you could express your views and opinions during the performance review meeting?</li> <li>• How confident are you that your action plan will be followed up?</li> <li>• To what extent have your action plans already been executed?</li> <li>• What areas of your knowledge/skills have you changed as a result of your performance review meeting?</li> </ul>
<p>2.8</p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Working in pairs, conduct a performance review meeting. One person will be the administrative assistant and the other person will be the appraiser. Use the information in Work tool #4 as the basis of your performance review discussion. Complete a copy of the performance review documents (Work tools #1 and #2) based on the information you have (you may have to add a few details). At the end of the role play, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your meeting.</p> <p>Students are likely to highlight some of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because the employee raised issues in advance, it was more of a two-way discussion.</li> <li>• Some of the issues the employee raised should have been noticed by the appraiser before the review.</li> <li>• The employee identified some training needs, which made it easier for the appraiser to suggest development opportunities.</li> <li>• Because of the pre-work, the appraiser was better prepared to discuss the issues with the employee.</li> </ul>



Additional activities	
<p><b>3.1</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Explore whether the use of a 360° appraisal system could be beneficial to Southwood School.</p> <p>Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of a 360° appraisal system and give examples of how it could be used at Southwood. For example, a manager could be appraised by both the teacher he or she works with and one of their administrative assistants. The following strengths should be identified by the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 360° appraisal systems allow staff to obtain more views about their job performance.</li> <li>• 360° appraisal systems may be more reliable because they allow multiple viewpoints.</li> <li>• 360° appraisal systems allow employees to explore areas that are otherwise difficult to assess.</li> <li>• 360° appraisal systems are useful when staff have such a broad range of roles and responsibilities that no one person can provide an overall view.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2</b></p> <p><b>Suggested answer</b></p>	<p>Identify the pros and cons of introducing a performance-related pay option into the organization's performance management system. What would you recommend?</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May motivate employees to work harder.</li> <li>• Rewards good performance and recognizes individual staff contributions to the organization.</li> <li>• Might increase employee commitment and encourage loyalty to the organization.</li> <li>• Reinforces key organizational objectives.</li> <li>• Encourages a “performance” culture.</li> <li>• Helps identify poor performers.</li> </ul> <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is potentially a subjective process.</li> <li>• It can be difficult to define criteria for a performance-related pay plan.</li> <li>• It can be complex to administer, and consumes management and HR time.</li> <li>• It may cause tension between employees and teams.</li> <li>• Unions may oppose its introduction if it is incongruous with the bargaining agreement in place or if it diminishes the control the union has with regard to representing all members equally.</li> <li>• To be effective, employees need regular feedback on performance to develop their strengths and address any weaknesses.</li> <li>• It may not fit with the organization's culture.</li> <li>• It is likely to change the nature of the performance management system.</li> </ul> <p>Because a new system has been recently introduced, it may not be wise to introduce a performance-related pay plan at this time. It may be considered in the future if the new system is working well.</p>



<b>3.3</b>  <b>Suggested answer</b>	What improvements would you make to Southwood’s new performance management system?  Suggested improvements may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide more detailed instructions on the documentation.</li><li>• Consider using 360° feedback.</li><li>• Add more structured questions.</li></ul> The changes could be evaluated by asking staff if the changes improved the system. If the changes are significant, consider testing them first with a smaller group of employees.
<b>3.4</b>  <b>Suggested answer</b>	How would you ensure that the organization’s commitment to equal opportunity and diversity is embedded into the performance management process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include a specific section in all documentation which discusses equal opportunity and the value of diversity.</li><li>• Offer diversity training for all employees as part of the performance management system.</li><li>• Include a case study during training which addresses both direct and indirect discrimination.</li><li>• Review the organization’s employment policies to ensure there are specific references to the importance of equal opportunity and diversity.</li></ul>



<p>3.5</p> <p>Suggested answer</p>	<p>You are the HR manager of a new organization; one of your first tasks is to develop and implement a new performance management process. Discuss how you would do this. You may find the following ideas helpful in designing your new system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and consult with all relevant stakeholders</li><li>• Determine key areas of performance</li><li>• Define employee performance criteria</li><li>• Set timelines</li><li>• Select appraisers</li><li>• Ensure appropriate training and development opportunities</li><li>• Monitor the system</li></ul> <p><b>Consult with stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk with employees, managers and trade unions.</li><li>• Consult with professional organizations for information on best practices.</li><li>• Benchmark other organizations to learn about their performance management systems and how they analyze its strengths and weaknesses.</li></ul> <p><b>Determine key areas of performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define the key areas you will focus on.</li></ul> <p><b>Define employee performance criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define generic criteria to ensure they reflect key areas.</li><li>• Consider how you will incorporate role-specific criteria. How will it link back to their job description?</li></ul> <p><b>Set timelines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When do you want to introduce the new system?</li><li>• How long will it take to develop and obtain feedback about the new system?</li><li>• When will training occur?</li><li>• How often will the review meetings occur and will there be subsequent reviews?</li></ul> <p><b>Select appraisers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will appraisers be selected and assigned to employees?</li><li>• How many appraisers will be needed?</li><li>• Will there be an appeals process?</li></ul> <p><b>Ensure appropriate training and development opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will you provide the same kinds of training for everyone?</li><li>• How long will training take?</li><li>• What will the training cover?</li><li>• Who will deliver it?</li><li>• How will it be evaluated?</li></ul> <p><b>Monitor the system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will you monitor participation in training?</li><li>• How will you monitor participation in the performance management process?</li><li>• How will you assess the timeliness of reviews and the use of training?</li></ul>
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## **Work Tool #3**

### **Sample Job Descriptions for Southwood School**

Job descriptions for the following roles are included in this case study:

- Office manager
- Administrative assistant
- Classroom assistant
- Computer technician

The job descriptions include key responsibilities for each position. You can use these job descriptions to support some of case study activities.



## Job Description 1

<b>Position Title</b>	Office Manager
<b>Department</b>	Administration
<b>Manager/Supervisor</b>	Director of Administration
<b>Direct Reports</b>	Secretaries Administrative Assistants

Date of job description review: August 10, 2007  
 Date for next review: August 10, 2008  
 Job description author: F. Robson, HR manager

### Job purpose:

- Ensure all administrative tasks in the School are executed accurately and efficiently.
- Develop, implement and/or monitor processes that ensure all the required administrative tasks are completed.
- Coordinate and manage the work of administration department employees.

### Key activities/responsibilities:

- Ensures that all administrative staff are familiar with standard procedures.
- Ensures that all statutory responsibilities are completed.
- Conducts new employee orientation training on the school's administrative procedures.
- Manages administration department budget.
- Works with the Director of Administration to plan events.
- Manages the administrative team on a daily basis.
- Conducts regular performance reviews with the direct report staff.
- Presents reports to the management team when requested.
- Works with teachers to ensure that they receive appropriate administrative support.
- Provides administrative support to senior managers in confidential and complex matters.
- Works with the examinations manager to ensure that exams are administered accurately and on a timely basis.
- Other tasks (appropriate to this level) as requested by senior management team members.



## Job Description 2

<b>Position Title</b>	Administrative Assistant
<b>Department</b>	Administration
<b>Manager/Supervisor</b>	Office Manager
<b>Direct Reports</b>	Not applicable

Date of job description review: August 10, 2007  
Date for next review: August 10, 2008  
Job description author: F. Robson, HR manager

### **Job purpose:**

Provides routine administrative support to meet school needs.

### **Key activities/responsibilities:**

- Provide routine administrative support:
  - Files correspondence and student records.
  - Makes photocopies.
  - Responds to basic telephone inquiries.
  - Mails standard letters when requested.
  - Answers e-mail inquiries sent to the general school e-mail address.
  - Distributes incoming mail.
  - Organizes outgoing mail (includes using postage meter).
  - Maintains the postage meter. Requests additional funds for the meter.
  - Registers students who have arrived late for school.
  - Ensures all visits to the school are recorded.
  - Updates staff and student lists on a timely basis.
  - Takes minutes in formal meetings.
- Ensures that school administration policies are followed, particularly in relation to data protection.
- Other tasks (appropriate to this level) as requested by senior management team members.





## Job Description 3

<b>Position Title</b>	Classroom Assistant
<b>Department</b>	Student Support
<b>Manager/Supervisor</b>	Teacher in charge of Student Support Services
<b>Direct Reports</b>	Not applicable

Date of job description review: August 10, 2007  
Date for next review: August 10, 2008  
Job description author: F. Robson, HR Manager

### **Job purpose:**

Under the direction of a qualified teacher, supports the learning and personal and social development of students in the school.

### **Key activities/responsibilities:**

- Works with small student groups or individual students to carry out work assigned by the teacher.
- Develops positive relationships with students.
- Maintains records of work with students and assists the teacher in assessing student progress.
- Carries out relevant administrative tasks as directed by the teacher.
- Assists students with special education needs where directed by the teacher in charge of student support services.
- Participates in internal training events to develop skills and knowledge.
- Works with parents (as assigned by the teacher).
- Assists with student goal-setting and monitors goal achievement on a regular basis.
- Works with relevant agencies where appropriate.
- Assists the teacher in development of learning resource materials.
- Proctors examinations as required. This may include supporting students with special education needs.
- Other tasks (appropriate to this level) as requested by members of the senior management team.



## Job Description 4

<b>Position Title</b>	Computer Technician
<b>Department</b>	Information Technology Department
<b>Manager/Supervisor</b>	Director of Information Technology
<b>Direct Reports</b>	Computer Support Assistants (2)

Date of job description review: August 10, 2007  
Date for next review: August 10, 2008  
Job description author: F. Robson, HR Manager

### **Job purpose:**

Maintains computer hardware and software throughout the school as part of the IT team.  
Ensures the proper use of school IT equipment.

### **Key activities/responsibilities:**

- Maintains all IT applications as instructed by the director of information technology.
- Ensures that all problems are recorded in a central database.
- Handles any technical problems reported by teachers.
- Allocates appropriate tasks to computer support assistants.
- Provide a high level of customer service to teachers. This includes keeping them informed of anticipated delays.
- Provides new employee orientation about the school's IT resources.
- Ensure that new employees are assigned a username and password and know how to access the network.
- Maintains records of all laptops distributed to staff and ensures they are insured for use away from the school.
- Ensure that all new items are security coded and registered as part of the school's insurance policy database.
- Updates help sheets when new versions of software are released into the network.
- Other tasks (appropriate to this level) as requested by members of the senior management team.



# Southwood Schools—A Case Study

## Sample Completed Work Tool #1

### Preparing for the Performance Review: An example of a completed document

**Name:** James Burn  
**Job Title:** Administrative Assistant  
**Line Manager:** Gill Bradley

1. What parts of my work have I been particularly pleased with or proud of since my last review meeting?

*I have worked really hard this year and learned a lot of new skills. I am now trained to give First Aid and feel much more confident using some of the Microsoft Office software. I also received two nice thank-you letters from parents.*

2. What parts of my work have not been as good or successful as I would have liked?

*I am still struggling to use the new electronic student registration system and this is taking up a lot of my time. I don't feel comfortable when I have to use software like Excel and Publisher.*

3. Has my job changed since my last review (duties, responsibilities, working relationships, etc.)?

*I have several new responsibilities, like selling school uniforms and depositing the money from them. I also have to phone parents to find out why their children are absent from school and report the information to the class teacher. Finally, I have been asked if I can take over the responsibility for organizing the annual student awards evening, as the person who used to do it now has too many other jobs to do.*

*I have a new manager and two new colleagues to work with.*

4. What training and development have I had since my last review (coursework, working with other staff members, observing other staff members, projects, visits, staff meetings, etc.)?

*Unfortunately I have had very little training this year as I only work part-time and my manager says that I can't attend as I have too much to do. I did observe someone using the new registration system before I had to start using it on a daily basis.*

5. Was this training effective? Why or why not?

*This training wasn't very helpful because it was very quick and there was not time to ask any questions. The person who I observed was not a very good trainer because they did not explain what they were doing and they did everything very quickly. If I had received better training it would make my job much easier and less stressful.*



# Southwood Schools—A Case Study

6. What changes would I suggest for my job (for example, duties, responsibilities, work hours)?

*At the moment I have too many duties, which I feel is a bit unreasonable when I only work part-time. I am also asked to complete tasks that could be carried out by different people who are more experienced.*

*I would prefer to work exclusively for one person. At the moment I work with 5-6 people, which is hard when they all have 'urgent' work for me.*

*Ideally I would like to increase my working hours by 5 hours per week.*

7. What objectives will I set for myself for the next 12 months?

*To continue to carry out my work to a high standard.*

*To develop my IT skills.*

8. What training and development needs do I think I have?

*To carry out my daily routines, I would really like some training on using the new registration system. This would mean I could finish the task more quickly.*

*I am interested in developing my IT skills further and need to become more competent using programs like Excel. I would also be interested in trying to gain some formal qualifications in administration, as this may enable me to apply for a promotion in the future.*

Are there any other points I wish to discuss at my review meeting?

*I am concerned about my working relationship with one of the new staff members. I feel that she is always criticizing my work. She does it in front of other people to embarrass me. Sometimes this makes me not want to come to work.*

*I would also like to talk about whether there may be any vacancies in the future for the next level of administration assistant. I would like to apply for a higher-level job.*

*My computer equipment is now quite old and is very slow – might it be possible to update it?*

*I cannot think of any other issues that I need to discuss.*

**Signature:** James Burn

**Date passed to line manager:** 7th August

**Date agreed for performance review meeting:** 18th August



## Work tool #4

### The Previous Performance Management System

Three documents formed the basis of the old system. The first document focused on planning for the forthcoming year and included setting objectives and identifying training activities. The second document was completed after observing a teacher. The final document reviewed performance against the goals identified in the first document (the planning record) and the notes made on the second document (the classroom observation feedback sheet). These documents follow.

#### Stage 1: Planning Record

Name of teacher:	
Name of appraiser:	Date and time of meeting:

Please detail your three objectives for the forthcoming year in the box below (if you wish to set more than three objectives please continue on a separate sheet). You should ensure that your objectives are related to the following areas:

- Pupil progress
- Developing and improving professional practice
- Meeting the objectives of the School Development Plan (SDP)

Objective 1:
Objective 2:
Objective 3:

Please detail any requirements for training and development in the box below:

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Please detail any resources that you require in order to successfully complete your objectives in the box below:

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If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the box below:

--

Please sign below to confirm that this document is an accurate reflection of your meeting.

Teacher:

Appraiser:



## Stage 2: Record of Classroom Observation Feedback

Date of classroom observation:

Date of feedback to teacher:

- Details of the observation:
- Which year group?
- How many students?
- What subject?
- What was the title of the session?

The appraiser should provide feedback using the following headings:

**Strengths**

**Areas for development**

**General comments**

If the teacher would like to make any comments about the feedback provided by the appraiser, please do so in the space below:

Please sign below to confirm that this document is an accurate reflection of your meeting.

Teacher:

Appraiser:



## Stage 3: Annual review statement

Name of teacher:

Name of appraiser:

Date and time of meeting:

Please review the progress against the agreed objectives and state whether they have been met or whether further development is required.

Objective 1:

Objective 2:

Objective 3:

Please consider overall performance over the last year using the headings provided below and note any support or development that is required.

**Strengths:**

**Areas for further development:**

**Support and resources to be provided by the School:**

**Comments from the teacher:**

Please sign below to confirm that this document is an accurate reflection of your meeting.

Teacher:

Appraiser: