

## Frequently Asked Questions about @Work

### 1) Q: What are the time frames for the four phases of the Performance Development and Compensation Programs' annual cycle?

A: Regular, ongoing performance based communication between manager and employee is essential to the success of these programs. In addition to these regular discussions, there are four key times in each yearly Performance Development Cycle (fiscal year) when managers and employees are expected to meet and discuss performance.

1. **July**            Performance Planning
2. **December**    Checkpoint Review
3. **May**            Performance Review
4. **June**            Merit Pay Communication

### 2) Q: What if one of the four phases is late?

A: Although it is important to stay on schedule, if you have missed a phase, every effort should be made to get back on track as soon as possible.

### 3) Q: What is a Job Description and how is it linked to Performance Planning?

A: The Job Description documents the major responsibilities and required competencies for a position. The Job Description is used for posting an open or newly created position and for documenting changes in responsibilities or requirements of an existing position. The Job Description provides a foundation for Performance Planning, which includes current year goals and ongoing expectations.

### 4) Q: How do I determine which of the two Performance Plan forms to use and how do I get a copy?

A: Managers and employees should assess samples of Performance Plan Option I and Option II to determine which form best suits the position responsibilities. (Appendix pp. 36-38)  
Both forms are available on the web: <http://www.tufts.edu/hr/forms/forms.html>

### 5) Q: Why is there a separation between the Performance Review and the Merit Pay Communication?

A: In the past, Tufts managers and employees observed that the Performance Review often focused too heavily on salary increase and not enough on performance. As a result, the Performance Review is a time for manager and employee to concentrate solely on performance for the past year and to determine to what degree goals have been met. The Merit Pay Communication meeting is a separate meeting that focuses on communicating the employee's salary increase based on the past year's performance and development.

**6) Q: What is the difference between performance goals and competencies?**

A: Performance goals specify WHAT is to be achieved and competencies specify HOW these goals are to be achieved—the skill and knowledge that need to be applied.

**7) Q: What's the difference between performance improvement and performance development?**

A: In describing an employee's learning needs, the words "improvement" and "development" are used. "Improvement" describes skills or knowledge that, based on past performance, need to improve. For example, being more consistent in meeting deadlines. "Development" describes skills or knowledge that, based on future goals, need to be enhanced or added. For example, learning how to use a new piece of software. For any employee, depending on the job, their experience, and their future performance goals, they may need to focus on one or the other or a combination of both.

**8) Q: How is the Performance Development process monitored?**

A: As part of the annual Performances Review meeting, the manager and employee sign the last page of the form indicating that the review has been written and communicated. This last page is sent by the manager to the senior administrator, or their designee, in their school or division. The senior administrators of all the schools and divisions then work with Human Resources to ensure that managers have written and communicated a Performance Review for each of their employees thereby ensuring that all Tufts employees have received their Performance Reviews.

**9) Q: What happens to Performance Review paperwork if either the employee or the manager leaves their position?**

A: Managers are required to maintain a file of each employee's records. This file stays with the department independent of manager or employee turnover. It is also good practice for employees to maintain a set of copies for their own records.

**10) Q: How is Progression Pay different from Merit Pay?**

A: Progression Pay recognizes significant growth in a position. This may include acquisition of new skills, development of competencies, or an increase in position responsibilities. Merit Pay, on the other hand, rewards past performance. If performance meets or exceeds expectations, an employee is eligible for a merit increase.

**11) Q: How does a Lump Sum Payment differ from other types of pay?**

A: Lump Sums are given to reward a one time event or special accomplishment that takes place over a finite period of time. For this reason, Lump Sum Payments are not added to base salary.

**12) Q: Do employees receive a merit increase or a cost of living increase?**

A: Tufts Performance Development and Compensation Programs are linked so that an employee's merit increase is based on performance over the past year. Tufts does not provide a cost of living increase. However economic data, including cost of living, is considered in the development of an overall merit budget.

**13) Q: What oversight is provided to ensure fairness in how different managers or different schools/divisions reward their staff?**

A: School/division leadership and Human Resources share responsibility for ensuring fair pay practices. The Senior Administrator is responsible for consistent application of pay programs within their school/division. Human Resources reviews individual pay changes, consults with managers, and conducts post audits of pay programs to ensure consistent practices throughout the university.

**14) Q: How do I do a review for a Post Doc?**

A: See the Postdoctoral Associate and Postdoctoral Fellow Review Form which is available at: [www.tufts.edu/hr/forms/forms.html](http://www.tufts.edu/hr/forms/forms.html)