



Framework document

Employee appraisals at the TU Darmstadt

In its mission statement on staff development the TU Darmstadt has committed itself to the principles of the fair and trusting treatment of one another, mutual regard and a strong sense of responsibility on the part of everyone in his/her respective working area. These principles are connected to a personal commitment to a management culture which supports all employees in being pro-active, creative and innovative, treating all people equally and fostering mutual trust. In addition to their professional work, they are requested to review and adjust their objectives as well as the current development of their work together, and also to identify and reduce stress factors. The TU Darmstadt also intends to complement current daily communications, by developing and maintaining a culture of employee appraisals.

The following statements are intended to create a common understanding regarding employee appraisals at the TU Darmstadt.

Definition

Employee appraisals are planned interviews between managers and employees, which are prepared in terms of their content, confidential and lie outside daily and spontaneous communications.

Objectives

Employee appraisals represent an interactive, participatory management culture and working atmosphere

whose aims include:

- Developing and maintaining trust and transparency;
- Creating an insight into and understanding of the structures of the working environment;
- Identifying and reducing weaknesses;
- Improving leadership and collaboration;
- Raising motivation and activating personal resources;
- Fostering cooperative and creative behaviour among the employees;
- Supporting employees' professional development.



Pivotal features of employee appraisals

- Employee appraisals may be conducted both regularly (e.g. annual appraisals) and for a current reason (e.g. critical reviews).
- Employee appraisals are usually conducted between two people. In specific cases (e.g. appraisals the content of which refers to disciplinary measures or employment law) an additional, trusted person may be involved.
 - Managers are in charge of conducting the appraisal and are responsible for the arrangements.
 - An employee appraisal may be initiated by either parties.
- Employee appraisals are confidential conversations between two people who respect each other equally.

The conversation is to take place in an open and honest spirit in which both participants are prepared to take one another's point of view.
- The difference between an everyday conversation and an employee appraisal is that the latter are planned, result-oriented and targeted.
 - The employee appraisal is scheduled for a specific date on which the parties are able to discuss the matters without any interruptions.
 - The parties prepare for this conversation.
 - They must be familiar with the reason of the meeting.
 - An employee appraisal always has a specific content and objective. These shall be specifically defined and agreed by the parties in good time before the meeting. In this process the parties should limit the objectives sensibly if needed.
 - The parties take care to keep them realistic.
 - On conclusion of the appraisal, the results and agreed measures or objectives are usually recorded in a joint document. Confidential documents shall always be filed by the parties only.
 - The results of the appraisals may only be forwarded to third parties if this has been agreed previously or is required for specific reasons.

The TU Darmstadt provides training for conducting employee appraisals. All parties, managers in particular, are requested to use the relevant offers in order to extend their competencies.



Employee appraisals conducted on a regular basis

- Annual appraisals are employee appraisals which are conducted at the TU Darmstadt on a regular basis. The TU Darmstadt provides a handout for preparing and conducting them.
- Appraisals are performed in accordance with the guidelines for the assessment of civil servants in the state of Hesse (Staatsanzeiger (government gazette) of 21 May 2007).

Appraisals also for current reasons, including:

- Introductory conversations and those on completion of a trial period
- Conversations recognising achievements
- Critical reviews
- Conversations about promotion (even if the promotion is refused)
- Conversations about academic qualifications
- Conversations about absence from work
- Conversations after an employee's return to work (after leave, long-term illness)
- Conversations about warning notices
- Discussions about how to deal with alcohol and drugs in the workplace (see service agreement of May 1994)
- Conversations about transfer
- Severance talks following notice of termination to an employee by a colleague
- Conversations following notice of termination to an employee by his/her employer
- Conversations about an employee's departure due to old age or illness
- Discussions about the integration and participation of severely disabled persons.

Further reading on the topic of employee/annual appraisals:

1. R. Fiege, P.M. Muck, H. Schuler: das Mitarbeitergespräch (the employee appraisal); in: Publisher H Schuler, Lehrbuch für Personalpsychologie; Göttingen 2006
2. Publisher J. Ryschka, M. Solga, A. Mattenkott; Praxishandbuch Personalentwicklung; Instrumente, Konzepte, Beispiele; Wiesbaden 2005
3. O. Neuberger; Das Mitarbeitergespräch, praktische Grundlagen für erfolgreiche Führungsarbeit; Leonberg 2004 (6th edition)
4. Publisher R. Nagel, M. Oswald, R. Wimmer: das Mitarbeitergespräch als Führungsinstrument, Stuttgart 2002
5. Publisher H.-E. Meixner; Das Mitarbeiter-Vorgesetzten-Gespräch – Neue Wege der Personalentwicklung und -förderung in der öffentlichen Verwaltung; Kronach, München, Potsdam 2001 (3rd edition)