Parliamentary Workplace Support Service

OFFICIAL

Fact Sheet

Giving, seeking and receiving feedback

The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) has developed this fact sheet to support positive performance culture. It provides guidance for *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act) employees and their supervisors, including parliamentarians, on giving, seeking and receiving feedback.

For advice or assistance in relation to feedback, please contact PWSS HR Advice on 1800 747 977 (option 1) or hr@pwss.gov.au.

The importance of feedback

Feedback plays an important role in developing performance, building self-awareness, strengthening relationships, and supporting a positive performance culture. It helps employees understand expectations, recognise strengths, and identify opportunities for development, while providing supervisors with insights to better support performance and growth. Supervisors should provide regular feedback that acknowledges achievements, reinforces positive behaviours, and supports an employee's ongoing development.

Giving feedback

Feedback should be specific, clear, actionable and objective. When providing feedback, it is helpful to explain the following:

- **Situation** – explain when and where you observed the specific situation, event, task or interaction
- **Behaviour** – describe the actions, behaviours or approaches that were observed
- **Impact** – explain the outcomes or effects of the behaviours

When to give feedback

Best practice is to provide feedback regularly including:

- **In the moment** – feedback is provided on an ad-hoc basis as duties are performed. It is often informal and occurs through daily work interactions. Some examples include:
    - Discussing progress on a task or piece of work
    - Commenting on draft communications (for example, briefs and speeches)
    - Encouraging reflection following an event or decision
- **During scheduled conversations** – feedback is provided at regular one-on-one meetings or as part of a scheduled performance review conversation. These conversations provide an opportunity to discuss current and upcoming priorities, any barriers and what support may be required from the direct supervisor.
- **Whenever expectations change** – supervisors should communicate changes to priorities, deliverables, measures of success or performance expectations as soon as practicable, and employees should seek clarification where needed.

Practical tips for giving constructive feedback

The diagram below includes practical tips to consider when giving constructive feedback.

Right time and place - choose an appropriate time and place to provide feedback.

Psychological safety - deliver feedback respectfully and constructively, focusing on observable behaviours rather than personal attributes. Aim to support development, maintain dignity, and balance constructive and positive feedback where possible.

Prepare - plan your key messages and use specific examples.

Two way - provide face-to-face feedback when possible (or consider the best way to do this online if remotely based), as this allows both parties to clarify any aspects of the feedback.

Follow up in writing - consider following up feedback in writing to ensure a shared understanding of expectations and next steps. Written records can provide a useful reference points for future discussions.

Support person - where feedback could reasonably be considered adverse in nature, the employee should be provided the opportunity to bring a support person – please contact HR Advice for guidance.

Seeking feedback

Seeking feedback helps build self-awareness, strengthens performance and supports continuous learning. Employees may seek feedback on a specific piece of work or their overall contribution, while supervisors may seek feedback on their leadership and management approach. When seeking feedback, individuals may find the following questions helpful:

- What areas do you think I am/have been doing well in?
- Is there anything I could do/have done differently?
- What would you like me to do more or less of?

Receiving feedback

When receiving feedback:

- Listen carefully and avoid jumping to conclusions.
- Try not to respond emotionally, remembering that constructive feedback communicated appropriately is designed to support development.
- Reflect back your understanding and ask questions where needed.
- Identify the constructive message and reflect on how it might be helpful.
- Share your perspective, including any relevant context or situational factors that may be helpful for the other person to understand.
- Respond thoughtfully and constructively, including identifying any actions or commitments you may choose to take as a result of the feedback.