

Performance Review Policy

SCOPE

Pastors and staff who are not meeting required standards will have these issues addressed as soon as performance difficulties are identified. Generally, unsatisfactory performance means not meeting agreed ministry objectives, pastoral care standards, administrative tasks, timeframes, or quality of work. Agreed standards are communicated through position descriptions, ministry plans, termly catch ups, annual goals, or other formal documentation.

Dealing with unsatisfactory performance requires a staged process which is transparent, consistently applied, considers the unique nature of ministry work, and has regard to any personal circumstances of the staff member. Restoration and improvement of performance is the primary goal, reflecting our Christian values of grace, growth, and reconciliation.

This procedure applies to all church staff where performance issues are identified, including:

- Senior pastoral staff
- Campus pastors and cross campus ministry leaders
- Administrative staff
- Part-time and casual employees
- Volunteers

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

This procedure is grounded in biblical principles of:

- Restoration: "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently" (Galatians 6:1)
- Clear Communication: "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you" (Matthew 18:15)

- Accountability: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17)
- Due Process: "Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses" (1 Timothy 5:19)

PROCEDURAL STEPS

Responding to Unsatisfactory Performance

The key stages for addressing unsatisfactory performance are:

- Prayer and pastoral care throughout the process
- Early intervention and informal support
- Undertaking an improvement program under pastoral supervision
- Formal disciplinary action (if restoration efforts are unsuccessful)

Pastoral and Operational Management

Where there is an incident or general level of substandard performance involving a specific staff member that requires action, the relevant supervisor (Senior Pastor, Campus Pastor, or designated ministry leader) will:

Initial Response:

- Pray for wisdom and the staff member's wellbeing before taking action
- Speak to the staff member concerned privately in a spirit of restoration
- Address the matter which is unacceptable with grace and clarity

The supervisor will:

- Identify and record the unacceptable performance, behavior, or attitude with specific examples
- Allow the staff member to provide an appropriate response and context
- Explore any underlying issues (personal, spiritual, or professional challenges)
- Identify and agree on the expected performance, behavior, or attitude

- Identify and agree on the staff member's committed response and growth plan
- Identify and agree on the supervisor's committed response and support
- Identify and agree on timeframes and expectations for improvement
- Commence action that will support, equip, and mentor the staff member
- Monitor and evaluate the staff member's progress with regular check-ins

Documentation: A written record will be kept of the content and outcomes of any meeting by the supervisor, with a copy presented to the staff member. These records will be kept confidential unless the matter escalates. All documentation will be handled with sensitivity to the pastoral nature of church ministry.

Immediate Action Required: Unsatisfactory performance should be addressed by supervisors as soon as it is identified, balanced with pastoral sensitivity. The nature of the unsatisfactory performance should be clearly communicated with specific examples and biblical guidance where appropriate.

Supportive Strategies: The following strategies can be implemented for unsatisfactory performance:

- Provide mentoring and pastoral support programs
- Ensure ministry expectations are reasonable, achievable, and clearly articulated
- Develop personal growth plans that address both professional and spiritual development
- Ensure clear understanding of ministry standards and church culture
- Provide professional development and ministry training opportunities
- Offer pastoral counseling or external support if personal issues are affecting performance
- Remove any identified barriers to effective ministry performance
- Consider temporary reduction of responsibilities to allow for restoration

STAGE 1 – IMPROVEMENT UNDER PASTORAL SUPERVISION

If informal support and meetings fail to improve performance, a formal response will be required. This stage maintains a pastoral approach while establishing clear expectations.

Formal Meeting Requirements: A meeting must be held to outline concerns, including:

- Opening with prayer for wisdom and restoration
- A clear statement that this concerns unsatisfactory performance requiring formal intervention
- Clarification of ministry expectations and church standards
- Explanation of how the staff member's performance has differed from expectations with specific examples
- Opportunity for the staff member to respond to concerns and provide context
- Discussion of any personal or spiritual factors affecting performance
- Advice of the staff member's right to use the church's Grievance Policy if there is disagreement
- Closing with prayer for the improvement process

Supervision and Documentation:

- Supervisors will keep records of all communications and meetings
- The Senior Pastor must be informed when any staff member reaches Stage 1
- Campus Pastors will inform the Executive Team of all formal performance management actions

Improvement Plan Implementation: This stage involves implementing a written improvement plan that includes:

- Clear ministry and performance goals for successful improvement
- Spiritual development objectives where applicable
- Timeline for completion of the plan (typically 3-6 months)
- Regular check-in meetings (weekly or fortnightly)
- Support resources (mentoring, training, counselling)
- Growth metrics that are measurable and achievable

Formal Documentation: A performance support letter outlining the concerns, agreed actions, timeframes, and outcomes will be prepared by the supervisor and provided to the staff member.

This letter will include:

- An official warning that lack of improvement could result in progression of the performance management process
- The complete improvement plan
- Available support resources
- Affirmation of the church's commitment to the staff member's restoration and success

A copy should be provided to the Executive Team and kept in the staff member's confidential personnel file.

Ongoing Support:

- Regular monitoring by the supervisor during the agreed timeframe
- Scheduled progress meetings with documented outcomes
- The Senior Pastor will be kept informed of progress
- Appropriate pastoral care, mentoring, and professional support will be offered
- Consideration of workload adjustments if necessary

STAGE 2 – FORMAL MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE TEAM

Notification: A letter outlining the progression to Stage 2 will be prepared by the supervisor and provided to the staff member. This letter will include:

- A second official warning concerning the matter
- Notice that continued unsatisfactory performance could result in dismissal
- Confirmation of the meeting date, time, and attendees
- Reminder of support available

Meeting Participants: The supervisor will arrange a meeting including:

- The supervisor (ie Lead Pastor)
- Senior Pastor (or designated senior leader)
- HR/Executive Pastor (if applicable)
- The staff member
- A support person chosen by the staff member (pastor, mentor, or friend)

Meeting Process:

- Opening with prayer for wisdom and restoration
- Details of the performance issues and previous improvement attempts will be presented
- The staff member will be given full opportunity to respond and provide context
- Focus on achieving agreed improvement within a reasonable timeframe
- Establishment of a checkpoint date for review
- Agreement on additional interventions, support, or accountability measures
- Reaffirmation of hope for restoration and the church's investment in the staff member
- Official warnings will be confirmed and documented
- Closing with prayer for the path forward

STAGE 3 – DISCIPLINARY ACTION (SENIOR PASTOR)

If the staff member has been given reasonable opportunity to improve performance through Stages 1 and 2 but has not demonstrated sufficient improvement, disciplinary action may be necessary.

Decision Process: This decision should be made in consultation between supervisors and the Senior Pastor (or Church Board for senior pastoral positions). The decision process must include:

- Prayer for wisdom and the staff member's future wellbeing
- Review of all documentation and improvement efforts
- Consideration of extenuating circumstances
- Assessment of the impact on church ministry and community

- Consultation with Church Board for significant disciplinary actions

Disciplinary Action Options:

- Formal written caution with extended improvement period
- Written reprimand with specific conditions
- Demotion of responsibilities or role change
- Suspension with or without pay (for serious matters)
- Dismissal from employment

Procedural Fairness: Principles of procedural fairness will be applied, ensuring:

- The staff member can respond to allegations of continued unsatisfactory performance
- Opportunity to make representations regarding any proposed disciplinary action
- All previous steps and documentation are reviewed
- Pastoral care continues throughout the process

Formal Notification: The Senior Pastor will advise the staff member in writing that performance remains unsatisfactory and may lead to disciplinary action. The notification will include:

- Specific details of unsatisfactory performance against improvement program criteria
- Statement that performance remains below required standards
- Notice that disciplinary action is being considered with potential implications
- Summary of the complete process to this point
- Opportunity for final restoration efforts if appropriate
- Right to provide written submission within 21 days
- Right to request interview with Senior Pastor (accompanied by support person)
- Assurance of continued pastoral care regardless of employment outcome

Decision Considerations: The following factors will be considered:

- Duty of care to congregation and community served
- The facts and documented evidence
- Impact of unsatisfactory performance on ministry and mission effectiveness

- Nature and seriousness of the performance issues
- The staff member's experience, training, and position
- Any mitigating circumstances (health, family, spiritual struggles)
- The staff member's overall employment and ministry history
- Potential for restoration in current or alternative role
- Effect of proposed action on the staff member and their family
- Impact on church community and witness

Final Decision Documentation: In matters where disciplinary action is taken, the Senior Pastor will write to the staff member including:

- Acknowledgment that the staff member's response has been fully considered
- The disciplinary action being implemented
- Reference to relevant employment history and improvement efforts
- Expression of ongoing pastoral care and support available
- Information about transition support (counseling, career guidance, references)
- Prayer for the staff member's future ministry and wellbeing

DEALING WITH UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE - FLOWCHART

Stage	Evidence Required	Person Responsible
Initial Identification	Performance concerns noted through supervision, feedback, or observation	Immediate Supervisor
Informal Support	Documentation of conversations and support offered	Supervisor
Stage 1: Improvement Plan	Written improvement plan, meeting records, progress documentation	Supervisor (Senior Pastor informed)
Stage 2: Formal Meeting	Stage 1 documentation, formal meeting minutes, updated improvement plan	Supervisor + Senior Pastor

Stage 3: Disciplinary Action	Complete documentation from all stages, decision rationale, final communications	Senior Pastor (Board consultation for senior roles)
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Process Flow:

1. Staff member identified as experiencing performance difficulties
2. Informal support and mentoring provided
3. Assessment: Improvement achieved? ? Yes: Continue monitoring ? No: Progress to Stage 1
4. Formal improvement program implemented under pastoral supervision
5. Assessment: Required performance met? ? Yes: Case closed with continued support ? No: Progress to Stage 2
6. Formal meeting with senior leadership
7. Assessment: Satisfactory improvement? ? Yes: Case reviewed and closed ? No: Referred to Senior Pastor for disciplinary decision
8. Senior Pastor makes final decision with appropriate consultation
9. All outcomes communicated with pastoral care and support

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHURCH MINISTRY

Pastoral Staff Considerations

- Spiritual and emotional demands of pastoral ministry recognised
- Sabbatical or ministry leave considered as restoration option
- ACC support and resources accessed where appropriate
- Congregation impact carefully managed with sensitivity

Confidentiality and Church Community

- Strict confidentiality maintained throughout process
- Pastoral care for families of staff members undergoing performance management
- Communication strategy for any changes in staff roles or departures

- Protection of church's witness to wider community and unity

Restoration Focus

- Primary goal is restoration rather than punishment
- Spiritual mentoring and counseling integrated throughout process
- Alternative ministry opportunities explored where appropriate
- Long-term relationship preservation with staff members where possible

RELATED POLICIES & FORMS

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Confidentiality Agreement
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Stage 1 Staff Performance Support Template Letter (request from HR only)
- Stage 2 Staff Performance Support Template Letter (request from HR only)
- Stage 3 Staff Performance Support Template Letter (request from HR only)
- Stage 3 Final Decision Performance Support Template Letter (request from HR only)
- Staff Performance Appraisal Questions (request from HR only)

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