

## Frequently asked questions:

**Q.** “Is the PRDS really a Human Resource package / approach?”

**A.** When most people think about the PRDS they assume that it is just another appraisal package. This is not true, the PRDS is a lot more, it is a performance management system which reviews and develops workers performance to agreed standards. It also recognises and rewards outstanding performance.

## Did You Know ...

“That the PRDS is developmental in nature?”

## Writing SMART Performance Objectives

Most of us in the work force recognise that objective setting in the workplace is just as important as planning (discussed in our last issue). But why is objective setting important to performance management? Essentially, because ‘objectives are statements of action with specific conditions and standards that can be measured or observed and which result in a desired product or outcome.’

Well-written performance objectives specify the tasks to be done as well as the performance standards to be achieved. As such, they clarify for managers and employees issues related to:

1. maximising usage of resources such as time, money, supplies, equipment and personnel;
2. reducing tensions between worker and supervisor caused by unclear objectives and required standards; and
3. answering such questions as: How am I doing? How can I improve? What will tell me that I have improved?

With the above in mind, we can see why objectives have to be **SMART**, that is:

- **S** pecific - describes precisely what the employee **must** do.
- **M** easurable - includes quality, quantity, time or cost.
- **A** ttainable - can be achieved by the employee.
- **R** esults oriented - realistic; within the control of the employee and related to the employee’s job description.
- **T** ime bound - specific time frames in which to complete the tasks in order to achieve the objectives.

## Operational / Performance objectives

An operational / performance objective describes what an employee **must** do in order to complete the tasks that make up a particular job. Performance objectives also identify the required standards to measure the performance of the employees. A well-written operational objective has three components:

- A performance statement
- A condition statement

- A standards statement

**A performance statement** is a brief, clear, action-oriented description of a task to be done. It has a single measurable or observable verb e.g.

1. **Write** a proposal for a new project
2. **Select** participants for a training seminar
3. **File** correspondence from mail folder
4. **Prepare** a monthly expenditure balance from payments outgoing

**A condition statement** describes the conditions under or the environment in which the task is to be performed. It includes the tools, equipment and / or information needed to complete the activity as specified e.g.

1. ...using data from survey results
2. ...using invoices and application forms
3. Working individually and with minimal supervision, .....
4. Complete human resources information for monthly report **using attendance sheets and punch cards.**

**A standard statement** describes the degree or acceptable level of proficiency needed for the objective to be met. Standards may include time, cost, quality and quantity e.g.

1. ...in accordance with the Financial Management and Audit Act 2007-11
2. ....by 31<sup>st</sup> March annually.
3. ... **within 5 days** of receipt of **all** required information.
4. completed with a **zero percentage** error rate.

Let us examine Section 1 page 2 of the PRDS appraisal form and see how objectives and performance measures are actually used in a work plan. Remember, the objectives used in the Work Plan are drawn from the list of duties in the Job Description. (See our article on job descriptions in issue Vol. 10. No 2. May – August 2007 pages 20-21). The following examples of objectives are drawn from a cross section of lists of duties in job descriptions across the public service.

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL SKILLS</b>
<i>Drawn from the list of duties in the job description and Unit objectives</i>  <i>Are the Objectives SMART?</i>	<i>Measure quantity, quality, time and cost</i>  <i>What things will tell you when you have achieved your objective?</i>	<i>What new skills will you need to meet your objectives</i>
Check the drugs in the Emergency trolley on a daily basis	The emergency drug book checked, signed and updated  Report on any changes on emergency drug trolley	

<p align="center"><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <p><i>Drawn from the list of duties in the job description and Unit objectives</i></p> <p><i>Are the Objectives SMART?</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b></p> <p><i>Measure quantity, quality, time and cost</i></p> <p><i>What things will tell you when you have achieved your objective?</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>ADDITIONAL SKILLS</b></p> <p><i>What new skills will you need to meet your objectives</i></p>
<p>Complete PSC 5 and PSC 6 forms in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Chief Personnel Officer and submit them to the Deputy Permanent Secretary within three working days of request.</p>	<p>The PSC5 and PSC6 forms are completed as specified and submitted to the Deputy Permanent Secretary, within three working days of request.</p>	
<p>Conduct performance appraisal of Clerical Officers assigned to the Registry in accordance to the PRDS guidelines</p>	<p>Completed performance appraisal reports on the Clerical Officers assigned to the Registry are submitted to the next level manager in accordance with the time frame and standards mandated by the PRDS guidelines.</p>	<p>Attend the PRDS training for Managers and Supervisors programme</p>
<p>Prepare Draft Annual Estimates by 31<sup>st</sup> October in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Finance</p>	<p>Accurately completed Draft Annual Estimates submitted to the Permanent Secretary / Head of Department by 31<sup>st</sup> October.</p>	<p>In-service training course in Accounts Levels 1 and 2, Microsoft Excel offered by Training Administration Division (TAD)</p>
<p>Submit request for quarterly allocation to the Ministry of Finance by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of March, June, September and December each year for the release of approved. .</p>	<p>Request for quarterly allocation reflecting the approved amount is submitted to Permanent Secretary / Head of Department for onward transmission to Ministry of Finance by specified dates.</p>	
<p>Cleaning sanitary facilities at least twice daily – by 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - and additionally in case of mishaps.</p>	<p>Sanitary facilities are kept in an hygienic state at all times</p>	<p>In-service training course in General Housekeeping offered by TAD</p>
<p>Sweep offices, dust desks and sanitise telephones thoroughly by 9:00 a.m. every workday.</p>	<p>Offices are swept, desks are dusted, and telephones are sanitised every workday by 9:00 a.m.</p>	
<p>Check Government owned vehicles on a weekly basis to ensure that water, oil and fuel do not fall below the minimum level.</p>	<p>Water, oil and fuel are kept above the minimum level at all times.</p>	
<p>Within two working days, take necessary follow-up action that accurately reflect instructions given and/or decisions taken on matters arising from meetings for which you have been assigned specific responsibility.</p>	<p>Documentary evidence on file shows follow-up actions(s) taken within two working days, which accurately reflect(s) instructions given and /or decisions taken.</p>	<p>In-service training course offered by TAD in Document Preparation or Preparation of Cabinet Papers</p>

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	ADDITIONAL SKILLS
<p><i>Drawn from the list of duties in the job description and Unit objectives</i></p> <p><i>Are the Objectives SMART?</i></p>	<p><i>Measure quantity, quality, time and cost</i></p> <p><i>What things will tell you when you have achieved your objective?</i></p>	<p><i>What new skills will you need to meet your objectives</i></p>
<p>Manage the secretarial unit ensuring that it meets its performance targets as indicated in the work plans of the officers supervised</p>	<p>Outputs from the secretarial unit meet its specified performance targets.</p>	<p>In-service training course offered by TAD in Supervisory Management</p>
<p>Accurately record files and route them to officers for action within three hours of receipt</p>	<p>The files are recorded accurately and routed to the relevant officers for action within three hours of receipt.</p>	<p>In-service training course offered by TAD in Records Management; Registry Procedures</p>
<p>Type all documents assigned within one working day of receipt, with a 0% error rate.</p>	<p>Completed error free documents are presented within one working day of receipt of assignments.</p>	<p>In-service training course offered by TAD in Microsoft Office</p>
<p>Answer the telephone each time within three rings and in accordance with the standards outlined in the document <i>How to make the telephone work for you.</i></p>	<p>The telephone is answered each time within three rings and in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the document <i>How to make the telephone work for you.</i></p>	

Now, practise writing some more examples of operational objectives.  
 In our next issue we will discuss how your smart objectives link with the PRDS cycle.