

Conducting new starter reviews during the first six months – A guide for employers

Undertaking structured new starter performance and feedback reviews are critical for both employers and new team members.

Conducting reviews in the early phase of an employee's tenure helps to set them up for success in their new role. These early evaluations signify to the employee that you, their employer, are invested in helping them to achieve their performance and career goals, leading to an increased level of productivity and engagement.

Meaningful new starter reviews also allow you as the employer to correct performance issues before they become a major issue and identify any actions needed to better support the employee.

When should you conduct your new starter reviews? This will differ from employer to employer. However, the most common (and arguably most effective) approach to follow is to conduct these reviews at week one, four and twelve of the new starter's tenure and at the completion of their probation period.



Week One Review

At the end of the first week of an employee's new role at a company, the review is not performance based but should be a more informal conversation about how they're settling in. In the employee's first week they will still be learning the basics such as the layout of the office and where the cutlery and cups are kept, so placing too much emphasis in the review on how they are performing can be unfair. Some of the questions you might ask at the end of week one are:

i How are you settling into your new role?

ii How are you finding your way around the office?

iii How have your new team members been?

iv Is the role/company what you thought it would be? Why/why not?

v How do you feel about the volume of work being delegated to you?

vi What are you happy about with how you are being managed? Anything you're not happy about?

vii What could we do better to make you feel more comfortable?

Remember to dig deeper beyond just 'yes' and 'no' answers to find out the reasons behind their answers, and to uncover any issues they might be experiencing.



Week Four Review

By week four, an employee should have a stronger understanding of their place within the broader organisational structure and how their role contributes value to the company. The week 4 review is your first opportunity to discuss how the employee is meeting quotas and/or performance expectations, and to discuss if they are enjoying their role and whether it aligns so far with their professional goals and aspirations. These questions can be more formal and metric based than the Week 1 review.

i Has the company/role met your expectations? What do you like about your position?

ii Do you have all the tools/resources needed to perform your role to the best standard?

iii Have you reached your goals for week 4? What are your goals for week 12?

iv Describe how you feel about your communication with your direct supervisor.

v How can we help you in the future, is there anything we can improve?

vi What do you feel are your strengths in this role so far? Are there any areas where you would like more support so far?

vii Is there anything you don't understand about your role that we can help you with?



Week Twelve Review

After twelve weeks in their new role, an employee will have a clear insight into their role and responsibilities. They should feel more comfortable within their team and are hopefully contributing to a positive workplace culture. By their twelfth week, an employee should have more confidence expressing their thoughts in a performance review which help you to gain valuable insights into their job satisfaction and engagement. The questions asked in a twelve-week review should focus on how the employee feels they have performed, and where they feel there is room for improvement:

- i** How would you describe your satisfaction with the scope of your current responsibilities?
- ii** Are you clear on the expectations of your position and your performance? Is there anything you would like more clarity on?
- iii** Is there anything we can do to better support you or help improve your performance?
- iv** Do you feel you need additional training in any aspect of your role?
- v** Would you prefer more or less direction in your work tasks?
- vi** Is there anything you miss about your last job?
- vii** How would you describe the relationship you have developed with your team and other members of the organisation?



Six Month Review (After Probation Period is Completed)

Upon the successful completion of a new starter's probation period, it's time for another performance review and general conversation about feedback. This review is designed to reflect on the last six months and plan the next steps for the employee's future at the company. The questions asked in this review are vital to determine how to best support the employee and to identify areas of improvement that the company can adopt in their onboarding process:

- i** Can you see a positive and fulfilling future at this company? What might prevent you from being fulfilled in this role?
- ii** How would you describe your performance during your probation period?
- iii** Is there anything you felt negatively affected your performance?
- iv** What are your goals for the next few months? What would you like to achieve?
- v** Is there anything we could have done better/differently to improve your experience here?
- vi** How can we support you/help you to achieve your professional goals going forward?
- vii** How has your first six months here compared to your expectations?