

Darwin performance reviews are designed to help employees and managers set objectives and make learning plans. Reviews are confidential meetings between the line manager, employee and Darwin's Head of HR. The employee's mentor may also be invited to some meetings.

There are a minimum of two formal performance reviews per year for each employee. However, line managers may also choose to schedule additional performance reviews or 121 meetings, and they may also provide more regular or ad-hoc feedback while working together with the employee.

Employees are encouraged to approach their line manager at any time if they have any questions about their performance or development.

6 week review

The first review happens after six weeks; this is less formal as it is designed simply to check how the employee is settling in their new role, and to explain the performance review process. No indicative performance rating is given at this stage, as the employee is still too new, but the rating system is introduced by the manager alongside objectives and expectations.

Manager comments should focus on three main areas:

- what the employee's individual targets are;
- what Darwin's objectives are in relation to their role; and
- what the goals of their learning plan are.

Probation review

The second performance review happens at the end of the 3-month probationary period. This is the first formal review, so the employee should draft their review record in advance of the meeting. At this review, the line manager will confirm the probation review outcome, which may be pass, extend, or not pass. The manager will also provide the first indicative performance rating.

Manager comments should focus on the following areas:

- how the employee has settled into their role;
- whether the employee is on track to meet their targets or objectives;
- record of any successes the employee has achieved so far;
- the development points the employee's learning plan is seeking to address;
- how the employee's work is contributing to Darwin's wider objectives.

Regular reviews

Darwin performs regular formal performance reviews twice annually: a **mid-year review** and an **annual appraisal** towards the end of the year. Depending on when an employee started at Darwin, if their probation review happens close to the time of a regular review, we may merge the two.

Manager comments should focus on the following areas:

- how the employee is performing in relation to their targets or objectives;
- record of any successes the employee has achieved so far;
- development points the employee needs to work on;
- what the employee's targets and objectives are for the coming period;
- what Darwin's wider objectives are for the coming period in relation to the employee's role;
- the performance rating the manager has assessed the employee to be achieving now.

Performance ratings

The first performance rating is given at the employee's first formal regular review. During the probation review, an indicative rating may also be given, to help steer the employee. Ratings are then typically given twice yearly. An indicative rating is given at the mid-year review and the final performance rating is given at the end-of-year annual appraisal.

Ratings are decided by the line manager and subject to a consistency review process which is undertaken by a performance steering group led by Darwin's Head of HR. On rare occasions, a manager's proposed rating may be adjusted up or down during this consistency review process, to ensure fairness and consistency in how all employees are assessed.

Performance rating key	
Performance ratings are given periodically alongside formal performance reviews. Darwin's senior leadership team also consider performance ratings when deciding pay rises and bonuses.	
Rating	Description
Poor	Employee performance, attitude, conduct, or attendance is below acceptable standards. Employee does not absorb manager feedback and has shown little to no improvement. Manager may decide to take disciplinary action.
Underperforming	Employee performance is not meeting expectations. Manager may decide to provide additional support, training, and/or more frequent supervision.
Good	Employee is meeting all expectations in a professional and timely manner.
Great	Employee is meeting expectations and also exceeding expectations in some areas. May be ready to take on additional responsibility.
Amazing	Employee is exceeding expectations in most or all areas, proactively goes the extra mile, and is recognised as a role model by their peers. A really extraordinary individual who merits extraordinary recognition.