

Your Union's guide to performance management in Bank of Ireland

Effective from January 1, 2023

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1. Introduction

Bank of Ireland has introduced changes to the performance management process, which will come into effect on January 1, 2023.

For many members, performance management can be challenging. An employee's rating outcome has significant implications for pay and promotional opportunities.

Your Union wants to help you through the process so that you can get the rating you deserve and better protect yourself in pressurised working environments.

This general guide gives you some important pointers, tips for preparing for your review, and advice about your rights. It is as relevant for managers who are members of the FSU as it is for all other bands.



2. Union engagement

Your Union negotiated with the Bank to ensure that safeguards for fairness and equity were built into the performance management process.

These principles for fairness and equity are:

- Participation in the performance management process is voluntary and employees can opt out.
- Objectives are agreed, not imposed.
- There are no specific numeric targets as part of the process.
- There is no forced distribution of ratings.
- The share of “inconsistent” ratings will never exceed 4.3% of employees.
- There is an agreed appeals process for staff who are not satisfied with their rating.
- Performance management ratings are one of the elements used in deciding annual pay increases. The second element is the salary review, which takes into account the BOI Group financial performance, the Consumer Price Index, and the prevailing market norms.

If, at any point during the performance management process, you feel that you are not being treated fairly as agreed under these principles, contact your Sector Committee for advice.

3. Before you begin

You are entitled to know the process your employer uses to judge performance. Make sure your employer has outlined the steps involved in the performance management process, and that the way your performance will be measured is very clear.

Ask yourself:

- Do you know how progress will be measured?
- Do you know when your quarterly check-ins and year-end review will take place?
- Do you know what will be discussed at your quarterly check-in and review?
- Do you know how the Bank will use your performance rating score?

If you don't know the answer to any of these questions, ask your manager for more information and contact a Union representative for advice.

Knowing the system and how it operates over the entire year will help you understand how to prepare effectively.



3. Process

The performance management process is voluntary, and employees have the right to opt out. However, the Bank nevertheless retains the right to conduct an appraisal of your performance. If you opt out of the process, you will have no influence over the outcome of your rating or ability to appeal.

At the start of each year, the Bank will publish an annual calendar with important quarterly check-in and review dates for each department. Ensure that you receive a copy of the calendar, so that you have an early view of when your dates will be approaching.

Every employee will have a series of four quarterly check-ins with their line manager. The final quarterly check-in will form your year-end review, and this is when you will receive your performance rating for the year.

Ratings are on a 3-point scale:

1. Inconsistent
2. Strong
3. Exceptional

Your line manager will be instructed by the Bank to give reviewees sufficient notice and preparatory time before each quarterly check-in and the year-end review. See “objective setting”.

Before each check-in, use your preparatory time to think about how you have met your objectives and gather any supporting documentation you have. This will assist you in your conversation with your employer. See “quarterly check-in” for more advice.

During the year-end review, your line manager will review your work throughout the year and give you a performance rating. You and your line manager will also use this same meeting to set new objectives for the coming year, and you should come prepared to the meeting with your proposed objectives. See “year-end review” for more advice.



4. Objective setting

Objective setting is an important part of the performance management process. This is where you and your manager discuss and agree objectives for the coming year. Your performance will be measured against these objectives, so the outcome of this meeting will largely define how your performance is assessed over the coming year.

Your approach to this meeting is very important. It is meant to be a discussion that leads to objectives that are agreed between you and your manager. This meeting is not about quietly accepting the demands of management – you should have a very active role in shaping the discussion.

Before the meeting, ensure you have reflected on your role, what you have achieved so far, and what you want to achieve in the coming year. Be confident about these issues before you go to the meeting.

You should have a clear idea of how you want your career to develop over the next 12 months, as well as the training and support you need from management to achieve these goals.

Make your objectives **SMART**:

Specific	Objectives are clear and focused
Measurable	How progress will be measured is clear
Achievable	Objectives are within your control to deliver
Realistic	Objectives can be achieved with resources available
Time bound	Dates for delivery of results are clear

When discussing and agreeing your objectives, make sure they correspond to the SMART analysis. Otherwise, you may have agreed to unrealistic goals with no way of measuring progress and without the resources to deliver them.

It is entirely appropriate for you not to accept unrealistic or unclear objectives. In this case, if your concerns have not been taken on board and an unrealistic objective is still on the table, ensure that this is recorded. Speak to your Union representative for advice and support.

5. Quarterly check-ins

The quarterly check-in is meant to be an informal conversation with your manager about your development, but it is still important to be well prepared for these discussions and to keep your records of them in writing.

Before your quarterly check-in, keep note of your major achievements and progress against your set objectives for the year. You should also record instances where your manager may not have fulfilled their commitments regarding resources or training.

Bring these notes and any evidence you have about your progress to your quarterly check-ins. These will help to inform the discussion with your manager.

Record everything in writing. After your check-in, follow up with a brief email to your manager outlining what you took from the discussion. Your own records and notes will prove invaluable throughout the process, especially when it comes time for your year-end review.



6. Year-end review

Preparation is key for your year-end review. The Bank has instructed all managers to give sufficient notice of reviews and allow staff adequate time for preparation. You should also request an agenda from your manager so that you have an overview of the topics that will be discussed.

Before your review, ensure you have prepared:

- o Documentary evidence of your performance throughout the year, including major achievements and progress against your objectives.
- o Note of any instances where your manager or the Bank may not have fulfilled their commitments (e.g. resources, training, etc.), and examples of how this impacted your performance.
- o Note of changes in the business environment (e.g. new responsibilities, staffing changes, etc.) that have impacted your performance.

Be confident and clear in putting forward your achievements. This should be a two-way discussion, not an employer-dominated exam.

At the review, your manager will propose a performance rating to you.

The ratings are on a 3-point scale:

1. Inconsistent
2. Strong
3. Exceptional

Ratings have a direct impact on your salary and future promotion prospects, so it is very important that they are accurate and reflective of what you have achieved throughout the year.

If you think your rating is fair, then you should formally accept it and ensure that a written note is made of this.

If you don't think your rating is fair, then you need to make this view known at the meeting and ensure that your dissent is recorded. You should inform your manager that you intend to appeal the rating.

At the end of the review, make sure you get a record of the conversation and the positive aspects of your performance in writing.



7. Appeals

In most cases, ratings are fair and agreed between employer and employee. However, there are some instances where employees may receive inaccurate or unfair ratings.

If this is the case, you are entitled to appeal your rating by following the appeals process agreed between the Bank and your Union.

Contact your Union representative, who will inform you about the steps to take and provide advice throughout the process.

Quite often, issues can be resolved informally between the employee and manager before filing a formal appeal. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, you will need to send a written request for a formal review within 10 working days of the issue arising. Talk to your Union representative before submitting your appeal.

The manager reviewing your appeal will be senior to your line manager. They will conduct a review and make recommendations.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you can request to have the matter examined by a person independent to the business area. The request for this review must be made in writing.

You are entitled to bring a Union representative with you to all appeal hearings. However, the employer will not inform the Union of an appeal and it is up to you to inform your Union representative of your appeal and request their presence at the hearing.

8. Help

For more advice, contact your Bank of Ireland Sector Committee:

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Bank of Ireland Sector Officer	Tom Rutledge	087 2283038	tom.rutledge@fsunion.org
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