

LDEO Department:
Human Resources

Effective Date:
12/01/2010

Standard Operating Procedure:
Guidelines for LDEO Performance Review Process

Summary:

The Observatory Director has been authorized by the Provost to set: annual performance guidelines and recommended annual merit increases. These annual increases are made based on merit, overall standing with like positions/grades, salary history, Columbia University (CU) averages, cost of living, salary equity, field competitiveness and current and pending funding.

Definitions:

Activity Report	A detailed listing of the work of an individual researcher for the preceding year, including a list of publications classified as either in print or in press; a list of talks and abstracts classified as either invited or not; a list of proposals written during the period classified as funded, declined or pending; a list of committee service and other community activities such as conferences and workshops attended; a list of educational activities such as courses taught or students advised; a list of mentoring activities; a list of cruises and field work; and a list of other activities such as outreach efforts, honors, prizes and other recognition received.
CU	Columbia University
HR	Human Resources
OMG	Observatory Management Group
PDRS	Post-Doctoral Research Scientist
SRC	Salary Review Committee
SSNU	Non-Union Support Staff

Guidelines:

Performance review committees:

LDEO has two committees which act on behalf of the Observatory Director in evaluating performance and recommended increases. The Salary Review Committee (SRC) is made up of Senior-level scientists representing each Division and the Assistant Director for Finance and Administration. The Manager, Human Resources (HR), is ex-officio charged with presenting preliminary averages by title and grade, and as needed explanations of CU policies. The SRC reviews all Non-Union Support Staff (SSNU), Administrative Officer and Staff Officer of Research review recommendations for compliance with LDEO Guidelines. The SRC's charge is to monitor equity, control salary costs and provide an impartial forum for performance reviews Observatory-wide.

Professional Officers of Research are reviewed by the Observatory Management Group, (OMG). In addition to scientific activity, they evaluate current and pending funding and review Curriculum Vitae.

The OMG is charged with cost and performance equity and salary competitiveness by field. Each Committee functions on behalf of the Observatory Director with results subject to the Director's final approval.

Performance Review Process:

Bi-Weekly Support Staff, Staff Officer of Research and Administrative Officer Reviews and Process

In March of each year, HR sends performance review guidelines and forms to the appropriate PI's and supervisors. HR provides evaluation forms, an outline/definition of performance levels as well as the current position description for each employee. Supervisors and employees are asked to review the current job description for accuracy as part of the performance review process.

The review period covers the prior twelve month period. Supervisors prepare a written evaluation of how well the employee has performed his/her duties over the past year. Then the Supervisor meets with each evaluated employee and discusses the written evaluation. The form is signed by both which indicates that the conversation has occurred. By signing the form the employee is not saying they necessarily agree with the written evaluation. Rather they are acknowledging receipt of the form.

Employees may submit a rebuttal to Human Resources provided they do so within 2 weeks of the date they met with their Supervisor. Each employee is given a performance rating between 1 and 5. Each rating corresponds to the percent increase the employee will receive at the start of the upcoming fiscal year.

The reviews are returned to the LDEO Human Resources Office, sorted and compiled by Division, and provided separately to each Associate Director for input and countersignature. The Associate Directors approve or adjust recommendations at this step.

LDEO HR prepares all materials for SRC review, an event routinely scheduled for May. The SRC reviews each and every performance review. They make sure the written evaluation meets the criteria for the rating assigned by the supervisor. The SRC may change ratings if the written documentation does not support the recommended rating. The SRC has the option to request additional information to support the rating at their discretion. The ratings assigned by the SRC are final.

Professional Officers of Research Reviews and Process

The Director distributes annual guidelines to all scientists with requirements for evaluation and supporting documentation. The evaluation period covers science activity from March 1 - February 28 of each Fiscal Year (FY). Lamont Research Professors (at all levels) and Post-Doctoral Research Scientists complete an on-line Activity Report. Project Research Scientists provide documents as required by their Principal Investigators.

The LDEO Human Resources Office provides Associate Directors with an evaluation form and the definitions of performance level ratings. Division Administrators provide the Activity report, Current and Pending funding and Curriculum Vitae to the Associate Directors.

Associate Directors prepare a written evaluation of how well the scientist has performed over the past year. Then the Associate Directors and scientist meet and discuss the written evaluation. The form is signed by both which indicates that the conversation has occurred. By signing the form the scientist is not saying they necessarily agree with the written evaluation. Rather they are acknowledging receipt of the form. Employees may submit a rebuttal to Human Resources provided they do so within 2 weeks of the date they met with their Supervisor. Each employee is given a performance ranking between 1 and 5. Each ranking corresponds to the percent increase the employee will receive at the start of the upcoming fiscal year. OMG decisions are final.

The LDEO Human Resources Office prepares all evaluation materials for OMG review, an event routinely scheduled for May. These reviews are then evaluated collectively by the Members of OMG and the LDEO Director. Approved increases are sent to LDEO Human Resources which obtains final approval for all research salaries through the Earth Institute.

Post-Doctoral Research Fellows

The performance review process for Post-Doctoral Research Fellows generally follows that of Professional Officers of Research. Review forms are provided by LDEO HR for Post-Doctoral Research Fellows, whether externally-funded or Lamont Fellowship competition winners. However, these Fellows are not eligible for annual merit increases. In some years, the Director of LDEO will revise the LDEO minimum salaries for Post-Doctoral Scientists and Fellows. When that occurs, Fellows earning a Columbia University salary will have their salaries adjusted to ensure they earn the required minimum for the ensuing year.

Training Plans:

Because Lamont values training, managers and their staff members are prompted to have a formal discussion regarding the employee's training and development as part of the annual performance review meeting. At a minimum, non-researcher staff that receive a review will be required to complete at least two training seminars or courses in the ensuing year. Priority should be given to training courses which address job-related competencies. The review forms prompt the discussion and will remind employees that while outside training is an option, there are more than 1,000 free on-line courses available to University employees. As part of the review process, the manager will review the employee's training tracker form for the past year, verifying proof of completion of training. Training trackers will be submitted to LDEO HR as an attachment to the performance review form. Training goals for the coming year for the employee will be discussed and documented on the employee's individual training plan.

Officers of Research, including Lamont Research Professors, are encouraged to participate in training that will enhance their ability to comply with federal and university mandates. In addition, they are encouraged to use the training tools made available by the University to assist them in performing their supervisory and management roles.

Final Steps:

All increases are submitted by LDEO Human Resources, through the Columbia University E-Comp system or via Personnel Action Form to the appropriate Morningside departments:

- Professional Officers of Research and Staff Officers of Research: final submission to the Provost's Office.
- Officers of Administration and Support Staff: final submission to CU Human Resources.

Submission schedules are set by The Provost and CU Human Resources. LDEO Human Resources routinely plans a submission deadline for all rosters and forms during the first week in June. The University's implementation date each year is July first.

LDEO Human Resources processes all approved merit increases for the International Research Institute, the Center for International Earth Science Information Network and the Marine Division within these deadlines; in accordance with their individual review processes or contractual agreements. As a final step, LDEO HR prepares memos for distribution to individual Observatory employees notifying them of their pending merit increases and pointing out that the increase is based on the performance appraisal that was reviewed with them in the Spring.

Roles and Responsibilities:

	LDEO Director	LDEO HR	Supervisor	SRC OMG	Employee
Establish guidelines	X				
Distribute guidelines, forms		X			
Prepare written performance evaluation			X		
Meet to discuss written performance review, sign forms				X	X
Submit to HR			X		
Prepare materials for committees		X			
Observatory-wide review of performance appraisals, review for consistency and fairness				X	
Process salary increases for upcoming fiscal year		X			

Document History:

Date	Name	Action	Notes
11/16/10	Virginia Maher	Text drafted	
11/17/10	Eddie Miller	Edited for content, format	
5/24/11	G Goodrich	Edited to add the individual training plan and training tracker; re-formatted the post-doctoral section	
7/19/11	G Goodrich	Added clarifying language in the training section	
7/22/11	Eddie Miller	Edited and returned	Included edits from Virginia Maher
11/12/2012	Eddie Miller	Reviewed with no changes added	