

Handbook for Communication with Subordinates in Dealing with Problems Relating to Performance and Discipline at Work and Changes in Employment

Annex to the Methodological Guideline of the Dean of the Faculty of Science, Procedures for resolving problems relating to performance, discipline at work and termination of employment.

A. Recommendations for communication with subordinates

Communication with the subordinates should be:

- comprehensible
- clear
- reasonable
- open

If a sensitive topic is discussed with the subordinates, we recommend that you:

- think in advance how you want to communicate, what exactly you want to communicate (emphasis on performance improvement, inappropriate behaviour, etc.) and what outcomes you expect;
- contact the HR Department of the Dean's Office for advice on the contents and form of the interview;
- invite an impartial colleague, if this is appropriate in relation to the matter discussed.

Every supervisor has his/her own style, which is fine – but not all employees perceive their decisions and feedback in the same way. It is therefore up to the supervisor to formulate his/her communication in a way understandable to everyone and to be able to adapt the communication to a specific employee.

When giving feedback, it is advisable to highlight the positives and let the employee know what part of his/her work you are satisfied with. Such an approach can motivate the employee and encourage them to do better in the remaining tasks. Thanks to the positive approach, the employee will become more receptive and open to feedback on other aspect of their performance.

Negative feedback should be communicated:

- if possible, in person;
- sensitively;
- with respect;
- after emotions of all persons involved have cooled down;
- without attacking, generalising (using the words always, every time, etc.), exaggerating.

Negative feedback, whether communicated in person or via EVAK, must be:

- based on objective and documented facts;
- relevant, i.e. relating to the employee's performance;
- free of subjective evaluation of the employee's personality traits.

If you are interested in a training focusing on managerial skills and communication, supervisors have access to the Training and Development section at the [MUNI Portal for Employees](#), which provides information on trainings offered at the Faculty and the university.

B. Examples of inappropriately formulated feedback:

“You are mentally unstable and ill-suited for this role”

Instead of this generalisation, provide a list of specific situations and procedures where the employee made mistakes, recommend trainings to strengthen the skills that would help the employee manage their working tasks better.

“You should see a psychiatrist”

Instead of this generalisation, provide a list of specific situations and procedures where the employee made mistakes, recommend trainings to strengthen the skills that would help the employee manage their working tasks better. If appropriate, consider whether the employee should be sent for an extraordinary medical check-up.

“This employee is incapable, he/she should first get his/her family life in order”

Inform employees of the specific mistakes they have made at work or of specific unsatisfactory results. Refer employees to the HR Department of the Dean’s Office, which can assist them emphatically with exploring possible solutions to their situation.

“Everyone says you’re annoying and unwilling to help, and you stay passive whenever you have to deal with a complicated situation”

Never give feedback based on rumours and inaccurate generalisations. Do not evaluate the employee’s personality, but rather their behaviour in a specific situation. Describe the impact of this type of behaviour on the work team, department, faculty.

“She’s hysterical, like all women”

Point out the specific inappropriate conduct of the employee and its impact on the work team. Require ethical and decent behaviour at the workplace. Show that problems are solved much easier when keeping calm. Alternatively, suggest training courses that could help the employee handle demanding tasks more effectively.

“You’re too old and slow, you’re constantly getting in the way and you’re occupying a job meant for the young”

This topic is very sensitive and should be approached with great caution. Older employees have contributed to the development of Masaryk University or its part through their lifelong pedagogical and scientific activities, and it can be assumed that they still wish to remain in contact with their employer and colleagues. In this respect, it is appropriate to talk with the employee openly and with empathy about a possible agreement on a change in the terms of the employment relationship (working hours, type of work, etc.) or on a change in the form of co-operation. This communication is also an opportunity to point out objective facts demonstrating unsatisfactory performance or breach of work duties. However, age as such cannot be a reason for criticism or negative feedback. The employee might also be interested in initiating the procedure pursuant to MU Directive No. 5/2018 Professor emeritus status.