Dual Reporting Lines and Working in a Matrix Structure

Preamble

These guidelines have been prepared to complement Administrative Instruction ST/AI/2010/5, entitled "Performance Management and Development System," ST/AI/2010/5 Corr.1). Their aim is to provide tips to help staff members and managers deliver results effectively when working in a matrix. In all instances of conflict between these tips and ST/AI/2010/5 or other pertinent issuances, the wording of the promulgated administrative issuances prevail over this document.

Inside this Guide

1. Background

As a result of the peace and security, development and management reforms more staff and managers across the UN Secretariat are finding themselves working in situations where they report to two or more supervisors across different teams to deliver projects.

These types of relationships are defined as "matrix relationships". This document provides tips that support dual reporting line relationships or reporting relationships in a matrix where staff members report to two or more supervisors during a performance cycle.

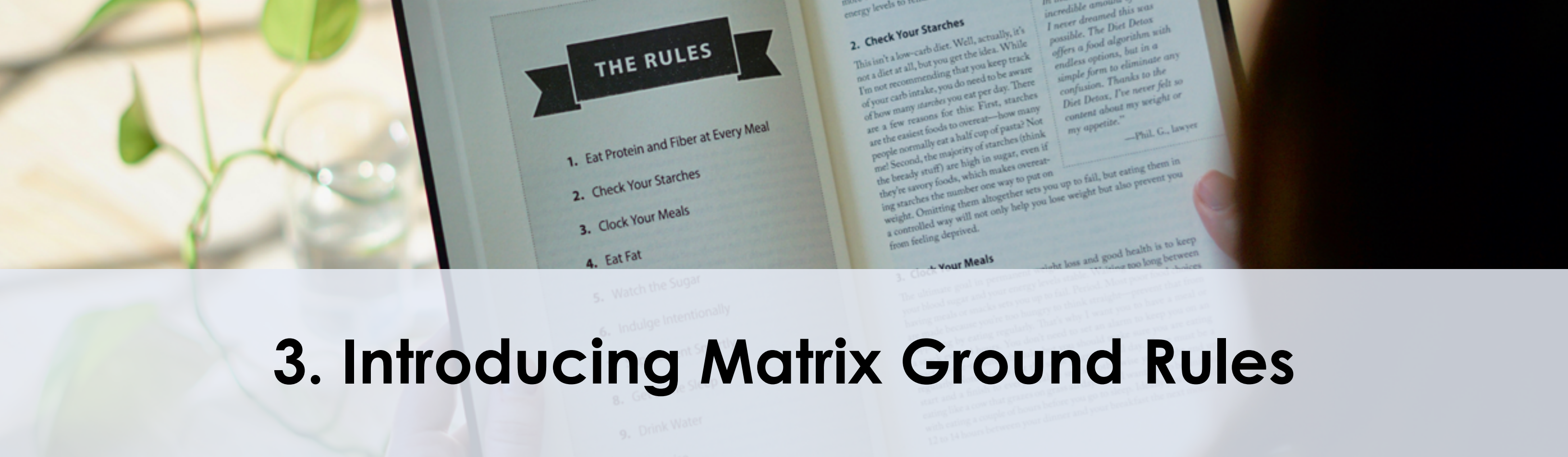
Are you working in a reporting relationship MATRIX?

Dual reporting relationships are recognized in ST/AI/2010/5 as instances where up to two Additional Supervisors are designated for a given staff member. A staff member works for the Additional Supervisor(s) for more than 25 per cent of their time or for assignments of at least 30 working days. Such arrangements need the agreement of the First Reporting Officer at the work-planning stage or at the beginning of the additional assignment or when the staff member's supervisor changes during the cycle.

Following reform implementation, new dual reporting relationships exist in which staff members have more than one Second Reporting Officer or work with two First Reporting Officers on a 50%-50% time allocation.

2. Overview of Guide

- Key stages in the performance management process include work-planning, a midpoint review and a final evaluation as per the ST/AI/2010/5.
- In a matrix structure the First Reporting Officers (FRO) and Additional Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the staff member has an agreed workplan. A group meeting should be held to ensure that the staff member understands the agreed workplan and its priorities.
- The FRO and Additional Supervisors should have mid point review discussions with the staff member and document this as appropriate in ePerformance. Likewise at the end of cyle, a joint meeting should be held to discuss the staff member's annual performance and final rating.
- Where a staff member has two Second Reporting Officers, it is highly recommended that the Second Reporting Officers schedule and meet the FRO and staff member intermittently during the cycle to ensure proper support is provided.
- Although the policy clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff members in the performance management process, disagreements, goal misalignments, role conflicts and mis-communication can arise during the cycle and derail these matrix relationships.



3. Introducing Matrix Ground Rules

*"The biggest mistake people make in matrix situations?
Assuming they can't do anything about it"* -- Executive Coach

Successful matrix relationships are characterized by the following four key elements which will be highlighted throughout these guidelines:

Develop a New Mindset:

The way you think about something affects your actions and ultimately the outcomes. Changing your results starts with changing your attitude. Adopting the right mindset is extremely important: otherwise, you risk appearing unfair and limiting your results.

Redirect Conflict:

When dealing with conflict it's important to note that fighting back is exhausting, and even if you win a battle, you probably lose some good will in the process. It may seem counterintuitive but stepping back and disarming the conflict by giving in can be a powerful approach to building your reputation and strength.

Zoom Out

Perspective is everything in a matrix role. Try to zoom out to take in the bigger picture of competing needs in your matrix. It will be like seeing the view from a helicopter rather than one from the middle of a traffic jam. It gives you the power to anticipate the needs of other people in your team/matrix and identify targets for influence, communication and involvement.

Prioritize:

In a matrix role you sometimes have a unique opportunity: you see more. To avoid being overwhelmed by all that you see, you must prioritize. Accepting that you can't take on everything and applying a process where you prioritize issues based on urgency and importance is critical to avoiding frustration and burn out.

4. Developing Workplans

Essential #1: Get goals aligned

The work-planning stage includes:

1. Establishing individual performance evaluation criteria by setting goals/key results/achievements.
2. Defining core competencies and managerial competencies where applicable).
3. Formulating a personal development plan.

Staff Members' Role

When working in a dual reporting structure, staff members are encouraged to prepare a draft workplan and share it with their First Reporting Officers and Additional Supervisor for discussion. Upon the discussion and an agreement, the staff member revises, if necessary, and submits the final workplan through the inspira ePerformance module.

Where a staff member has two Second Reporting Officers, it is highly recommended that the First Reporting Officer shares the agreed workplan with the Second Reporting Officers for their review and feedback before final revisions are made and the final workplan is entered in ePerformance/inspira.

Supervisors' Role

At the beginning of the performance cycle, supervisors are required to meet with their staff to ensure that the objectives of the work unit are understood and individual workplans are prepared.

In a dual reporting structure where a staff member has two first level supervisors, both First Reporting Officers and Additional Supervisor are encouraged to meet together with the staff member to clarify their goals for the cycle including defining key measures of success and timelines.

Where a staff member has two Second Reporting Officers, it is recommended that the two SROs and First Reporting Officer meet to discuss the priorities of the staff member and then the FRO meets with the staff member to support the staff member in incorporating these priorities in the staff member's workplan.

Before discussing with staff member, it is recommended that both First Reporting Officers and Additional Supervisors meet separately to ensure that they both have a shared understanding of key expectations for the staff. This ensures that the deliverables are realistic and can be feasibly met during the cycle. It also helps to prevent conflicts between the two supervisors during the cycle.

Essential #1.1: Ground Rules for Keeping Goals Aligned

	For Matrix First Reporting Officers, Additional Supervisors or Second Reporting Officers	Staff Member with dual or multiple reporting lines
Mindset	**Have frequent check in meetings with staff– sometimes jointly with the other manager and staff member.** As managers it is important to support your staff members in staying on track on their goals through frequent check in meetings that will ensure that their goals are aligned and are able to effectively incorporate new/changing priorities.	**Be Realistic** You can't run after all the competing goals even though you will be tempted to try. It important to continually clarify goals with your supervisors to ensure that your goals are aligned with their priorities. If there are new priorities that come up you may have to ask them for support to make tough choices where you have to let go of some priorities.
Redirect Conflict	**Be ready to compromise in conflict situations and be open to making trade-offs** e.g. extending deadlines to allow staff finalize something aligned to the other supervisor. Not only will your willingness to make trade-offs shift the outcome of the discussion at hand, but psychologically most people will feel the need to repay in kind. **Don't put the employee in the middle:** Engage the other manager directly when conflicts arise—don't put the matrixed person in the middle to represent or defend a particular side.	**Don't get caught in the middle:** When your managers have conflict stay neutral. Get them to get to talk directly, don't try to represent one side to another. **Don't play one side against the other:** Your role is in place to bring two parts of the organization together—not to drive a wedge between them. Stay neutral and focused on what is best for the overall organization.
Zoom Out	**It's Bigger Than You:** There is always an overarching goal– bigger than you, sometimes bigger than your team, function or geography that takes precedence over any individual goals. If you go in determined to maximize your personal success, or your immediate team's success, the matrix breaks down.	**Its Bigger Than You:** There is always an overarching goal– bigger than you, sometimes bigger than your team, function or geography that takes precedence over any individual goals. If you go in determined to maximize your personal success, or your immediate team's success, the matrix breaks down.
Prioritize	**Assume Nothing:** Be sure to hold discussions with staff member and where appropriate the additional supervisor to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the priorities from both sides. **Align from the start and realign as you go**– as a manager you should help the staff member to focus on at least 3-5 high level priorities at the beginning of the year. **Hold frequent conversations** with staff member to address challenges and make adjustments throughout the year. *Note: It is impossible to maintain alignment with a laundry list of goals. If you have fewer focused goals, then your conversations with staff members will most likely revolve around how much you accomplished rather than how much you didn't finish/how many of these goals you forgot.*	**Align from the start then realign as you go**, include the right people, have a huge focus on at least 3-5 set of goals and keep goals in the forefront of all your discussions with your managers and team members. **Assume Nothing:** Goals aligned at the beginning of the year may not be necessarily aligned 6 months later. Don't assume your supervisors are in sync or others know what your goals and priorities are. Be proactive and ask questions, share information and clarify.

Essential #1.2: How to avoid goal mis-alignments

Most people often forget their goals after setting them and only revisit them at the mid-point review. In a matrix structure this could easily lead to misalignments that could result to conflict and frustration as things will be left to drift and shift.

It is important to take proactive steps to prevent this. The staff member and dual supervisors in the matrix could leverage the tips below to avoid goal mis-alignments throughout the cycle.

Filter Priorities

- When new priorities come up check whether they align to your goals. If not, initiate a meeting with the respective supervisor to make necessary adjustments.
- Use your goals to drive actions and decisions on what work should be done and when.

Make Goals Visible

- Don't set your goals and forget about them. Keep your goals and your progress visible, and track progress using shared drives/Trello/JIRA/spreadsheets etc.

Lock For Early Warning Signs

- Understand what is spurring goal mis-alignment. Reiterate the importance of the goals and address the need to get back on track.
- When other managers/staff start to miss meetings/delegate the meetings to others, or take a long time to respond, bring it up directly with the staff member/supervisor.

Use Goals to Drive Your Meetings

- Let your goals drive your one on one/team meetings with your supervisors/staff
- Make sure your discussions are structured around the goals that you are working on.

Be on the Hunt

- Watch out for priorities that conflict, goals that collide and timelines that clash.
- Create a forum for discussing these misalignments e.g. weekly/monthly basis.
- Be willing to bring these up with your supervisors or the other manager if you are supervisor.

Essential #1.3: How to esclate goal conflicts

According to the ST/AI/201/5 Second Reporting Officers are expected to support in resolving disagreements between staff and supervisors. If your two First Reporting Officers are in disagreement you may want to escalate the issue to your Second Reporting Officer.

Please check in with your local HR partner or Executive office for advice on who to esclate the conflict to if it is unclear.

It is important not to overplay this card– the risk is two-fold:

- You may be perceived as dependent and not willing to able to resolve things on your own
- You could be accused of over-dramatizing the situation.
- The more you escalate problems the less potent esclation becomes and the more powerless you look. It is important to think twice and use this card wisely.

A few TIPS on esclating a conflict

Don't ever cry wolf: Do your homework and have all facts pointing to the misalignment. Don't send the person you are escalating the conflict to on a wild goose chase

Be Objective: Present the misalignment from both sides

Frame it in the larger context– Describe how the misalignment affects team and organizational goals

Share your ideas on steps to resolution– Don't just share the problem have a proposal for what to do next and all the information needed to take that next step.

Essential #2: Achieving Role Clarity

In a matrix environment, the more supervisors you have, the more proactive you will need to be to obtain role clarity for yourself. This gives you an opportunity to take charge of your role and shape it. If things are not clear in your role, then you are the person with the most motivation to sort this out.

In a matrix structure its important to not wait for your supervisor to achieve clarity because for them things may already be clear. Engage with your managers, colleagues and other key stakeholders to make sure expectations and boundaries are clear. Not everything will be clear in a matrix.

The most common tool that is used to create clarity in roles is RACI chart which outlines who is **R**esponsible, **A**ccountable, **C**onsulted and **I**nformed.

Ground Rules for effective role clarity:

- Bring as many people in on role clarity discussions as possible at the beginning of the cycle. If you are a First Reporting Officer, ensure that you involve the Additional Supervisor and/or Second Reporting Officer (s) in role clarity discussions. Staff members should ensure a shared understanding of your role with both supervisors.
- When tackling role conflicts, your response should be based on the nature and impact of the role breach, your relationship with the person and the risk involved.
- When someone is not accepting a particular role, don't assume they are rejecting the role as defined. Assume clarity is at issue.
- In a matrix role, you don't have the authority to force compliance. Your approach will need to focus not only on resolution but building trust and the partnership with genuine intent and actions.
- Create regular meetings (monthly/weekly) for the First Reporting Officer and Additional/matrix supervisor to proactively address & resolve any role clarity issues that may have come up.
- When tackling role conflicts, your response should be based on the nature and impact of the role breach, your relationship with the person and the risk involved.

TIPS for preventing role conflicts in dual reporting line structures

Ensure that the workplan, midpoint review and final evaluations are jointly discussed and agreed by both supervisors and staff members and that roles are clearly defined at the beginning of the cycle.

Ensure that discussions on what should be done in the event of a conflict are anticipated and discussed at the beginning of the cycle including who would be best to support in resolving disagreements.

Ensure regular meetings are scheduled for the staff member and each supervisor, for the SRO and matrix staff member where possible and for the two dual supervisors to ensure continuous alignment and prevention of goal and role conflicts.

Essential #2.1: Practical Guide on how to resolve role conflicts

Role conflicts are often a result of a perceived boundary breach and are especially common in a dual reporting structure. An example of a boundary breach and suggested steps to resolve it is shown below.

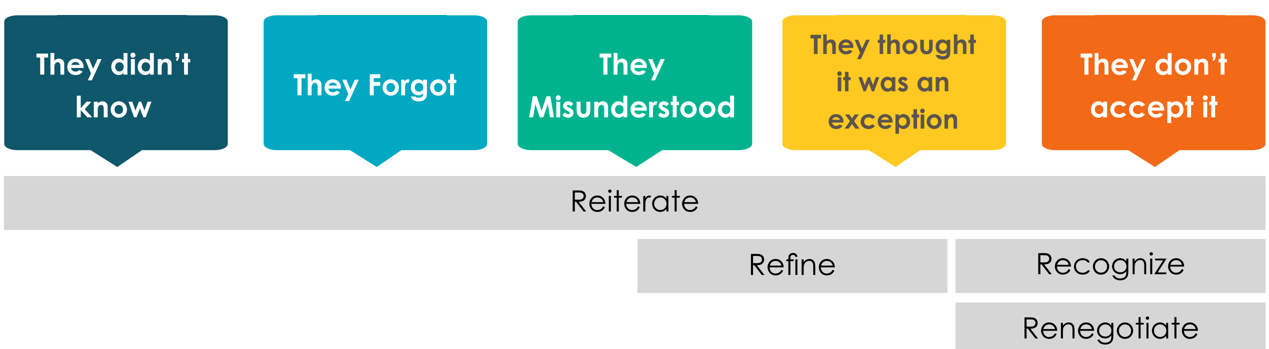
Sample Case Scenario

Veronica is currently the First Reporting Officer to Joan a Staff Development Assistant. She is sharing supervisory responsibilities with Stephen, who has been assigned as Joan's additional supervisor. Stephen has noticed that Joan is no longer available to support some key aspects of her role that align to Stephen's deliverables. When he had a meeting with Joan, she informed him that she had been allocated to lead several programs that Veronica is currently supervising which are demanding and have taken up most of her time. Stephen has also noted that this has been the trend for the last 6 months and noted that Joan has been working at least 80-90% of her time with Veronica with little time left for her to engage on projects that have been pre-agreed during the work planning phase. With a key global workshop coming up in 2 months, Stephen will need to address to this issue.

STEP 1: Analyze the Issue

In dealing with this issue, it is important first for Stephen to determine what may have caused this boundary breach. Possible explanations to boundary breach/role conflict are presented below.

It is important to note that sometimes we tend to see our own boundary breaches as accidents or attempts to "help out," but see others as overstepping their bounds or encroaching on in on our territory. It is therefore strongly recommended to always assume best intent when walking into a role conflict meeting.



Step 2: Have a conversation with the other matrix supervisor

The next step is for Stephen to schedule a meeting with Veronica and to prepare the key messages to use in the meeting to ensure its effectiveness as suggested below. It is important to always prepare to renegotiate especially if there is a lack of acceptance on the part of the other supervisor.

It is also recommended that supervisors meet directly with each other to discuss and only invite the staff member once they have agreed. This ensures that staff member is not dragged into the conflict.

Partnership Driven Resolution for Role Conflicts

Stephen's meeting with Veronica	**Say THIS...**	**Not THAT...**
Start with a safe opening	"Hey by the way, I wanted to revisit the role and workplan agreements we set up in April regarding Joan's role."	"I am here to talk to you about not following up on role commitments we laid out in Joan's workplan in April"
Keep it tentative and reiterate	We had agreed that Joan would coordinate the global program workshop planned in August as well as three other key initiatives for our program during this year.	"Even though we agreed that Joan would support the global workship and other key initiatives in our program, you have consistently allocated her more work and have done nothing to give her space to engage with these programs.
Recognize it may be tough to accept	I know it must be frustrating having to discuss this amid everything that it is going on in the section. I do think that this will go a long way to help Joan be able to manage her time well over the next few months and to ensure that she is well supported in delivering on her role.	"You have to accept that I am also Joan's supervisor and its not just you who is responsible for her outputs"
Renegotiate	How about we meet bi-weekly with Joan to ensure we are all in alignment and she can support?	"You agreed to it at the beginning so you need to stick to it"

Step 3: Document agreements and inform staff member

Final step is for Stephen to have a joint meeting with Joan and Veronica and share agreed actions.

Step 4: Escalate the Conflict (last resort)

Role conflicts tend to get more complicated especially if they revolve around acceptance. It is therefore prudent to elevate this to the Second Reporting Officer (SRO)/ the Additional Supervisor's manager /local HR partner where appropriate to help in resolving the issue especially if there is a series of missteps noted even after discussions such as the one suggested above.

5. Working Effectively During the Cycle

ESSENTIAL #3 Communicate frequently and without assumption

Communicating in a matrix role is challenging as there are more people who need to be involved/informed in comparison to the traditional reporting structure. Often in a matrix, to pick up speed we make assumptions on who needs to know what, how they prefer to hear it and even what we ourselves need to know.

These assumptions can only lead to communication misfires that impact not only your work product but also your trust and credibility. It is especially important for managers to ensure that they communicate frequently with each other and with the staff member involved in the matrix relationship.

TIPS for maintaining the right balance in your matrix communications

AT BEGINNING OF CYCLE	Ask: What information can I share on an ongoing basis that would be helpful?
	Ask: What is the best way to provide it?
DURING THE CYCLE	Tell: Here's why I am sharing this with you
	Tell: Here's the information that is most important
	Ask: Was this information helpful? Is this the kind of information I should continue to send your way?
	Cc: Only those who really need to know, and let people know why they are Cc'd
MID-POINT AND FINAL	Ask: Are you getting what you need from me? What information is most helpful? Least?

Supervisors’ Role

If you want to be heard, Listen!

When we assume we have the full picture, we stop listening. This often happens in a dual reporting matrix where one supervisor may assume that the other supervisor knows about a particular project that the staff is involved in and therefore does not communicate or inform the supervisor as appropriate.
This often results in conflicts between the two supervisors and gets the staff member caught in between. It is important for staff members and managers who are in a matrix relationship to know that:

- The other party doesn’t always know what you know
- You don’t necessarily know what they need to know.
- The reason behind your actions is important to people and is not obvious
- When asked for information your response matters.
- Frequent, structured, one-on-one meetings are important and they are how results are achieved in a matrix structure.

Essential #3.1: Ground Rules for improving communications in a dual reporting

	For Matrix First Reporting Officers, Additional Supervisors or Second Reporting Officers	Staff Member with dual or multiple reporting lines
Mindset	**Learn to share**: You do not "own" the employee; they are a shared resource. **Build the partnership**: Without trust between the two managers, the connection will splinter and fall apart. **Get roles clear**: Know why the matrix role is in place and define your role vis a vis the other manager, but remember that role clarity doesn't replace trust. **Go slow to go fast**: Include, involve, inform the other manager. It will help you pick up speed in the long run.	**Anticipate conflicts**: Your role is in place to create and bring these to the surface. You will feel tugged, expect it and learn to both let it go and deal with it effectively. **Watch your bias**: You may align more closely with one boss versus another based on common function, geography, exposure or style. Don't fall into this trap—remember why your matrix role is in place. **Go slow to go fast**: Include, involve, inform the both managers. It will help you pick up speed in the long run.
Redirect Conflict	**Be tentative, assume best intent and be ready for trade-offs**: Go into all situations with a tentative mindset—your first intention must be to understand. In order to ask the right questions and truly listen, you also have to assume best intent. **Don't put the employee in the middle**: Engage the other manager directly when conflicts arise— don't put the matrixed person in the middle to represent or defend a particular side.	**Don't get caught in the middle**: When your managers hve conflict, stay neutral. Get them to get to talk directly, don't try to represent one side to another. **Don't play one side against the other**: Your role is in place to bring two parts of the organization together—not to drive a wedge between them. Stay neutral and focused on what is best for the overall organization.
Zoom Out	**Get out of your silo and up on the balcony**: You need to continually step up to see the goal, conflict, issue, or decision from a departmental/ office or organizational level.	**Get out of your silo and up on the balcony**: You need to continually step up to see the goal, conflict, issue, decision from a departmental/ office or organizational level.
Prioritize	**Pick your battles**: Decide what to let go or tackle based on potential impact on the organization, not your personal feelings. Willingness to be influenced also loosens things up for negotiating a conflict down the road. **Use your "Elevate" card wisely**: There will be issues, decisions, conflicts that you can't resolve on your own. On those rare occasions when you have to escalate do so objectively.	**Don't try to do it all**: Proactively bring up conflicting priorities or impending overload; ask questions before taking things on; don't be afraid to talk about priorities. **Use your "Escalate" card wisely**: There will be issues, decisions, conflicts that you can't resolve on your own. On those rare occasions when you have to escalate, do so objectively.

Essential #4: Effective Decision-Making Process

In a matrix environment, there are often diverse perspectives, divergent agendas and priorities. Decisions therefore tend to be more complex in a matrix which calls for greater transparency and inclusion in decision-making processes.

It is important for staff members with dual reporting structure to clarify how key decisions would be made especially regarding their roles and goals throughout the cycle.

This guide aims to share key tips that staff members and matrix supervisors can leverage to ensure a faster and more efficient decision making process.

TIPS for managing stalemates in matrix reporting decision making process

During the cycle, it is highly likely that you will get caught in the middle of your two supervisors when they reach a stalemate on a decision that affects you or you may be faced with a decision that requires weighing of options or preferences.

The following tips below may help you to navigate these situations faster:

- Proactively request a meeting with both supervisors and state beforehand what you would like to discuss and the expected outcomes.
- Prepare to present the facts and various options that will aid the decision making process. This is especially important if there is a role conflict/new priorities have come up that are in conflict with the goals agreed by both the supervisors.
- Watch your bias during the meeting by ensuring you remain neutral and not siding with one supervisor more than the other.
- In the event that they do not agree, esclate it to the Second Reporting Officer or where appropriate, seek facilitated support from your local HR partner.

Essential #5: Making the matrix partnership work

During the course of the year, the First Reporting Officer, Additional Supervisors and the staff member should hold formal and informal conversations and exchange emails and/or other written communication on the progress of the performance goals set for the year.

These conversations or written communications should address recognition for good performance and any shortcomings as they become apparent at any time during the cycle.

The following tips are useful for matrix managers to keep in mind during the cycle;

- Find ways and opportunities to build trust with your matrix partner, for example If you waver in your commitments, be transparent about it
- Share relevant information with them as much as possible, for example about new priorities that the staff member will be working on that might affect other set deliverables
- Establish consistent communication with them especially if they are not based in the same duty station/location as you.
- Address conflicts promptly.
- For new matrix relationships, it is important to discuss potential conflicts with your new matrix partner and how to deal with them upfront. This makes addressing conflict easier to deal with later.

6. Appraising Performance

ESSENTIAL #6: Mid-Point Performance Review

The First Reporting Officer and Additional Supervisor should conduct a mid-point review, usually six months after the creation of the workplan, after discussing with the staff member the progress to date of the goals/key results.

The review should indicate the progress made and justify any updates to the workplan goals/key results. Both the First Reporting Officer and Additional Supervisors should also note the progress made in demonstrating the competencies and progress on the personal development plan.

First Reporting Officers, Additional Supervisors and staff members in a matrix are advised to involve the Second Reporting Officer(s) as appropriate to resolve any concerns or issues that have been brought to the fore during the prior six months.

How to Complete Mid-point review if you have two Second Reporting Officers?

1. Prepare list of accomplishments, challenges and priorities for the upcoming months for each area supervised by the Second Reporting Officer
2. Hold a meeting with your First Reporting Officer to discuss these issues as part of your self-appraisal during the mid point review discussion.
3. First Reporting Officers are advised to review the issues raised by the staff member and share with the respective Second Reporting Officers.
4. Collate and communicate any comments/adjustments that need to be made with the staff member before completing the mid-point review in ePerformance.

Essential #7: Final Performance Review

Evaluation by First Reporting Officer (FRO) and Additional Supervisor

- Within three months after the end of the performance appraisal cycle, the First Reporting Officer, Additional Supervisor and the staff member shall meet to discuss the overall performance during the cycle. Alternatively, the discussion may take place by telephone or videoconference.
- The staff member is encouraged to prepare a self-appraisal summarizing achievements against the agreed workplan and comments on competencies demonstrated during the performance period and to share it with supervisors prior to discussion.
- Both the First Reporting Officer and Additional Supervisors shall evaluate the extent to which the staff member has achieved the goals as set out in the workplan, and comment on the manner in which the staff member has demonstrated the core values and competencies.
- Both supervisors are encouraged to jointly agree on the overall rating that aligns with the staff member's performance during the cycle.
- Both supervisors should then enter their comments in ePerformance and the First Reporting Officer shall submit the completed evaluation to the Second Reporting Officer for review and approval.

Dual Second Reporting Officers (SROs)

- In cases where a staff member has two Second Reporting Officers, both are required to review the completed evaluation, make comments as appropriate and approve the evaluation. In this case, the evaluation will only be deemed complete and viewable by staff member when both Second Reporting Officers have approved it.
- It is highly recommended that the First Reporting Officer and the two Second Reporting Officers meet to agree on the overall staff rating and evaluation before it is finalized in ePerformance to prevent inconsistent end-of-cycle comments or disagreements over the First Reporting Officer's rating.
- The rebuttal process in section 15 of the ST/AI/2010/5 should be observed in the event that the staff member does not agree with the evaluation.

7. Addressing Underperformance

ESSENTIAL #8: Addressing Underperformance– Tips for managers

When a performance shortcoming is identified during the performance cycle, it is highly recommended that the First Reporting Officer, Additional Supervisor and Second Reporting Officer(s) work closely to support the staff member. Observation, documentation, and feedback on a staff member's performance are very important aspects of a supervisor's role when it pertains to proper performance evaluation.

Supervisors are encouraged to document the staff member's performance year round and communicate with them about it throughout the cycle.

According to the ST/AI/2010/5, the supervisors can apply the following remedial measures to underperformance;

- counselling,
- transfer to more suitable functions,
- additional training and/or
- the institution of a time-bound performance improvement plan, which should include clear targets for improvement, provision for coaching and supervision by the supervisor(s) in conjunction with performance discussions, which should be held on a regular basis.

Sample Case Scenario

Stella is the first reporting officer to Victor who is leading a team of communication specialists and officers who are required to identify communication needs and prepare appropriate materials to increase awareness of programmes across two departments. As a result of this role, Stella has a dual-reporting relationship where she reports to the two heads of departments who oversee these activities across the different departments. During the performance period, Stella has noted that Victor doesn't provide support to members of the team at all. She has also noticed that despite having several meetings with Victor, most communication projects under his purview have began to slip, needs were not properly assessed and therefore the materials he approved were not in line with expectations. She's noted that most of the materials have been submitted late and she has often needed to designate another team member to continuously check in with Victor and do a quality review and reassign work. His teammates frequently have to do extra work to cover for him because he cannot review or approve work products or assignments in time. One of the Heads of Departments who is Victor's Second Reporting Officer, has brought this to Stella's attention and requested that she address this promptly as client support is now in jeopardy.

Practical Guide: Addressing Underperformance in a Dual Reporting Structure

Step 1: Communicating expectations and performance problems

To address the performance shortcomings, Stella should schedule a meeting with Victor to discuss the performance problem. The focus of this discussion should be to explain exactly what must be done to bring performance up to an acceptable level, both by providing specific examples of poor performance and also suggesting ways through which performance can be improved.

It is critical that Stella reviews Victor's performance work plan/goals to ensure that they clearly convey what needs to be done in the job and check with Victor if he understands precisely what must be done to bring performance to an acceptable level.

Immediately after any such discussion, it is highly recommended that Stella documents what was discussed and makes note of agreed actions. She should make sure to share this with both Victor, the head of department who reached out to her as well as the other Second Reporting Officer for their information.

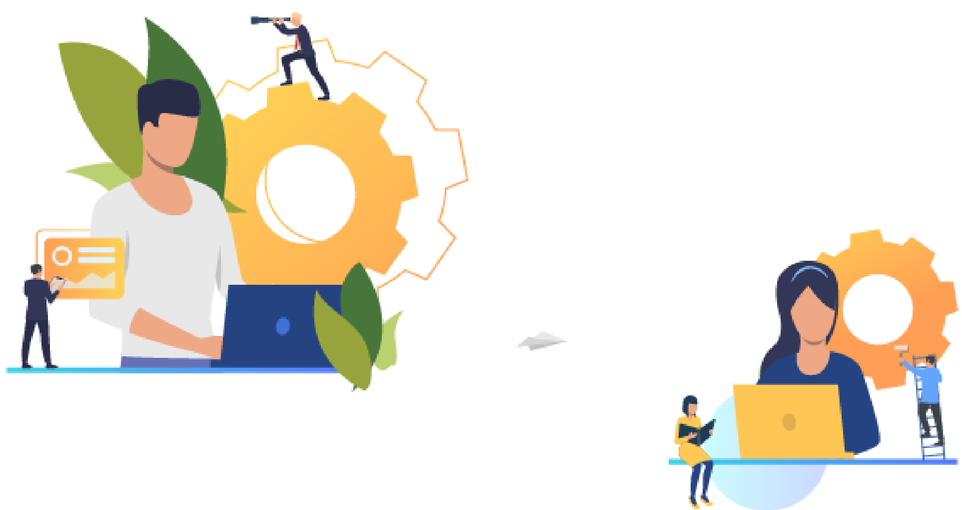
Topics discussed during this session include:

- Performance expectations
- The staff member's work plan/goals
- Critical element(s) where the staff member is failing
- What the staff member must do to bring performance to an acceptable level

Step 2: Providing a formal opportunity to improve

Sometimes, additional assurance or training is required, especially where improvement is not achieved. If such methods do not work, a time-bound performance improvement plan may need to be considered. A performance improvement plan should include clear targets for improvement, provision for coaching and supervision by Stella in conjunction with regular performance discussions.

Stella should consult with the Second Reporting Officers and the staff member when developing a performance improvement plan for Victor. The performance improvement plan provides a formal opportunity for Victor to improve his performance. The duration of the performance improvement plan may vary depending on the nature of the performance issue. Performance improvement plans may cover up to a period of six months (see Section 10.2 of ST/AI/2010/5).



Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

A structured and agreed performance improvement plan provides a mechanism that allows the staff member an opportunity to clearly demonstrate improved performance. Stella should follow the steps shown in order to ensure appropriate opportunities are accorded to Victor to enable him improve. If Victor fails to perform satisfactorily by the end of the performance improvement plan or improves but then fails again within the given period, Stella in consultation with the Second Reporting Officers has the option to recommend withholding the within-grade increment, non-renewal of the staff member's appointment or termination of the appointment for unsatisfactory performance. More information regarding administrative actions are discussed in the next section.

Steps for providing a formal opportunity to improve are:

Determination of performance shortcoming

Staff member's performance is determined to be marginal or inadequate.

↓

"Performance improvement plan" developed and agreed

Inform the staff member of performance shortcomings, what is needed to bring performance up to an acceptavle level, what assistance will be provided, and the consequences of falling to improve during the performance improvement plan. A performance improvement plan is developed and agreed upon by both the staff member and the supervisor.

↓

Opportunity to improve

The staff member must bring performance up to an acceptable level. The duration of a performance improvement plan may vary and can be up to six months, depending on the performance issue. Be sure to document the staff member's progress and to provide any appropriate assistance.

↓

Determination of performance improvement

Consider the evidence of performance and compare with goals and expectations outlined in the performance improvement plan.

Step 3: Taking Action

Administrative Actions to deal with unsatisfactory performance

As discussed previously, Stella may consider the following administrative actions in the event that Victor fails to improve following the PIP. This section provides an overview of the administrative actions that may be taken for unsatisfactory performance. There is also a brief explanation of deferral of within-grade increments, rebuttal rights, and non-renewal or termination of appointment.

Deferment of within-grade salary increments

Within-grade increments are routinely granted for staff members whose performance is satisfactory but managers need to be aware of the process required to "deny" a within-grade increment when a staff member's performance is not at the satisfactory level.

In order to be eligible for a within-grade salary increment, a staff member must have a rating of "successfully meets performance expectations" or "exceeds performance expectations" (see Section 16 of ST/AI/2010/5).

When a staff member partially meets performance expectations, the salary increment can be withheld pending the outcome of a performance improvement plan. The decision to withhold an increment must be endorsed by the Second Reporting Officer (s) and communicated to the staff member in writing before the decision is implemented. In a dual reporting structure, it is recommended that this is decision is endorsed by both Second Reporting Officers as appropriate.

Rebuttal rights

A staff member may request a rebuttal of his/her performance rating within 14 days of the finalization of their performance appraisal document. Staff members may only rebut a rating of "does not meet" or "partially meets" performance expectations. Staff members cannot rebut comments on a performance appraisal form. The rebuttal panel is required to respond to a staff member's request for a rebuttal within 14 days. A decision made by a rebuttal panel is final and may not be appealed (see Sections 14 and 15 of ST/AI 2010/5 and ST/AI 2010/5 Corr.1).

Appeal rights

Staff members do, however, have the right to appeal a non-renewal or termination of contract or other administrative decision (e.g. withhold of increment or transfer). The staff member may decide to have the action reviewed by the Organization's formal and/or informal justice system. Following the guidance set out in this document and taking into account the applicable rules and policies will prepare you to present a strong case supporting your actions before any third party.

Practical Guide: Addressing Underperformance in a Dual Reporting Structure

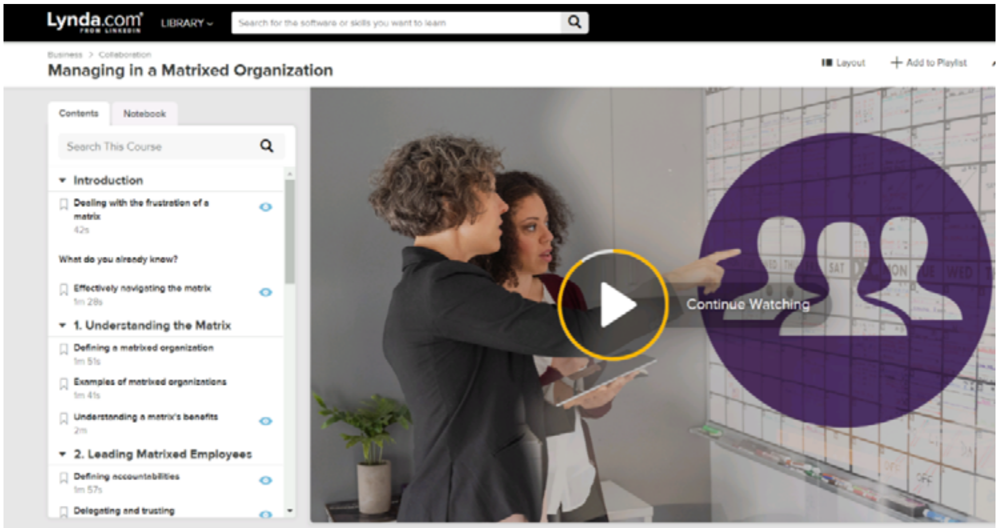
Stella in consultation with the Second Reporting Officers, could leverage the following checklist to make sure that she has completed all the actions related to Step 3 three:

Step 3 Checklist	Yes	No
Do you have copies of any notes of counseling or assistance given to the staff members?	☐	☐
Did you document the staff member's performance during the performance improvement plan period?	☐	☐
Was the staff member provided information on his/her right to appeal or rebut?	☐	☐
Before an administrative decision is taken, ensure that proper procedures were duly observed.		

Click on the icon for more information on addressing underperformance

8. Support Resources: Learn More

Support Resources: Learn More



LMS-4054

Office of Human Resources

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

On Goal Development and Using Feedback

LEARN HOW TO:

- Improve your goal-setting
- Give meaningful, powerful feedback
- Grow from feedback received

GOAL SETTING

Setting team goals – General
by Daisy Lovelace (2018)

(Required)

Why the secret to success is setting the right goals
by John Doerr (2018)

(Required)

Setting team and employee goals
by Mike Figliuolo (2016)

(Optional)

Goal setting – Matrixed organization
by Mike Figliuolo (2019)

(Optional)

GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

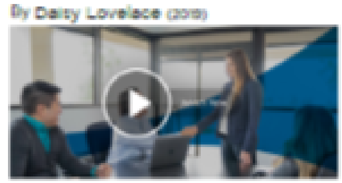
How to use others' feedback to learn and grow
by Sheila Heen (2016)

(Required)

Get better at receiving feedback
by Sheila Heen

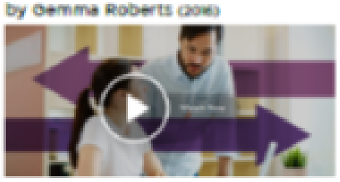
(Required)

Providing feedback in diverse teams
By Daisy Lovelace (2019)



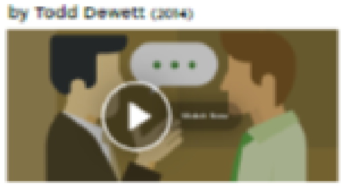
(Required)

Giving and receiving feedback
by Gemma Roberts (2016)



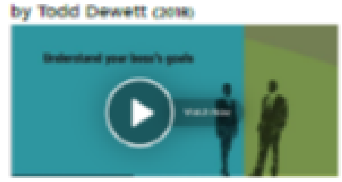
(Required)

Delivering employee feedback
by Todd Dewett (2014)



(Optional)

Managing your manager
by Todd Dewett (2018)



(Optional)

OHR has curated these resources from LinkedIn Learning, a learning platform available to all UN staff.

HOW TO SIGN UP / EARN YOUR CERTIFICATE

1. Sign up on inspira (LMS-4054)
2. Complete the five required courses
3. For further study, complete the optional courses
4. Submit the course evaluation
5. Download your certificate of completion from inspira

External Support Resources: Learn More

Workshops/Elearning Courses

Matrix Management Workshop

Leading and Working in a matrix

Leading and Influencing in a Matrix Organization

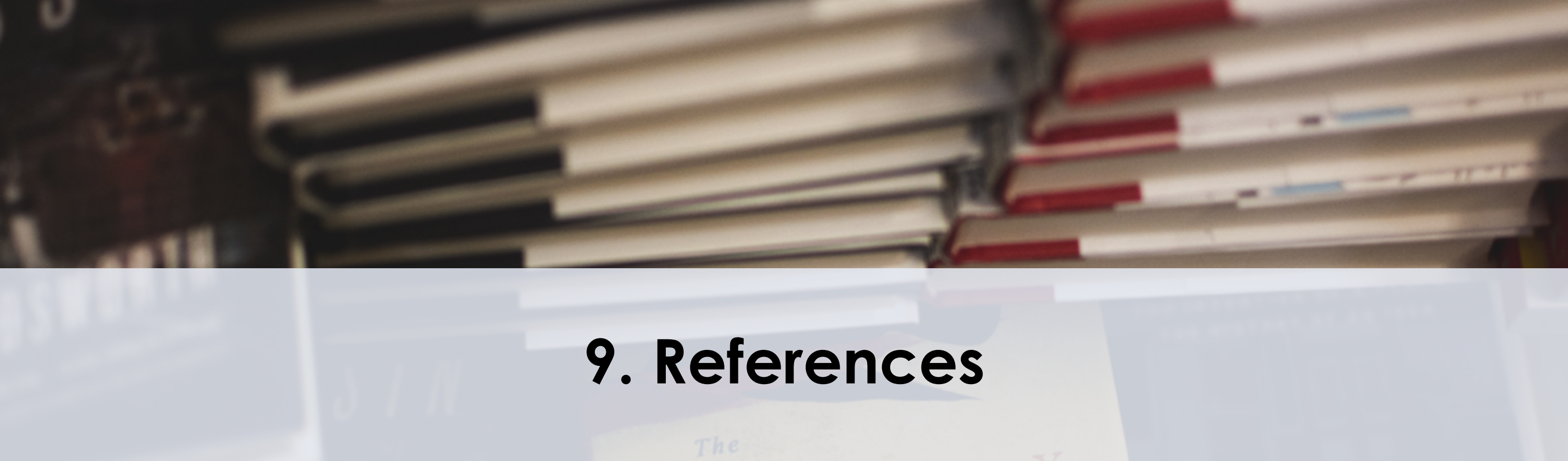
Master the Matrix elearning course

Books/publications

Matrix Management: Not a Structure, a Frame of Mind – Harvard Business Review

Master the Matrix: 7 Essentials for Getting Things Done in Complex Organizations – Susan Z Finerty

Making the Matrix Work: How Matrix Managers Engage People and Cut Through Complexity – Kevin Hall



9. References

Note: This Guide should be read and used in conjunction with the applicable staff regulations and rules and administrative issuances, which prevail in the case of inconsistency.

Bibliography & References

Staff Regulations

Staff Regulation 1.3 Staff Regulation 9.3

Provisional Staff Rules

Staff rule 1.3 Staff rule 3.3 Staff Rule 9.4 Staff Rule 9.6 Staff Rule 11.2

Secretary-General Bulletins

ST/SGB/2002/13, Status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members ST/SGB/2005/20, Prevention of Workplace Harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority ST/SGB/2009/9, Learning and Development Policy ST/SGB/2008/5, Prohibition of discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority.

Administrative Instructions

ST/AI/2010/5 and ST/AI/2010/5/Corr.1, Performance Management and Development System ST/AI/292, Filing of Adverse Material in Personnel Records

Handbooks & other UN materials

Addressing and Resolving Underperformance– A guide for Managers June 2018
Online Performance Management and Development Skills Programme for Managers and Supervisors– PMD LMS3281

External References

Master the Matrix: 7 Essentials for Getting Things Done in Complex Organizations– Susan Z Finerty
Making the Matrix Work: How Matrix Managers Engage People and Cut Through Complexity– Kevin Hall

Published by
Office of Human Resources
Department of Management Strategy,
Policy and Compliance

Version 4, 27 June 2019