

BOKU University

Guideline Appraisal Interview

Guideline for managers, employees and
apprentices

Personnel Development
1.7.2024

Content

Regarding the essence of the appraisal interview (AI)	2
What is an AI?	3
Contents of the AI	3
The AI with apprentices	4
Why conduct an AI?	5
From the perspective of the manager	5
From the point of view of the employee	5
From the perspective of the apprentice	5
Procedure of the AI.....	6
Preparation	6
Execution.....	6
Follow-up.....	6
Tips on how to conduct the AI	6
Feedback.....	7
Requirements for goals.....	7

Regarding the essence of the appraisal interview (AI)

Operational events determine communication in everyday work: there is rarely time to deal with fundamental issues, such as setting long-term goals and results of the work, addressing issues of collaboration and a conversation about professional development.

The AI offers space for these topics. Detached from the daily work routine, there is the opportunity to discuss and work on fundamental issues.

What is an AI?

- ✓ a structured one-on-one discussion between supervisor and employee
- ✓ is prepared by both sides
- ✓ takes place regularly (once a year)
- ✓ is characterized by a specific form: at a distance from the daily work routine, defined contents are systematically discussed
- ✓ is a counseling and promotion talk
- ✓ is a review of the past year: conclusion of achievements and cooperation
- ✓ is a foresight in which goals/tasks, support and development measures for employees as well as training goals for apprentices are defined

The unit for Human Resources Development regularly organizes training sessions for managers and employees on how to lead AI. You can find information on this at <https://boku.ac.at/personalentwicklung>

Contents of the AI

The following contents should be discussed in the AI:

- ✓ Areas of activity and responsibilities of the employee
- ✓ Discussion of last year's agreements
- ✓ Formulation of agreements for the next period
- ✓ Possible development and support measures required for the new target achievement and further development
- ✓ Possible vacation planning for the coming work year
- ✓ Job satisfaction and collaboration
- ✓ Opportunities to improve work-life balance for employees with care duties (e.g. working time arrangements)

The AI does not substitute

- ✓ agreements on an ongoing basis in everyday working life
- ✓ the solving of conflicts
- ✓ regular team meetings to clarify everyday problems
- ✓ the joint development of strategies and programs of the department

The AI is **not intended** to be a one-sided assessment of the employee.

The first AI should be conducted with new employees at the end of the induction phase (after approx. 3-6 months).

The AI with apprentices

Feedback is an essential part of any apprenticeship training. It is important for apprentices to find out what level they are at, where they are good and where there are still areas for learning. Positive feedback encourages apprentices that they are on the right track and has a motivating effect. However, feedback also offers the opportunity to discuss learning areas, define measures and thus initiate further development.

The interview with an apprentice can be guided by the following framework:

- ✓ Training objectives according to the apprenticeship training plan
- ✓ Technical knowledge and practical skills
- ✓ Personal development

Practical tips for AI with apprentices:

- ✓ If you are conducting the AI for the first time, discuss the guideline together in advance, as well as the preparation and the documentation sheet. Explain to your apprentice what the AI is all about. In this way, you can allay possible fears, but also clarify ambiguities and answer questions. Make sure your apprentice has understood all the information correctly. Then give your apprentice enough time to prepare (2 weeks).
- ✓ If you are conducting the AI for the second time with your apprentice, still ask in advance if there are any questions about the interview or the documents.
- ✓ Always give your apprentice a copy of the training plan from the last year of apprenticeship as well as the document sheet from the last AI to prepare for the interview.

Why conduct an AI?

From the perspective of the manager

Managers are supported by the AI in their responsibilities for people management (reaching binding agreements on tasks and ways of working) and personnel development. The manager

- ✓ promotes alignment of collaboration with organizational goals by agreeing on future tasks
- ✓ reviews the past working year together with the employee, discusses its progress and investigates the causes
- ✓ receives feedback on his or her own leadership behavior
- ✓ gains a deeper insight into the motivation, interests and expectations of his*her employees and can thus better understand and guide their behavior in day-to-day work

From the point of view of the employee

The employee

- ✓ gains clarity about work priorities and scope for action by agreeing on future tasks
- ✓ gets feedback about his own performance
- ✓ can systematically and in context present the following once a year: expectations of his or her own work, ideas about working with superiors and colleagues, and personal and professional development prospects
- ✓ can contribute his*her own ideas and interests and help shape his*her own further development

From the perspective of the apprentice

The apprentice

- ✓ receives feedback on his*her professional and personal development
- ✓ knows where his*her strengths and learning areas are
- ✓ can systematically give feedback on how he*she experiences his*her apprenticeship training

Procedure of the AI

Preparation

- ✓ arrange the appointment at least two weeks in advance
- ✓ if necessary reserve a meeting room
- ✓ prepare for the interview (if an AI has already been conducted, the respective records should be included in the preparation)

Materials: preparation sheet for staff, managers und apprentices¹

Execution

- ✓ tasks and goals (apprenticeship training goals): review and foresight
- ✓ cooperation, job satisfaction, development measures and vacation planning

Materials: documentation sheet part 1 (looking back) and part 2 (looking ahead)¹

Follow-up

- ✓ initiate the discussed measures if applicable
- ✓ enter the date of the AI in the BOKU Training Passport

The documentation sheet remains with the dialog partners.

But the execution of the AI needs to be recorded in the BOKU training passport. From there, the number of interviews conducted is evaluated annually and reported to the works council.

Tips on how to conduct the AI

- ✓ **Take your time:** Plan 1 to 2 hours for the conversation in an undisturbed place (redirect phone, turn off cell phone), and create a pleasant atmosphere for the conversation.

¹ All AI documents can be found online at <https://boku.ac.at/personalentwicklung>

- ✓ **Active listening:** Try to understand the person you are talking to and not to judge her. Ask if something is unclear to you, or repeat in brief what the person you are talking to has said. This will help you to make sure that you have understood everything correctly.
- ✓ **Ask open questions** („who", "what", "how“): in this way you get more information than with questions that can only be answered with "yes" or "no".
- ✓ Pay attention to a well-balanced participation in the conversation.
- ✓ Perhaps agreement might not always be reached on all points. In this case, it is possible to record the different points of view side by side.

Feedback

- ✓ Feedback should be open and meaningful.
- ✓ When you give feedback, it is your perception and that is how it should be formulated (I-messages: e.g. "I would write a report in the form XY" and no you-messages: "You wrote the report very clumsy“).
- ✓ Feedback should also refer to a specific behavior (e.g., "I would elaborate on the report at points A, B and C, and add information X, Y and Z. What do you think?"), and not be a generalization (e.g., "You work inaccurately“).
- ✓ When you get feedback, listen and ask for clarification if you are unclear.

Requirements for goals

- ✓ Goals should be **achievable, appropriate** and **accurately described**.
What is to be achieved? How should it be achieved? When should it be achieved? How can I tell that I have reached the goal?
- ✓ **SMART** principles (goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound).
- ✓ Goals should not be set too high, this creates unnecessary pressure and frustration. However, goals should also not be set too low, as this does not motivate.
- ✓ Agree on **a few goals that are significant**. (Ask yourself, "Is this really important? What will happen if we do not do this?“)
- ✓ Goals should be set down **in written form**, this saves mistakes and misunderstandings later on.
- ✓ The higher the **acceptance** of the agreed goals on both sides, the greater the probability of goal achievement.