



PERFORMANCE-IMPROVEMENT PLAN & CORRECTIVE-ACTION DOCUMENTATION KIT

The Measurable- Standard Rewriter

Vague feedback in, a standard somebody can actually meet out

Free · the five tests, 12 worked rewrites and a blank one to fill in

The five tests a standard has to pass

Run the sentence you were about to write through these five. A standard that fails any one of them leaves room to argue about it later: the employee and the manager can each read it a different way and both be right.

#	The test	Why it matters
1	Names a behavior, not a trait	It describes something the employee does or produces, like submitting a report on time, rather than a character judgment like attitude or initiative that no two people would score the same way.
2	Carries a number, rate, or deadline	A standard without a figure attached, a count, a percentage, a time limit, leaves too much room for disagreement about whether it was actually met when the review comes around.
3	Passes the any-given-day test	The employee should be able to look at the standard on a random Tuesday and know, without asking, whether they are currently meeting it or falling short of it.
4	Sits inside the employee's control	The standard should depend on the employee's own actions, not on a coworker's slow response, a client's delay, or a system outage the employee had no way to prevent.
5	Reflects a bar you already hold others to	If the standard is stricter than what the rest of the team is actually expected to meet, it reads as targeted rather than fair, and that undermines the whole plan.

Twelve rewrites, two from each category

Find the row closest to your own situation, take the measurable version, and change the numbers to the bar you already hold other people to. The figures here are examples, not recommendations — a standard borrowed whole from somebody else's business is just a different kind of vague.

Quality of work

Whether the finished work is accurate, complete, and matches what was asked for.

The vague version	The measurable version	How it is measured	Over
Needs to improve attention to detail.	Submit completed work with no more than 1 factual or formatting error per 10-page document, verified before sending.	The reviewing manager compares the final document against the source data and the style checklist.	4 weeks
Work quality has been inconsistent lately.	Deliver work that passes first-round review without a rewrite request on at least 8 of every 10 items submitted.	The team lead tracks pass or rework outcomes in the project tracker.	6 weeks

Productivity and output

How much gets done in a given period, measured against a clear baseline.

The vague version	The measurable version	How it is measured	Over
Needs to pick up the pace.	Complete at least 12 assigned tickets per week, tracked in the ticketing queue.	The ticketing queue's closed-ticket count for the employee each week.	4 weeks
Output has fallen off from where it used to be.	Process a minimum of 40 orders per day, matching the team's baseline logged in the fulfillment system.	The fulfillment system's daily processed-order count.	4 weeks

Attendance and timekeeping

Whether the person shows up, stays for the shift, and records time accurately.

The vague version	The measurable version	How it is measured	Over
Shows up late too often.	Clock in by the scheduled start time, with no more than 1 late arrival, over 5 minutes, per 2-week pay period.	The time clock system's clock-in timestamps against the posted schedule.	one full billing cycle
Attendance has become unreliable.	Attend all scheduled shifts except for approved leave, with no more than 1 unplanned absence per month.	The scheduling system's attendance record against approved leave requests.	6 weeks

Communication and collaboration

How reliably someone shares information, responds to others, and works well with the team.

The vague version	The measurable version	How it is measured	Over
Needs to be more of a team player.	Respond to teammates' direct messages within 2 business hours during scheduled work time, per the team chat log.	The team chat platform's response-time report.	4 weeks
Communication has been a sore spot.	Send a written status update on every assigned project by end of day each Friday, using the shared status template.	The supervisor checks the shared project channel each Friday for the update.	6 weeks

Following process and procedure

Whether established steps, checklists, and approvals are followed as written.

The vague version	The measurable version	How it is measured	Over
Doesn't always follow the steps we've laid out.	Complete every step on the standard operating procedure checklist, in order, with zero skipped steps per audited job.	The supervisor audits a sample job against the SOP checklist each week.	4 weeks
Cuts corners on procedure when things get busy.	Log every inventory adjustment in the tracking system at the time it happens, with zero adjustments made outside the log per week.	The inventory system's adjustment log compared to physical counts.	4 weeks

Conduct and professionalism

How someone behaves and represents the business day to day.

The vague version	The measurable version	How it is measured	Over
Attitude has become an issue.	Address concerns about a task or coworker through the supervisor or the posted channel, with zero raised-voice incidents reported per month.	The supervisor logs any reported conduct incidents each month.	6 weeks
Comments in the break room have crossed a line more than once.	Keep workplace conversation free of remarks about coworkers' appearance, background, or personal life, with zero reported incidents confirmed at each check-in over the review period.	The supervisor tracks any coworker complaints received during the period.	6 weeks

One of them, walked through the five tests

Take the first row above. This is what changes when it goes from the version a manager writes at speed to the version an employee can act on.

THE SENTENCE YOU WERE ABOUT TO WRITE

Needs to improve attention to detail. It is not that the sentence is wrong. It is that nobody can tell, on any given Tuesday, whether they are currently meeting it — so the first honest conversation about it happens at the review, which is far too late for the employee and for you.

THE VERSION THAT CAN BE MET

Submit completed work with no more than 1 factual or formatting error per 10-page document, verified before sending. Measured by: The reviewing manager compares the final document against the source data and the style checklist. Evidence: Redlined copies of the last three submissions kept in the project folder. Timeframe: 4 weeks.

The test	Why the first version fails it	Why the second passes
Names a behavior, not a trait	It describes a quality of the person rather than something they do or produce, so there is nothing to observe.	It names a specific output and the act of checking it before it is sent.
Carries a number, rate, or deadline	No number, no rate, no deadline — so met and not met are the same sentence read by two people in a different mood.	It carries a figure and a period, so the answer is the same whoever reads it.
Passes the any-given-day test	The employee cannot answer 'am I meeting this today?' without asking you.	They can check their own last piece of work against it without asking anyone.
Sits inside the employee's control	It depends on judgment that sits with the reader, not with the worker.	It depends on what the person actually does before they submit.
Reflects a bar you already hold others to	Nobody else on the team has ever been held to a written version of it.	It is a bar you can state out loud and apply to the next person too.

Your turn — the blank one

Print this page, or fill it in on screen. Write the sentence you were actually about to use in the first box — the real one, not a tidied-up version — because the rewrite is only useful if it replaces the thing you would otherwise have written.

The six categories, if it helps to place yours: Quality of work · Productivity and output · Attendance and timekeeping · Communication and collaboration · Following process and procedure · Conduct and professionalism.

The vague version	The measurable version	Measured how, by whom	Over

BEFORE IT GOES ON A PLAN

Read it back and ask the only question that matters: could the person this is about check, without asking you, whether they met it yesterday? If the answer is no, it is not finished yet — go back to the number, the rate or the date.

The library this came from is one tab of eleven

The Standards Library this came from holds 54 rewrites across all six categories, each with how it is measured, where the evidence comes from and a suggested timeframe. It is one tab of the Performance-Improvement Plan & Corrective-Action Documentation Kit.

WHAT THE FULL KIT ADDS

An Evidence Log that keeps the day something happened apart from the day you wrote it down, scores the gap and bands every record Strong to Reconstructed. A Plan Builder that derives all three check-in dates and the review date from a start date and a number of weeks, and withholds ready-to-issue until five checks pass. A Consistency Check across every open plan in the same category. Eight corrective-action documents, each as a fillable PDF and an editable Word file. Eleven tabs in all, at ardentworkshop.com/products/performance-improvement-plan-and-corrective-action-documentation-kit/.

See the full range at ardentworkshop.com.

This PDF is general management guidance for writing a standard somebody can meet. It is not legal advice, it applies no legal test, and every example in it is invented. What a performance process must contain, and how many steps are required, is set by law and by your own employer's policy, and varies sharply between countries and between states. Where health, disability, an accommodation, a complaint, a protected characteristic, or any formal step is involved, talk to your HR team or a qualified employment lawyer in your own jurisdiction first — and have one review anything you intend to issue.

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