

A skills-based approach to performance review and growth

SFIA Week - November 2025

Summary

Traditional growth and performance management is prone to being reactive and exhibiting deficit thinking.

In contrast, basing your performance review process on explicit skills reduces bias and helps makes feedback feel less personal.

This feedback, coupled to the team member's stated career goals, can then be used to help guide the growth and development pathway conversation.

Traditional Growth and Performance

Conflates 2 disparate things (in 2 different ways)

Growth & Performance are not the same (not least due to leading / lagging).

The organization's wants/needs may not match team member wants/needs.

Org priorities (strategy) vs growth focus (self development).

Ineffective

Time consuming, subjective (biases, personal opinions, and evaluator preferences / character disproportionately influence results), so called 'horn and halo' effect, done to rather than with, results often not visible or seen to 'do' anything. Often privileges social/interpersonal factors (popularity) over high performance / competence, frequently 'fitted to a curve'.

Arbitrary

Often simultaneously feels impersonal and patronising.

'3 work and 3 personal' – why 3?

Leveraging skills to improve the performance review process

By contrast, basing your performance review process on explicit skills reduces bias and helps makes feedback feel less personal.

- Make reviews objective, fair, and growth-oriented by centering on skills and evidence
- Shift from opinion-based ratings to observable, evidenced skills.
- Define each role as a small set of critical skills with level expectations.
- Link day-to-day work and outcomes to those skills using checklists, portfolios, and manager/peer evidence.
- Calibrate fairly across teams using a shared rubric and levels.

Reviewee01

Direct report evaluation

Submit review

Skills in role

Average of 1.7 across 3 assessments

→ Data engineering

Leads the selection and development of data engineering methods, tools and techniques.

Develops organisational policies, standards, and guidelines for the development and secure operation of data services and products.

Ensures adherence to technical strategies and architectures.

Plans and leads data engineering activities for strategic, large and complex programmes.

Data management

Developing and implementing plans, policies, and practices that control, protect and optimise the value of data assets.

One assessment score of 4

Data modelling and design

Developing models and diagrams to represent and communicate data requirements and data assets.

One assessment score of 4

Database design

Specifying, designing and maintaining mechanisms for storing

How it works

Standardised Role Profiles: map each role to 6–12 pivotal skills and target levels.

- *Use recognised frameworks (e.g., SFIA v9) and/or your internal roles and skills taxonomies.*

Current Skill Picture: self-assessments can be incorporated into the full 360 review process. Peer & manager review + evidence (projects, artefacts, feedback).

- *Evidence is attached once, reused across cycles; bias-aware prompts guide entries.*

Calibration: side-by-side skill heatmaps standardise ratings across teams.

- *Flags rating drift and highlights consistent gaps; supports HR governance.*

Development Plans: auto-suggest learning and stretch work tied to specific skills.

- *Links to internal content, mentors, micro-tasks; tracks completion over time.*

Business Support > Business Administration

Junior Administration Assistant

ID 1539 • SFIA (Typical) v9.2

Description

Provides routine clerical and office tasks such as filing, scanning, basic data entry, and simple meeting bookings under close supervision.

Essential skills

1 Business administration

Managing and performing administrative services and tasks to enable individuals, teams and organisations to succeed in their objectives.

Performs routine administrative tasks in a structured environment.

Follows clear procedures. Uses common office software and equipment.

Organises and maintains information following agreed procedures.

Assists with basic coordination activities.

Attributes

✓ Apply data governance guidance

1 2 3

Average of 2.0 across 4 assessments

Reviewer01	1	2	3
Reviewer02	1	2	3
Reviewer03	1	2	3
Self assessment	1	2	3

Build a target skills profile

Enterprise Architect SFIA (Typical) v9.1

Match

90%

Overkilled

16 levels

Underskilled

4 levels

You need to further develop 2 of the 20 skills needed for this role.

REQM	Requirements definition and management	-2
NTDS	Network design	-2
ITSP	Strategic planning	0
STPL	Enterprise and business architecture	0
SCTV	Information security	0



Outcomes and next steps

Constructive feedback and growth.

Feedback from the review process should highlight both strengths and areas for growth.

Coupled to the team member's stated career goals, this feedback can then be used to help guide their growth and development pathway conversation.

Skill assessment details ×

Self assessed at level 3 on 28 May 2025

Moderated at level 5 on 14 Aug 2025 by Elias Wyber

Comments and evidence accumulate to support a belief.
31 Oct 2025 by Elias Wyber

And sometimes asking for evidence or foundation for a belief is easier and kinder than directly questioning it.
31 Oct 2025 by Elias Wyber

Moderation is not always downwards - you often see things the person takes for granted.
31 Oct 2025 by Elias Wyber

Just goals

Include growth areas

In progress

Closed

Archived

DRAFT Delight customers with exceptional customer support
PERSONAL GOAL • STANDARD ACCESS
Deliver faster, more helpful and more personal support to increase trust and loyalty.

▼ Hide actions

No due date • No comments → details

ACTION Increase CSAT Score by 10 Percent
Lift CSAT from 80 to 90 Percent

8090

ON-TRACK

One comment → details

DRAFT Delight my team
PERSONAL GOAL • PRIVATE TO YOU
No description

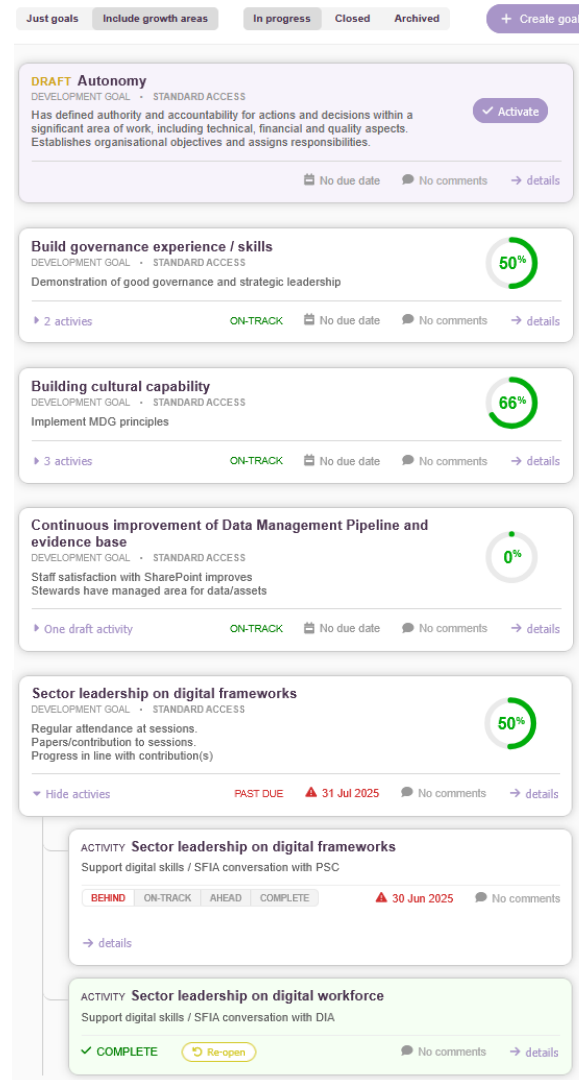
How an improved review process informs development and growth

Use OKRs and evidenced skills to define specific goals to set targeted actions that build capability and target growth where it matters most.

Translate review outputs into 2–3 concrete skill outcomes for the next quarter.

Turn 'gaps' into goals with clear level descriptors and examples of 'what good looks like'.

Connect goals to work: projects, rotations, and stretch tasks, not just courses (use 70/20/10 to lift investment efficiency).



The screenshot displays the TalentJam interface with a list of development goals. The interface includes tabs for 'Just goals', 'Include growth areas', 'In progress', 'Closed', and 'Archived', along with a '+ Create goal' button. The goals are listed as follows:

- DRAFT Autonomy** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Has defined authority and accountability for actions and decisions within a significant area of work, including technical, financial and quality aspects. Establishes organisational objectives and assigns responsibilities. Status: No due date, No comments, → details.
- Build governance experience / skills** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Demonstration of good governance and strategic leadership. Progress: 50%. Status: 2 activities, ON-TRACK, No due date, No comments, → details.
- Building cultural capability** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Implement MDG principles. Progress: 66%. Status: 3 activities, ON-TRACK, No due date, No comments, → details.
- Continuous improvement of Data Management Pipeline and evidence base** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Staff satisfaction with SharePoint improves. Stewards have managed area for data/assets. Progress: 0%. Status: One draft activity, ON-TRACK, No due date, No comments, → details.
- Sector leadership on digital frameworks** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Regular attendance at sessions. Papers/contribution to sessions. Progress in line with contribution(s). Progress: 50%. Status: Hide activities, PAST DUE, 31 Jul 2025, No comments, → details.

Below the goals, there are two activity cards:

- ACTIVITY Sector leadership on digital frameworks**: Support digital skills / SFIA conversation with PSC. Status: BEHIND, ON-TRACK, AHEAD, COMPLETE. Due date: 30 Jun 2025. No comments. → details.
- ACTIVITY Sector leadership on digital workforce**: Support digital skills / SFIA conversation with DIA. Status: COMPLETE. Re-open button. No comments. → details.

Turning reviews into growth

1) Personalised PDP: auto-suggest goals from review results and role profile.

- Curate learning, mentors, and actions mapped to target skills/levels.

2) Work-linked growth: assign stretch work, pair with coaches, capture artefacts as evidence.

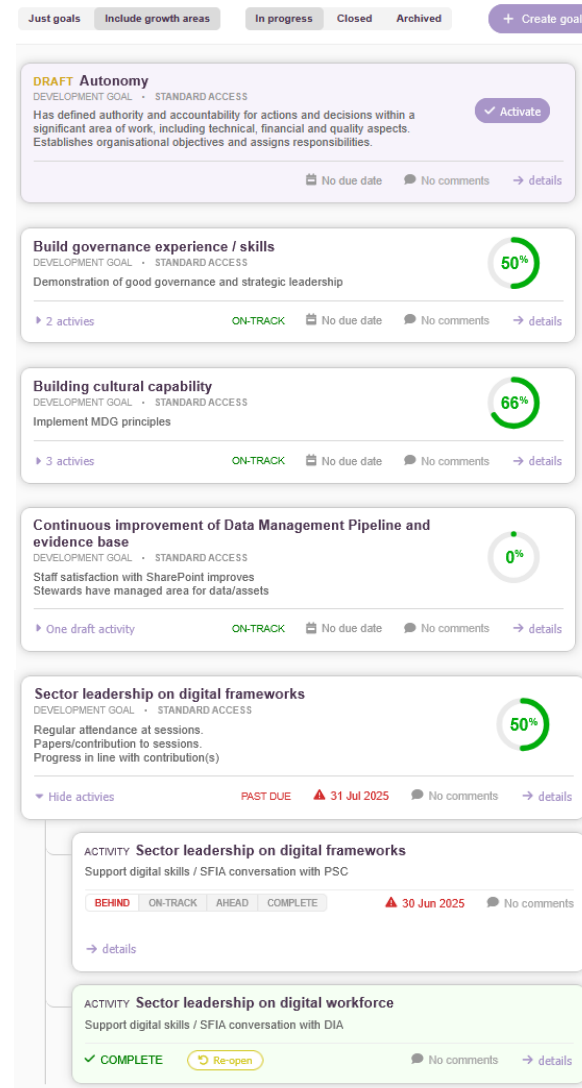
- Evidence is re-usable next cycle; use prompts to reduce bias in reflections.

3) Progress tracking: skill heatmaps and trend lines at individual/team/org levels.

- Notifications for stagnation/skill-decay; nudge to refine goals mid-cycle.

4) Systems integration: sync with HRIS/LMS; export reports for governance and audits.

- Maintain a clean audit trail of development activity and outcomes.



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- DRAFT Autonomy** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Has defined authority and accountability for actions and decisions within a significant area of work, including technical, financial and quality aspects. Establishes organisational objectives and assigns responsibilities. Status: **Activate**. Progress: No due date, No comments, details.
- Build governance experience / skills** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Demonstration of good governance and strategic leadership. Status: **ON-TRACK**. Progress: 50%. Details: 2 activities, No due date, No comments, details.
- Building cultural capability** (DEVELOPMENT GOAL · STANDARD ACCESS): Implement MDG principles. Status: **ON-TRACK**. Progress: 66%. Details: 3 activities, No due date, No comments, details.
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Operating rhythm, signals, and scale

Define success upfront:

Skills progressed, time-to-proficiency, and role-readiness.

Link to workforce plans:

Succession, bench strength, forward demand, and critical role coverage.

Inform L&D spend:

Target L&D spend to meet identified and evidenced organization wide skills needs.

Adopt a simple rhythm:

Q0 review, set 2–3 skill outcomes; at least monthly check-ins; Q1 recalibration.

Embed at team ceremonies (retro/planning) to keep goals live.

Report what matters:

Team heatmaps, pipeline readiness, L&D utilisation vs. outcomes, promotion fairness signals.

Scale via pilots:

Start with 2–3 teams, refine the rubric, roll out incrementally.