# *When Things Go Wrong - Professionals Edition*

It happens, but the Grievance and Workplace Concerns Committee (GWCC) is here to help. If you're a professional, below is an FAQ to get you started toward understanding your rights and righting your workplace. If you are an academic employee you should refer to the *Academic Edition*. If you need assistance, here is contact information and intake form for the GWCC.

**What is a grievance and how do I file one?**
The Grievance and Workplace Concerns Committee is here to help you navigate all sorts of workplace concerns. Not all workplace issues are grievances though. The word 'grievance' refers to a documented violation of a specific clause of the UUP contract. In order to file a grievance on your behalf, we must be able to point to a specific clause in the contract, and argue with supporting documentation that this clause has been violated. If this occurs, the clock starts ticking because according to the contract, we must file such a grievance within **45 days** of when you knew or should have known about the contract violation. But most workplace concerns do not fall into this strict definition. In many cases, workplace concerns are not the result of contract violations. They still can be serious, and we still take them seriously. But in those circumstances, we cannot file a grievance and follow a different path to help. Have a workplace concern? Contact us whether or not you think it's a grievance.

***How do I get my job description to match what I actually do?***
The description of what you do should be in your **performance program**, an annual document you review at least once/year with your supervisor, who will also provide you with a preliminary written **performance evaluation** of your past year's performance at that time. Your supervisor should give you these drafts ahead of time and meet with you prior to issuing a new performance program each year, so that the two of you can make it as accurate, specific, and measurable as possible. The Professionals Guide has great suggestions for how to prepare and what to ask at this meeting. If none of this sounds familiar, contact the GWCC. Your supervisor isn't doing their job!

***What if my supervisor won't adjust my performance program?***
If you disagree with elements of your performance program but your supervisor won't change them, you've got **10 days** from when you two met to respond in writing. Be clear about why you disagree. Is the assignment too broad? Is the extent to which you're responsible unclear? Do you lack the authority, control, or training to do the job? Also write down what you think the descriptions should be instead, and request that your response be attached to your performance program for your permanent file. If your supervisor refuses to attach your written disagreement, contact the Grievance Committee.

***What do I do if my workload keeps increasing?***
Workload creep is an endemic problem. If you're assigned additional work during the course of the year, ask for an updated **performance program** to reflect it. Again, if you disagree with elements of your performance program, you've got **10 days** from when you met to respond in writing. If your supervisor refuses to amend your performance program, contact the GWCC.

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Secondly, collect evidence. Keep notes on additional assignments throughout the year, documenting not only what you do but who assigned it. Be careful that you're not assigning yourself extra work, simply because you see that it needs doing. If you have a good working relationship with your supervisor, bring this evidence to them as it develops. If not, you'll bring it up when you next review your performance program. You may want to ask for a **promotion** or **salary increase**.

***I seem to report to a bunch of different people. How do I manage this?***
Enlist your immediate supervisor. Many professionals support multiple people, but they report to only one person, an immediate supervisor. Your **appointment letter**, which you received when you were first hired, specifies who this is. It's also the person who gives you your **performance evaluation** and updates your **performance program**. Everyone else is secondary. If they are asking you to do work beyond your performance program, especially if it's work that you don't have the authority, training, or control to do, your supervisor needs to know. You should not be evaluated on those assignments, either.

***Are people beyond my supervisor evaluating me?***
Your **performance evaluation** may include secondary sources weighing in, especially if you support multiple people or work across departments. Ask your supervisor who was consulted for feedback and get that information into your performance program. Make sure you understand how these functional relationships are supposed to operate.

***Oh, no, I got a bad performance evaluation! What should I do?***
Once an evaluation is final (signed and dated by your supervisor and a copy provided to you), you have **10 days** to appeal to the College Committee on Professional Evaluation (CCPE). You can appeal an "unsatisfactory" performance evaluation or an evaluation that, while marked "satisfactory," has primarily unsatisfactory feedback in it. Contact the GWCC right away to help you through this appeal process, which is also described in the Professionals Guide.

If the evaluation is still preliminary--i.e., the draft version provided to you prior to your meeting--or it's bad only in part, work with your supervisor to revise the evaluation at your meeting. Hopefully, you've collected evidence over the past year of your performance. Present that. Suggest revisions and re-wording. Point out elements of your performance program that are inaccurate or unrealistic. You cannot be evaluated for work that's not listed on your performance program, nor can you be evaluated based on an old performance program, so check the date and make sure any low marks connect with an actual assignment. As with your performance program, you have a right to disagree with your evaluation, in writing, **within 10 days**, and to attach your written rebuttal to the evaluation for your permanent file.

***What is the difference between a satisfactory/unsatisfactory rating and a renewal/non-renewal rating?***
A lot! A satisfactory/unsatisfactory evaluation is a single summary of your *overall performance* from the past year. A renewal/non-renewal recommendation is a recommendation from your

supervisor whether you should have your contract renewed. Typically a satisfactory + renewal recommendation goes together and an unsatisfactory + non-renewal recommendation goes together. However, they do not have to line up:

- You can have a satisfactory evaluation but still be recommended for non-renewal - this means that your supervisor thinks you did a good job over the past year, but they are recommending to not renew your contract.
- You can have an unsatisfactory evaluation and still be recommended for renewal - this means that your supervisor thinks you did not do a good job over the past year, but they are still recommending that the University renews your contract.

***My supervisor checked the "non-renewal" box on my performance evaluation. What does that mean?***

In the final section of your performance evaluation, if your supervisor has checked the "non-renewal" box it means they have started the process to not have your contract extended. This recommendation is only for term professional employees, and not for professional employees that have permanent appointment already. If you receive a performance evaluation that says you are being recommended for non-renewal, **contact the GWCC immediately.**

***I got a notice of non-renewal email! What should I do?***

Again, the clock is ticking, so **contact the Grievance Committee right away** to help you. You have **5 days** to respond to a **recommendation** of a non-renewal letter, which would come in an email from Human Resources, with the slightly deceptive subject line of "Confirmation of Appointment." Look for the words "recommendation of non-renewal." While you're in this "recommendation" stage, you can still contest the decision. If the HR letter "confirms" non-renewal, however, it means you somehow missed the "recommendation" notice and you're too late to contest the decision.

***What should I say in my response to a recommendation of non-renewal?***

Read the Professionals Guide to make sure you understand the basis on which you've been evaluated. Your response should address the same issues you'd put in a rebuttal of an unsatisfactory performance review (see "Oh no, I got a bad performance review" above).

***I have an uneasy feeling about my performance but no specifics. How do I know whether I'll keep my job?***

Ask questions at your annual performance evaluation, require clarification, and know that, while your supervisor has the authority to assign you work, you can't be evaluated on anything that's not specified in your performance program. It should not come as a surprise to you if your job is in jeopardy. An unsatisfactory performance evaluation will be likely to precede any such decision, so focus on making your performance program as clear, accurate, measurable and defined as possible.

**This FAQ is an ongoing project, so if you have additional questions please let us know. The GWCC plans to continue to update this guide with more information in future editions.**