

**PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL
GUIDE**

Directions for Conducting Performance Appraisals

Purpose

- An annual performance appraisal is required for all eligible administrative, professional, and supervisory (A/P/S) employees. If you have questions regarding eligibility, please contact your departmental Pay-For-Performance (P4P) facilitator, or University Human Resources.
- The appraisal process provides an opportunity for regular dialogue between an employee and his/her supervisor concerning work priorities, performance expectations/standards, and areas of development and growth.
- Effective appraisals are necessary to promote fairness in pay decisions and to recognize and reward good performance.
- The information contained in a performance appraisal is confidential, and you need to take care to protect the employee's right to privacy.

General Instructions for Completion

Section 1: Appraisal Matrix. Identify the key duties, responsibilities, special projects, or competencies for the job, and establish priorities.

Section 2: Overall Assessment. Provide an overall assessment of the employee and offer supporting comments.

Section 3: Performance Standards. Define performance expectations.

Section 4: Appraisal and Documentation. Appraise the employee and document your assessment.

Section 5: Performance Improvement or Enhancement. Identify and list ways to enhance performance as well as any training/development or new challenges sought.

Section 6: Signatures and Comments. Obtain the signatures and comments of the first- and next-level supervisors and of the employee.

Appraisal Schedule

- Complete the Job Duties & Priorities in Section 1 and the Performance Standards in Section 3 during the Performance Planning process.
- Complete the ratings & documentation in Section 4 before completing the overall assessment in Section 2.
- Section 5 & Section 6 are completed after the review meeting with the employee.

Note: Use the process checklist to ensure compliance with P4P procedures (see page 10 of this guide).

For assistance with any phase of the performance appraisal process, please visit the University Human Resources website at <http://uhr.rutgers.edu/comp/P4POverview.htm>

UNDERSTANDING THE APPRAISAL FORM

Overview

The purpose of the appraisal form is to document the facts, events and circumstances of an employee's appraisal process. This process involves the defining of performance expectations and the appraisal of an employee based on these expectations.

The performance appraisal process begins with **Performance Planning**. A **Performance Planning meeting**, held early in the year, allows the supervisor and employee to discuss the overall scope of the employee's position, and the performance expectations for the appraisal period. During that meeting, the supervisor and employee may discuss and clarify:

- The key duties of the position and their priority (**Section One**); and
- How performance will be measured and specific standards to measure the employee's performance on each key duty (**Section Three**).

Throughout the year, the supervisor and employee may meet to review the employee's progress. These informal meetings will help to:

- Measure the employee's performance against the established standards,
- Identify obstacles that might keep the employee from meeting the standards, and
- Focus on areas of the employee's performance that could be improved.

While the appraisal form does not have a section in which to record these meetings, it is important for a supervisor to document specific examples of effective and ineffective performance and the feedback which he or she provided to help the employee improve performance. An informal mid-year review is a positive way for a supervisor and employee to stay in touch and ensure that there are "no surprises" at the end of the year. Also, these meetings will allow the employee and the supervisor to determine if the performance standards are still appropriate. Together, the supervisor and employee may decide to redefine the job responsibilities, revise the performance standards, or set new priorities.

At the end of the appraisal period, the supervisor and employee will meet for a formal discussion about the employee's overall appraisal. During this **Review Meeting**, the supervisor and employee discuss and clarify:

- The overall appraisal (**Section Two**),
- Performance ratings for each duty (**Section Four**), and
- Areas for performance improvement or enhancement (**Section Five**).

The process is begun again with a Performance Planning meeting for the following year.

We will discuss each of the appraisal form sections in detail.

PERFORMANCE PLANNING

Performance Planning is the process of defining an employee's job and setting performance expectations for the annual review. It consists of three steps included on the appraisal form:

- **Key Duties** in Section 1,
- **Job Priorities** in Section 1, and
- **Performance Standards** in Section 3.

1. Key Duties

In this section, you will define the overall requirements of the job by identifying the three to five key duties. A key duty may consist of:

- A **task, duty, or responsibility** as reflected in the position description,
 - A **special project** which was not part of the description, or
 - A **competency** expected to be displayed in the position (such as teamwork, leadership, problem solving, creativity/innovation, critical thinking, customer service, fiscal responsibility).
- Regardless of which type of element you use to define the job, it is important that you **capture the job's major elements**.
- Use the **position description** as the initial source for the key duties. Supplement this with additional information to make it more complete or up-to-date.
- It is important that you **involve the employee** in this process. The employee typically has more detailed and specific information concerning what he or she does in performing the job. Further, the process will be fairer and less threatening to the employee if you solicit and use his/her input in defining the job.

2. Priority

It is unlikely that all of the job duties will be equally important. You should prioritize the duties so you and the employee have a mutual understanding of the relative importance of the major duties. In determining which duties are most important you need to consider:

- Why the job exists (i.e., its purpose),
- How it contributes to the achievement of the department's goals (i.e., context),
- What external or internal clients it serves,
- Its benefits or positive impact, and
- Its cost if done poorly.

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- Time spent performing a task is not synonymous with “importance.” It is possible for an employee to spend a great deal of time on insignificant duties.
- You may want to establish **percentage weights** to indicate the **importance** of each duty to the effective functioning of the department or the university.
- To assign percentage weights, allocate 100 points between the job duties to reflect their relative importance or impact on the department's functioning.

The following is an example showing the priorities for a Project Manager position.

SECTION 1: APPRAISAL MATRIX

1. List the three to five **Key Duties** (use a word or short phrase to describe the duty) of the position.
2. Indicate the **priority percentage** for each duty (should total 100%).
3. **Appraise each duty** in Sections 3 & 4 on the following pages, then **transcribe the rating** to the column below.

EXAMPLE:

<u>Key Duties</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Rating</u>
1. Consults with user community	40%	
2. Project management	25%	
3. Supervision	20%	
4. System problem-resolution	10%	
5. Administration	<u>5%</u>	
	Total:	100%

Note: The priorities above are specific to this job. Even jobs with similar titles may have very different priorities.

3. Performance Standards

In this section, you will define the **performance expectations** for the job by:

- Developing **reliable measures** of performance, and
- Clarifying your **performance standards** for each of the key duties.

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This step is clearly the most difficult part of the Performance Planning process. It is here where you determine how you will measure performance on each of the key duties and what level of performance would meet your standards.

While this is sometimes difficult to put down on paper, most supervisors have a good sense of what they would like their employee to accomplish, or how the employee should go about accomplishing it.

Developing Measures of Performance

To develop measures of performance for a key duty, you need to identify the results expected from the employee in carrying out this area of responsibility. It is useful to think in terms of the “What” and the “How.” The “what” are the results, outcomes, deliverables or work produced. The “how” involves the way in which the work was performed and includes specific behaviors or work processes followed.

The acronym **SMART** is often used to describe the characteristics of good performance measures. The characteristics include:

- Specific and as detailed as possible
- Measurable
- Accepted by the employee so that he or she believes it is attainable and worthy of his or her effort.
- Relevant to department goals
- Trackable

An additional consideration is that regardless of the result used to measure performance, the employee must be able to impact the result for it to be a fair performance measure.

Describe the product or deliverable and address the following criteria: quantity, time, speed, quality or client reactions. For example: completes the project on time and within budget.

Performance can also be evaluated based on **work behaviors** (i.e., how the work is performed, or whether proper procedures were followed). For example, “answers telephone within three rings, identifies department and self, asks how the caller can be helped, and makes certain the caller is connected to the appropriate party or a message is taken and delivered to the appropriate person.”

A useful method to identify the important results or critical behaviors is to think of a specific employee who performs the given duty extremely well. Then, think of an employee who is not able to accomplish the duty at all. Now, determine what were the positive/negative results or outcomes and the behaviors that differentiated the top performer from the ineffective employee. This contrast should provide specific results and the important behaviors that impact job performance.

Setting Performance Standards

The final task in Performance Planning is to articulate your standards for performance for each of the key duties. The **Rutgers Performance Appraisal** process differentiates two performance levels.

- **Meets Standards.** This rating encompasses a wide range of performance from employees satisfactorily meeting job expectations to making exceptional contributions in advancing the objectives of their departments and/or the university. Almost all A/P/S employees perform their jobs efficiently and with professionalism so it is expected that most will be rated in this category.
- **Does Not Meet Standards.** Employees who do not satisfactorily meet job expectations and, overall, do not consistently perform their assigned responsibilities adequately will be given this designation. Employees rated in this category will be provided specific guidelines on how to improve performance and be reevaluated again in six months.

When setting performance standards for the “meets standards” rating, you should define what level of result or behavior must an employee meet to satisfy the requirements of the job. This is a broad performance level ranging from an employee who is job knowledgeable and experienced and who makes a serious effort to perform up to the employee who has made an exceptional contribution in advancing the objectives of the department and/or university.

Note: *Rutgers University strives to be among a select group of superior universities. The “Meets Standards” level of performance is what we expect our professional staff to accomplish to help Rutgers achieve this goal.*

Be as specific as possible in defining this standard. The more specific the results or behavior used to “anchor” a standard, the less likely there will be any confusion concerning that standard.

To set standards for “Does Not Meet” performance, think of a performance level which if observed would make you want to call it to the attention of the employee, and would make you question the employee's skill or effort.

There are several points to consider when developing standards:

- It is important to do a little "reality checking" before implementing your standards. If they are excessively high, your employee will recognize that they are unattainable and will not even attempt to meet them. If they are too low, you are not likely to get the best from your employee, and the performance of your work unit may suffer.
- If several managers in a unit have employees with similar jobs, they should discuss standards among themselves and try to reach consensus on what appropriate standards should be.

The following is an example of a performance standard for a key duty of the Project Manager position.

SECTION 3: PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

For each key duty, describe the performance expectations for the **Meets Standards** level of performance. You may describe the performance expectations for the **Does Not Meet Standards** level, if desired, to more fully explain your performance expectations.

Key Duty # 1: Manage Projects

Meets Standards

- Develops accurate and realistic project plans that are accepted by the user.
- Completes tasks within agreed upon time frame and within budget.
- Anticipates problems and recommends a range of realistic & cost-efficient solutions.
- Updates project status to all involved in the project on a weekly basis.
- Maintains a global perspective when analyzing problems (i.e., re-use in other applications).
- Maintains complete and accurate records and complies with all university regulations.

Does Not Meet Standards

THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Performance Review is the process of documenting performance accomplishments, determining whether and how well performance standards were met, and assigning an appropriate rating based upon this assessment. It consists of two steps included on the appraisal form:

- **Appraisal & Documentation** for each duty, in Section 4, and
- Making the **Overall Assessment** and assignment of a rating, as well as providing comments, in Section 2.

Appraisal & Documentation

Documentation requires time and effort and may seem like an unnecessary burden, however, the benefits of documentation outweigh the inconvenience. Documentation provides a **factual basis** for performance ratings and overall assessment. These ratings have an important impact on employees, and it is important to have a sound basis for your judgment. Proper documentation increases the likelihood that an employee will understand his/her rating, even if it is less positive than expected. By providing specific results, accomplishments or examples, you convey to the employee that your decision is based on facts and reasonable judgement. By keeping records all year long, you prevent the “recency effect” error. Thus, you use an employee’s overall performance throughout the year to make your rating, rather than just the last couple of months.

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Documentation should be accurate and specific. Cite distinct examples of performance, both positive and negative, including the context in which they occurred, the behavior or inaction, and the outcome or consequence. It is important to distinguish between fact and opinion in documenting performance. Documentation should focus on facts, which are events, behaviors or results. You are describing a fact when you describe what you know, and what you take in from your five senses. (What did you see? What did you hear?) Examples of documentation could include copies of employee work product, notes of discussions between the employee and supervisor, copies of communications between the employee and supervisor, and observations recorded by the supervisor.

Based upon this documentation, a determination is made whether the performance standards were met. Part of this determination is a supervisor's reasoned judgement as to the quality of an employee's work performance on each duty.

Overall Assessment

Based upon the rating for each key duty and its priority level, indicate the employee's overall appraisal rating which reflects his/her performance during the past year. Explain your assessment using the documentation included in Section 4. The overall assessment requires carefully combining the performance ratings and accounting for the relative importance of the duties. Supervisors must give the ratings on the higher priority duties a greater weight in the overall assessment.

Note: Section 1 contains the **Appraisal Matrix**, which allows you to capture all of the appraisal information on one page. Some of the information is completed during the Performance Planning phase, while some sections are completed later, during the review period.

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P4P Process Checklist

Directions: An X indicates responsibility for the associated task for the Employees (E), Supervisors (S) or Directors (D). An individual should circle the X when the task is completed. The term director is used as a generic term to refer to any individual to which a supervisor may report (e.g., Dean).

	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>D</u>
Director meets with supervisors and staff to explain program, answer questions and provide guidance on setting standards for department.			X
Employee submits draft of Section 1 & 2 (i.e., performance plan), job duties and performance standards (optional).	X		
Supervisor drafts performance plan (Section 1 & 2, i.e., job duties, priorities and performance standards).		X	
Supervisors meet to develop common standards.		X	
Employee and supervisor meet to discuss performance expectations and standards.	X	X	
Supervisor provides feedback to employee.		X	
Employee self-appraisal submitted to supervisor.	X		
Supervisor completes appraisal, considering points from self-appraisal.		X	
Supervisor submits appraisal to next level for review and comment.		X	X
All appraisal scores from department submitted to next level to ensure consistency with standards.*			X
Supervisor discusses appraisal with employee, and employee adds comments and signs appraisal. **	X	X	
Supervisor works with department head/director to recommend salary increase and/or bonus.		X	X
Performance appraisal and salary/bonus recommendations submitted as specified in processing instructions from VP/Provost.			X

*This process repeats up to the level required by the Vice President/ Provost (or designee) to certify consistency with standards. Supervisor then reviews and discusses appraisal with employee.

**If employee feels procedures were not followed, that there was a demonstrable factual inconsistency, or that he/she was not evaluated according to the performance standards for the job, he/she may seek a review as detailed in the Review Process. This is available on the University Human Resources website at <http://uhr.rutgers.edu/comp/P4PReviewProcess.htm> , or by calling 732-932-3020.