

**NSPS**  
*Transition*

*Employee*

Managing My

# Performance

*A Guide for Employees*





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# Managing My Performance

## *A Guide for Employees* **Intro**

*Managing My Performance: A Guide for Employees* provides an understanding of how to manage individual performance within the context of Department of Defense (DoD) performance management policy, guidance, and standards. The content is organized into five sections:

Planning My Performance

Monitoring My Performance

Developing My Performance

Rating Performance

Rewarding Performance

### **Background**

A solid performance management system is the cornerstone of organizational excellence. Communication, accountability, and performance incentives are positive attributes of a performance management system that enable an organization to reach its goals.

The objective of performance management in accordance with Department of Defense (DoD) policy is to improve individual, team, and organizational performance by setting clear and concise employee expectations; monitoring progress; aligning measurable individual goals with larger organizational goals; and recognizing and rewarding individual accomplishments, demonstrated competencies, and contributions to mission. These system traits can drive organizations forward, while preserving valuable resources and cultivating high-performing cultures. While the Department uses several types of performance management systems, the systems share common attributes.

Each system:

- Is designed to meet the mission, goals, objectives, and management processes of the organization.
- Serves as a managerial tool that helps execute supervisory responsibilities; communicate organizational goals and objectives to employees; facilitate involvement in accomplishing organizational missions and goals; develop and implement programs; improve organizational effectiveness; and assess employee, team, and organizational performance.
- Uses appropriate measures of performance to recognize and reward employees.
- Uses the results of performance appraisal as a basis for appropriate personnel actions.
- Supports and is consistent with merit system principles and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) standards.

- Provides appropriate training.
- Encourages employees to take responsibility for supporting team endeavors, developing professionally, and performing at full potential.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of supervisors and employees are consistent within each performance management system.

**Employees** are responsible for contributing to a high-performance, high-involvement organization through their individual performance and accomplishments. Regular conversations with supervisors help employees establish goals and identify values and behaviors expected of them. Open communication with supervisors also helps employees document accomplishments and understand how performance expectations, conduct, and organizational mission and goals are linked. The employee should discuss his/her level of achievement in reaching established goals and be willing to accept constructive feedback to improve performance.

**Supervisors** are responsible for their individual and team performance and for creating a work culture and environment that promotes a high-performance, high-involvement organization. Supervisors are management officials in the direct supervision and line-of-sight of employees. They link employee goals to organizational mission; make meaningful distinctions in performance levels; evaluate employees based on performance; conduct all required performance-related conversations; and recommend ratings in accordance with the appropriate performance management system.



### Responsibilities of Employees and Supervisors

Roles	Beginning of year	Throughout the year	End of year
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for performance by drafting goals for the performance period; gain agreement with supervisor.</li> <li>• Establish a method for accomplishing and documenting achievement of goals.</li> <li>• Work towards the accomplishment of new goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work toward accomplishment of established goals.</li> <li>• Document accomplishments.</li> <li>• Communicate formally/ informally with supervisor regarding accomplishments and performance improvement areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document assessment of performance according to established goals.</li> <li>• Participate in formal conversation with supervisor regarding past year's performance.</li> </ul>
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for performance by drafting goals for new year with employee(s) and gain agreement.</li> <li>• Establish a method for monitoring and documenting employee performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and document performance of employee(s).</li> <li>• Help employee(s) to develop.</li> <li>• Communicate formally/ informally with employee(s) regarding performance expectations, performance shortfalls, and accomplishments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document assessment of employee(s) performance according to the established goals.</li> <li>• Assign a rating of record.</li> <li>• Conduct formal conversation with employee(s) regarding past year's performance.</li> </ul>

Additional key players in the performance management process include the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy)—DASD(CPP)—and the Heads of the DoD Components.

The DASD(CPP), under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, issues DoD performance management policies and procedures; establishes the DoD Performance Appraisal System; and develops, or assists in the development of, performance management programs, monitoring their implementation and effectiveness.

The Heads of the DoD Components ensure the development, implementation, application and evaluation of performance management programs within Components and ensure that programs established or revised after the effective date of the DoD Performance Appraisal System are in compliance with relevant DoD policies and procedures.

# Planning My Performance

Performance planning is mandatory. You must have a written performance plan at the beginning of each appraisal period or when you start a new position. Typically, you have 30 days to establish a performance plan.

**Performance plans include:**

**Performance goals, objectives, elements or standards<sup>1</sup>** – Typically, these are the three to five priorities you must focus on during the performance appraisal period. Performance goals are written at the “fully successful” or equivalent level. Writing expectations at the fully successful level provides you with an opportunity to meet or exceed expectations.

**Developmental goals** – Provide direction on how to gain the skills and experience necessary to perform in your current role and enhance your career opportunities. Developmental goals are often included in the “individual development plan (IDP)” section of the performance plan.

## Establishing Expectations

Setting performance goals enables you and your supervisor to establish a mutual understanding of expectations and develop a concrete plan for your future. As an employee, you are responsible for managing your individual performance, working with your supervisor to determine and document your goals, and understanding how goals connect to the larger organization.

Prior to developing your goals, which are described in the next section, you are encouraged to meet with your supervisor. The purpose of the meeting is to clarify expectations, goals, and priorities for the performance period.

### Five Phases of the Performance Management Cycle

#### 1. Plan

At the beginning of the performance period, you and your supervisor develop a plan for performance, to include: performance goals, expected behaviors, individual development plan (IDP) goals, and a plan for documenting and discussing performance throughout the year.

2. Monitor
3. Develop
4. Rate
5. Reward



<sup>1</sup> Performance expectations are documented as performance goals, objectives, elements, or standards. Usage of these terms may vary based upon the particular performance management system. For the purpose of this guide, these terms may be used to describe performance expectations.

## Performance Planning Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for your meeting with your supervisor.	✓
Request a copy of the organization's goals and the Agency's mission from your supervisor.	
Review performance standards issued by your organization.	
Review last year's performance goals and your accomplishment of those goals.	
Consider your developmental needs or interests.	
Anticipate any potential barriers to success or challenges.	
Document your questions about your performance expectations so that you can discuss these items during your conversation. Be sure to ask about the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Your organization's goals and priorities</li> <li>– Your work priorities</li> <li>– Specific tasks you should accomplish in order to successfully complete your performance goals</li> <li>– Timelines for completing your tasks and any noteworthy milestones.</li> </ul>	
Draft preliminary performance goals	

Consider using the following questions to guide your discussion.

1. What do you see as my priorities for this performance period? What are your expectations of my performance?
2. What growth opportunities do you envision for me this performance period?
3. What do you see as our major initiatives as a unit/organization/team?
4. What mission or strategic goal statement should I use to align with your goals?
5. What accomplishments would make the greatest contribution during this performance period?
6. Is there a format or method you prefer that I use to document my goals and priorities?
7. When would you like to have my goals in draft?

### Writing Performance Goals

Performance goals are established at the beginning of the rating period or when you begin a new job. Performance goals are written at the “Fully Successful” or equivalent performance level. One way to ensure that performance goals are written at the appropriate level is to make them SMART. Performance goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound (SMART).

In addition, the PURE and CLEAR principles provide complementary guidance to help ensure that goals are accurate, well-written, comprehensible, and attainable.<sup>2</sup> PURE and CLEAR are useful to clarify goals after applying SMART.

<sup>2</sup>Whitmore, J. (2007). *Coaching for Performance: Growing People, Performance and Purpose*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Begin by using the SMART framework to develop performance goals.

SMART	
<b>S</b>	<b>Specific:</b> Goals should be clear and detailed.
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable/ Meaningful:</b> Goals must have observable, verifiable measures. They must also be meaningful to the organization, team, and individual.
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable/Agreed/ Aligned:</b> The measures must be fully achievable by the employee and agreed upon by the supervisor and employee. Goals must be aligned to the organizational goals and mission.
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant:</b> Goals should have significance to the job duties of the employee and to the organizational goals and mission.
<b>T</b>	<b>Time-bound:</b> Goals must be measurable within the rating period, and it is helpful to have time-sensitive measures.



Your individual goals should align with the organizational goals and mission.

Once the performance goals have been developed according to the SMART framework, use the PURE and CLEAR principles as a second measure to verify for accuracy, achievability, comprehension, and compliance.

PURE	
<b>P</b>	<b>Positively Stated:</b> The wording in goals should avoid words like: “don’t,” “won’t,” “not,” and “never.” State what is expected instead of what is not expected or what is prohibited.
<b>U</b>	<b>Understood:</b> Goals should be easily understood by the employee, supervisor, and anyone else in the performance management environment of that employee.
<b>R</b>	<b>Realistic:</b> Goals must be realistically achievable given the time, resources, and skills available.
<b>E</b>	<b>Ethical:</b> Employees should never be asked to do anything unethical or against the Merit Systems Principles.

CLEAR	
<b>C</b>	<b>Challenging:</b> Goals should be something for which an employee is challenged to attain.
<b>L</b>	<b>Legal:</b> All legal policies and procedures should be taken into account when developing and determining goals.
<b>E</b>	<b>Environmentally Sound:</b> An individual’s goals should not interfere with the accomplishment on another’s goals or with organizational mission and goals. Instead, they should support the performance environment.
<b>A</b>	<b>Appropriate:</b> An individual’s goals should be appropriate to the pay grade and level, as well as the role to which the employee was hired.
<b>R</b>	<b>Recorded:</b> Goals should be documented and kept for at least the length of the performance cycle.

### Is it observable, verifiable, or reportable?

You must define the measures you select to track the accomplishment of specific goals. You and your supervisor should agree upon how a measure will be observed, verified, or reported to avoid differences in opinion at the end of the year.

As you create and discuss performance goals with your supervisor, you may want to consider the following questions to ensure you are including appropriate measurements:

- Is a reporting or data-capture method already in place?
  - If so, does it capture the data needed for the measurement, or does additional data need to be captured?
  - If additional data is needed, how will the data be captured?
  - Who is responsible for recording or reporting the data?
- Are there timeframes and/or deadlines to meet?
- How will behaviors be observed?
  - Whose observations are allowable?
  - How will it be reported?
- How is quality determined?
  - Who decides quality?
  - On what basis is it measured?
- Are absolute measures necessary and/or reasonable?
- What status checks will occur throughout the year to gauge, monitor, and develop performance?
- Is the measuring method documented in the goal so that anyone could understand how success is measured?

#### Suggested Wording for Measurements

- by means of
- by managerial review
- as determined by
- contingent upon
- acceptable to
- accepted by
- including at a minimum
- in accordance with
- as described by
- as indicated by
- as demonstrated by
- accurate according to
- actionable by
- completed by
- completed during
- completed within
- added value by
- was effective in
- showed efficiency by
- as reviewed by
- with error rate of



### Is it meaningful?

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Ambiguous measures create confusion about the result and benefit of the performance goal and might inadvertently promote undesired behaviors or results. Superfluous measurements can create an extra reporting burden on you and your supervisor. Therefore, during the process of identifying measurements, be sure to check if the measures are truly meaningful.

Consider the following questions to confirm that the measurements are indeed appropriate for successful completion of your performance goals:

- Am I measuring the most important aspect of this goal?
- What is the underlying purpose of this goal?
- What is the immediate effect/purpose/result/outcome that I am trying to accomplish with this goal?
- What is the long-term effect/purpose/result/outcome that I am trying to achieve?
- Do the measurements drive performance to the needed results?
- What behaviors am I trying to foster or inhibit?
- How does this measurement ensure alignment with organizational goals?
- Does this measurement fully capture achievement of the expected result?
- Could any other measures more effectively capture the achievement of this goal or further supplement the measurement already identified?
- What defines success on this goal? What defines failure to meet this goal?
- What might be some unanticipated and undesired results of this measurement? How can I modify the measurement to minimize the undesired results?

### My Performance Plan

By the end of the planning phase, you should have met with your supervisor to discuss performance expectations and have an approved performance plan that clearly identifies:

- Performance expectations documented as goals, objectives, or standards and written at the “fully successful” or equivalent level
- Developmental goals that document developmental, experiential, and training opportunities

# Monitoring My Performance

## Teaming with My Supervisor to Monitor My Performance

Throughout the performance period, you should:

- Maintain open dialogue with your supervisor regarding expectations and performance.
- Gain awareness of any obstacles to your performance and discuss them with your supervisor.
- Document clear, specific performance information.
- Participate in a mid-year performance conversation.

It is important that you and your supervisor mutually understand and agree upon what is expected and how you are performing as compared to these expectations. Furthermore, you should be aware that your supervisor is accountable for conducting regular performance conversations to discuss your performance, review your goals, activities, and priorities, and address any issues or concerns.

These conversations should be an informal and routine part of your relationship with your supervisor. If your supervisor has not yet held these ongoing discussions with you, you should make a request to start. The frequency and time required for these ongoing performance discussions depends on several factors that may vary for each employee. These factors include the relationship you have with your supervisor; the issues you need to discuss with your supervisor or that your supervisor needs to discuss with you; how often you work directly with your supervisor; and how well your supervisor understands your work.

Before attending a performance discussion to ensure you are moving in the appropriate direction, take some time to consider what questions you would like to ask your supervisor, such as:

- I believe I am meeting my performance goals. Do you agree?
- Is there anything I could be doing differently to more effectively achieve my performance goals?

### Five Phases of the Performance Management Cycle

1. Plan

2. **Monitor**

Throughout the performance period, you should be aware of your performance, against your goals and keep your supervisor updated on your progress and any obstacles you encounter. Keep clear, specific documentation of your performance for use in writing your self-assessment.

3. Develop

4. Rate

5. Reward



- Can you share with me an example of something I am doing well? How can I take what I am doing well and apply it to other aspects of my work?
- Are there particular areas where you think I need to focus my attention or improve my performance? What courses of action do you recommend I take?
- I noticed that our organization’s priorities/goals have shifted. Since my performance goals are aligned with the previous priorities/goals, do we need to revisit my goals to determine if they are still appropriate?
- Because the team is so busy, I have not been able to take advantage of developmental opportunities. Can we discuss the work I have on my plate and reprioritize or restructure it so I have time to attend the classes we discussed?

### My Performance Documentation

Year-round documentation of performance helps you track the details of your accomplishments and expected behaviors. This makes it easier for you to write your self-assessments, if required, and participate in performance conversations. Consider these tips for documentation.

Documentation Quick Tips	
What to Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions with your supervisor about performance and expectations</li> <li>• Completion of work products</li> <li>• Special or difficult circumstances you overcame and how you overcame them</li> <li>• Reporting mechanisms for tracking accomplishments</li> <li>• Complimentary messages from customers, peers, or employees about your performance related to your job objectives or expected behaviors</li> <li>• Copies of reports, studies, advisories, operating procedures, training materials, or other documents you developed</li> </ul>
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On a regular basis (weekly, monthly) throughout the performance period</li> <li>• Before and after performance conversations</li> </ul>
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic or hard copy file or journal of performance-related discussions</li> <li>• Email folder for performance-related emails</li> <li>• Folder for status reports and other performance-related documents</li> <li>• Notes on planner or calendar</li> </ul>
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized by goal</li> <li>• Relate accomplishments to specific goal(s)</li> <li>• Describe accomplishments in the context of relevant behaviors/values</li> </ul>
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminder of total performance</li> <li>• Reference for writing self-assessment</li> <li>• Preparation for performance conversations</li> <li>• History of work in case of transfer</li> </ul>

## Accountability for My Performance

Being accountable for your performance also means being responsible for accomplishing performance expectations, which can lead to:

- improved performance
- enhanced participation and involvement
- increased feeling of competency
- increased commitment to your work
- fostered creativity and innovation
- higher morale and satisfaction with the work

## My Mid-Year Performance Conversation

During the mid-year performance conversation, which typically occurs halfway through the performance cycle, you and your supervisor discuss your progress towards accomplishing your expectations, any issues impeding progress, and developmental needs. As a result of this conversation, expectations might be adjusted.

Before you participate in the mid-year performance conversation, review the following checklist to make sure you are fully prepared for the discussion.

- Review your performance plan to ensure that it reflects your current work focus.
- Review your notes on your performance.
- Document your performance; be thorough and specific.
- Consider your performance to date as compared to your goals and expected behavior.
- Be prepared to provide examples of your contributions, focusing on the following:
  - Progress on goals
  - Tasks you have completed
  - Problems you have solved/challenges you have overcome
  - Progress on your developmental interests
- Prepare questions you might have related to the following:
  - Problems with which you need assistance
  - Tasks that have yet to be completed
  - Developmental, training, and learning needs or interests
- Note where your supervisor can help you remove obstacles and overcome challenges.
- If necessary, be prepared to suggest adjustments to your performance plan to reflect new work or changed goals and priorities.
- Remember to keep the conversation focused on the progress to date. Try to avoid discussing rating of record or potential rewards.

## Receiving Feedback

During performance feedback discussions, you should welcome the input your supervisor provides. Giving and receiving feedback takes patience and practice – do not be surprised if during the first few discussions there are pauses of silence in the conversation that make you feel uncomfortable. After these initial conversations, you and your supervisor will grow accustomed to communicating openly and comfortably.

When your supervisor provides feedback, you should consider these important points:

- **Don't be defensive.** Remember that your supervisor's feedback might be for a job well done or might contain valuable suggestions for improving your performance. Do not assume the worst; take negative feedback as an opportunity to learn and improve. If you catch yourself becoming defensive or hostile, take a deep breath and let it out slowly to help you regain your composure. If you cannot remain calm, request to continue the discussion at another time.
- **Listen for understanding.** Practice effective listening: use body language and facial expressions that encourage engagement; listen openly and without interrupting; and rephrase or paraphrase what your supervisor says to demonstrate that you fully understand the important points of the discussion. Your supervisor will appreciate that you are truly interested in the conversation.
- **Avoid being judgmental or too hard on yourself.** Take each discussion as a learning experience. Keeping an open mind as you listen to your supervisor's point of view might help you realize how your actions are interpreted by others and how your work affects the team and organization.
- **Request clarifying examples and ask probing questions.** Focus on understanding the feedback by asking clarifying questions and restating the information provided. If your supervisor does not offer specific examples when providing either positive or negative feedback, don't be afraid to ask. Definitive examples coupled with specific suggestions increases your learning experience and opportunities for future success. Be sure to ask detailed questions to augment your understanding of the situation.
- **Remember that it is a discussion, not a lecture.** Conversations are two-way – your supervisor is there to speak with you, not at you. Demonstrate that you are interested in your supervisor's feedback and suggestions by engaging willingly and wholeheartedly in these discussions. Realize that while receiving feedback might be difficult, giving feedback can be just as tough. A two-way conversation that is open and honest is the essential part of a successful feedback discussion.
- **Thank your supervisor for providing feedback.** Demonstrating that you appreciate your supervisor's feedback encourages him/her to continue taking the time and effort required to provide effective feedback and worthwhile suggestions.



## **Difficulty Meeting Expectations**

If you find it difficult to meet your supervisor's expectations or successfully complete a performance goal, set up a meeting with your supervisor as soon as you recognize a problem. Although the discussion might be uncomfortable at first, your supervisor needs to be aware of the issue in order to offer suggestions or remove barriers to success. Remember that your supervisor wants you to succeed for your own development, as well as the achievement of the team, unit, and organizational goals.

When you meet with your supervisor, focus on identifying the specific challenge faced, and be prepared to share how you have attempted to overcome the challenge. Listen to your supervisor's suggestions and offer a few of your own. Work with your supervisor to establish a plan of action to get you back on track and to monitor your progress.

If you are uncomfortable speaking with your supervisor, reach out to your human resources specialist to request assistance. The human resources specialist can work with you and your supervisor to address your concerns.



# Developing My Performance

## Taking Responsibility for My Development

While your supervisor is supporting you, developing your skills and experiences is your responsibility. What can you be doing to actively develop yourself?

The individual development plan (IDP) is your action plan for developing the skills and competencies required to perform in your current job and to acquire the knowledge and experience needed for career progression.

Your IDP:

- Identifies short- and long-term career goals.
- Documents training and developmental activities to complete during the year.
- Tracks your accomplishments towards completing training and developmental activities.
- Should be frequently reviewed and discussed with your supervisor throughout the year.
- Can help you become more qualified for a new position by identifying relevant knowledge, skills, abilities, and developmental activities to help you get there.

Your IDP is a living document that should be reviewed and updated throughout the year with input from your supervisor. Your IDP provides a means for your supervisor to support your career by targeting developmental opportunities that will help you obtain the skills needed to successfully fulfill your responsibilities identified in your performance plan and achieve your short- and long-term career goals.

Your supervisor plays an important role in helping you develop your IDP and monitoring your progress throughout the year. He or she is responsible for:

- Discussing your progress throughout the cycle
- Helping you modify your IDP, as appropriate

### Five Phases of the Performance Management Cycle

1. Plan
2. Monitor
3. **Develop**  
Throughout the performance period, develop yourself by putting your IDP into action.
4. Rate
5. Reward



- Developing realistic developmental goals
- Locating training and developmental opportunities
- Reviewing your accomplishments at the end of the performance cycle, so you can appropriately plan for the upcoming year

Ultimately, you have the most at stake in managing the success of your career.

You are expected to:

- Take responsibility and be accountable for your career development
- Identify your individual strengths and skills-improvement areas relative to occupational requirements and organizational goals
- Engage with your supervisor early and often to discuss career management activities and track progress
- Utilize available tools and resources to assist you with satisfying occupational requirements and achieving career goals

### **Documenting Progress**

Managing your IDP is your responsibility. As with any responsibility, obstacles can get in the way of your success. Do not let this happen when it comes to managing your career goals.

- Make your career goals a priority. Do not become “too busy” to focus on your professional development.
- Realize you own your development. Look for ways internal and external to the organization to be effective. Offer to help someone develop in their own career, too.
- Be sure to include your career development accomplishments on your self-accomplishment report.
- Take time to plan how to complete identified training and developmental activities.
- Initiate ongoing developmental conversations with your supervisor.

### **Developing My Performance**

Throughout the performance period, you should:

- Follow your IDP.
- Let your supervisor know if you are unable to take advantage of the training and developmental opportunities because of your workload.
- Document your experiences.

# Rating Performance

## Using the Self-Assessment to Tell My Performance Story

You have been documenting your performance all year. Now, it is time to compile your documentation to tell the clear and compelling story of your performance. Do not assume that your supervisor knows all the details of your performance or accomplishments. Even if you have discussed it in depth, your supervisor might not readily recall your performance. It is up to you to document it thoroughly, while being concise.

### Self-Assessment DOs and DON'Ts

Use this list to help you write your self-assessment.

A good self-assessment includes:

- **Accomplishments and results:** Describe the impact on the organization's mission and goals. Focus on results instead of tasks.
- **Performance Level:** Include wording that describes your level of performance for each goal.
- **Behaviors:** Describe how you exhibited the expected behaviors/values while achieving your goals.
- **Challenges and added value:** Describe how you overcame challenges and dealt with special circumstances. Include wording that describe how you added value to your organization.

An effective assessment should answer these key questions:

- What did I achieve?
- How well did I do it?
- How did it help my organization?
- What expected behaviors did I exhibit?
- What special circumstances made my accomplishment significant?

### Five Phases of the Performance Management Cycle

1. Plan
2. Monitor
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5. Reward



DO	DON'T
✓ Set aside uninterrupted time to reflect and write.	✗ Rush through writing at the last minute.
✓ Review the goals, expected behaviors, and any other performance expectations before you start writing.	✗ Write an assessment that is unlinked to the performance plan and goals.
✓ Review documentation of accomplishments and determine which are the most significant in terms of contribution to mission and organizational goals.	✗ Rely on your memory to recall all accomplishments within the performance period.
✓ Use active verbs to describe actions and accomplishments.	✗ List tasks performed.
✓ Be specific and concise.	✗ Be flowery and verbose.
✓ State the level of performance at the beginning of the narrative (i.e., "I met the expectations established for these goals").	✗ Leave your supervisor wondering how you believe you performed against goals.
✓ Spell out acronyms and explain terms that might be unfamiliar to your supervisor or other readers.	✗ Use acronyms or terms with which your supervisor or other readers might not be familiar.
✓ Focus on accomplishments only within the current performance period.	✗ Cite accomplishments from past performance periods.
✓ Note how challenges were overcome.	✗ Assume your supervisor will infer the challenges.
✓ Cite instances where actions or conduct exemplified the expected behaviors.	✗ Ignore any expected behaviors.
✓ Relate individual accomplishments to team goals.	✗ Attribute credit for team accomplishments solely to the individual.
✓ Describe any instances where performance exceeded expectations.	✗ Attribute high performance without substantiating it.
✓ Provide specifics on measurable or qualitative results and describe the relation to organizational goals.	✗ Leave the reviewer wondering why the accomplishments were important.
✓ Explain accomplishments in a way that someone unfamiliar with the work would understand.	✗ Assume the pay pool panel is aware of individual accomplishments.
✓ Use spelling and grammar check and reread writing.	✗ Assume grammar and spelling do not matter.

## My Annual Appraisal Conversation

During the annual appraisal conversation, you and your supervisor discuss your performance and rating of record. Use the checklist below to prepare for the conversation.

### Annual Appraisal Checklist

#### Discuss these essential topics:

- Your rating of record
- What worked and what might need to be improved upon
- Performance expectations for the next year based on this year's performance

**Consider discussing these topics:**

- 
- How you can grow professionally and learn through experiences and formal/informal training to improve your performance
  - Additional work or responsibilities that would provide an opportunity for you to perform at a higher level
  - Coaching or mentoring support to improve performance

**Remember to:**

- 
- Bring a copy of your self-assessment and refresh yourself on your expectations.
  - Discuss any questions or concerns.
  - Focus on the conversation.
  - Stick to the facts.
  - Keep emotions under control.
  - Listen to your supervisor's feedback.

**Discussing the Rating of Record**

It is important that you and your supervisor discuss your rating of record. Like all other performance feedback, this should be discussed in person and in private. In receiving your rating of record, take the opportunity to ask your supervisor to provide direct links from performance to the rating by using specific examples.

If the rating is not what you were expecting, do not become defensive or angry. Instead, consider asking some of the following questions in a professional manner to gain constructive feedback and an understanding of expectations.

- What specific examples of behavior led you to assign this rating?
- What organizational performance standards guided this rating?
- May I voice some of my concerns based on my performance goals, my performance, my self-assessment, your evaluation, and our past conversations?
- May I clarify the specific performance or behavioral issue you observed that contributed to this rating?
- What specific actions can I take to achieve a higher rating this coming year?
- Could we meet more frequently to share feedback on my performance, shortfalls, and obstacles, so that I can be more aware of my performance and achieve a higher rating?

By investing in ongoing dialogue and communication throughout the year, the annual appraisal discussion becomes routine. Consider these points:

- Communicating clearly and consistently throughout the year with your supervisor.
- Being aware of and taking responsibility for your performance.
- Communicating early and often to identify and resolve performance shortfalls and obstacles.

- Paying attention to your supervisor's verbal and written feedback of your performance.
- Being open to feedback and suggestions when your supervisor provides coaching.
- Documenting your performance thoroughly and specifically throughout the year.

### **Rating My Performance**

As part of the rating process, you should:

- Understand the performance management system's rating protocol.
- Prepare for performance conversations by writing a thorough self-assessment.
- Attend meetings with your supervisor to formally assess performance and discuss your rating of record.



# Rewarding Performance

## Using Performance Rewards as another Opportunity to Glean Feedback

Performance rewards, depending on your organization's performance management system, may come in the form of annual bonuses, salary increases, awards throughout the year, time-off awards, or others. Irrespective of the timing or type, awards should be performance-based and used as a tool to promote a culture of high performance, reward successful performers, and promote greater future performance.

Your supervisor will follow up on any reward you have earned by tying it into your performance. Use this conversation to determine exactly what behaviors and actions are being rewarded so that you can repeat them and/or build on them to enhance future performance. Every performance-based conversation with your supervisor provides an opportunity for feedback. Be ready to ask questions that will provide you with the tools to understand expectations and perform well.

### Five Phases of the Performance Management Cycle

1. Plan
2. Monitor
3. Develop
4. Rate
5. **Reward**

At the end of the performance period (or within the period), you are rewarded according to your performance and in accordance with your organization's performance management system. Clarify with your supervisor the direct connection between the reward and your performance.



