

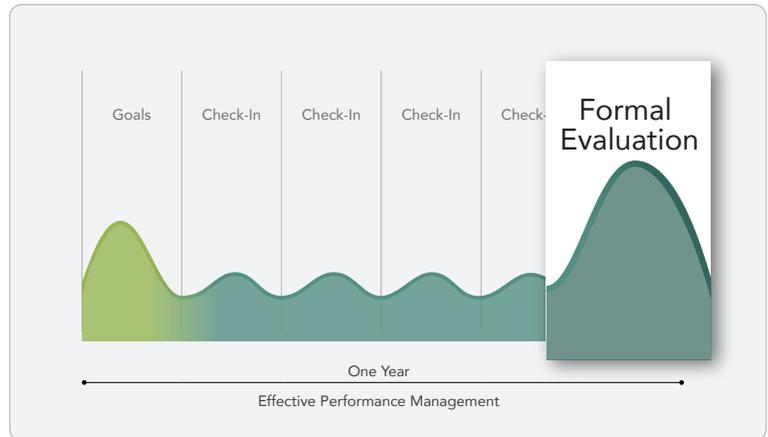
# Performance Evaluation

## What is performance evaluation?

Performance evaluation includes measuring effectiveness in meeting expectations for achieving results as well as how those results are achieved (i.e., behaviors).

Effective performance evaluation does not happen only at the end of a year but through ongoing check-ins throughout the year.

Formal evaluation is the final step in the performance management process and includes writing and delivering a performance evaluation.



*Ideally, a formal evaluation is a summary of what has already been discussed throughout the year.*

## How do I conduct performance evaluation?

### Before you begin

#### Rater Bias

Everyone has biases, and we bring them to the table when evaluating ourselves or others. Be consciously mindful when undertaking performance reviews. Setting up an effective performance management system that includes the best practices will help alleviate potential bias in a formal performance evaluation.

#### Local Process

Performance review processes and methods are determined locally. Your college, campus, or unit may have their own guidelines for performance management process, including the timing, steps, and the forms and tools you need to use. Contact your local HR department to learn about the specific guidelines.

## Get Ready: Prepare for Review

# 01

### GET EMPLOYEE INPUT ON THEIR RESULTS AND IMPACT

Have employees *summarize* their key results and accomplishments for the year (e.g., shared Google doc or MS Word). These descriptions should include: a) the situations they faced, b) the actions they took, c) the results they achieved, and d) the impact of those results.



Avoid asking employees to self-rate. Having employees provide self-ratings and then comparing them to manager ratings is not recommended. Employee self-ratings are usually inflated, which may result in defensiveness, conflict, and bad feelings when managers do not agree with an employee's ratings.

Instead, focus employee input on accomplishments and impact. This increases communication and understanding, decreases disconnects between the manager's view and the employee's view, and increases employee ownership and acceptance of the process. Accomplishments and impact can be included in part of the review, and can be helpful in making pay or promotion decisions.

# Performance Evaluation (Cont.)

## 02

### GET INPUT FROM OTHERS

Ask for input from an employee's peers, direct reports, and important partners in other departments or units. This type of input is often seen as especially credible and helpful for employees, and done as a simple conversation or through a more formal feedback process (i.e. survey).

**!** Evaluate the relevance and usefulness of that input and compare it to other information about the person's performance (e.g., your observations, available metrics).

If you use multi-source feedback, consider ways to focus this on learning and development rather than performance evaluation.

## 03

### EVALUATE THE RESULTS THE EMPLOYEE ACHIEVED

Identify the employee's most important accomplishments of the past year. Determine the impact those accomplishments had on the department, college or unit and the contribution they made to important goals and priorities.

<b>Results - the "What"</b>	<b>Example</b>
Context	<i>One of Nadia's most important accomplishments this year was helping our new director of student services quickly learn how our office works, who the important people are within the college and across the University, and how to build good working relationships with our faculty and associate deans.</i>
Accomplishment	<i>Nadia created the onboarding plan and took responsibility for ensuring that it happened.</i>
Impact	<i>Her efforts allowed our new director to learn her role quickly and start identifying opportunities to improve student services within just a few weeks.</i>

Use relevant, accurate metrics (if available) to inform your evaluation of the employee's impact and contributions.

**!** While objective indicators of performance (e.g., metrics) are often seen as the ideal, they are often not as accurate as they appear and can be affected by differences in opportunities available to employees. For example, one employee may be using outdated equipment, which lowers productivity, or they may be providing a service to units that have an especially complex set of needs compared to others, resulting in a slower process.

## 04

### EVALUATE HOW THEY ACHIEVED RESULTS

Identify *how* the person was expected to achieve results. Including behaviors in the evaluation process is an important way of differentiating between employees who are performing more or less effectively than others. Ask yourself:

- Did they meet the behavioral expectations on a consistent basis?
- Did they consistently exceed these expectations?
- Did they perform below expectations much of the time?

Avoid focusing on too many competencies. Focus on those that are most important for achieving results. Typically, evaluating an employee on a couple of competencies\* is plenty.

 \* Need more information on behavioral competencies? Go to [z.umn.edu/competencies](https://z.umn.edu/competencies) to learn more about the competency model developed at the University of Minnesota to support talent development discussions.

# Performance Evaluation (Cont.)

## 04

### EVALUATE HOW THEY ACHIEVED RESULTS (CONT.)

#### Behaviors - the "How" Example

One of Mark's goals for the year was to increase his effectiveness in focusing on important issues and projects without getting distracted by unimportant or low priority details. Mark demonstrated that he was able to focus his time and effort on his three most important projects, while effectively managing a number of lower priority issues that arose throughout the year. His growth in this competency allowed him to successfully complete his three projects on time.



If you did not include behavioral expectations in the goals for the current performance management cycle, include them as you set goals for the next year. Behavioral competencies are part of ongoing check-ins and are an important focus for coaching and feedback.

## Get Set: Write the Review

## 05

### WRITE THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

#### The Narrative

Take the time to be thoughtful and specific, as the narrative will be the most useful portion of the review for the employee. Narratives provide important feedback that helps the employee understand how they are performing relative to the expectations for their role.

#### Specific Examples

Write a narrative to include *specific behavioral examples*.

- Be sure to *describe the results* achieved and the *impact* of those results.
- Examples of accomplishments provided by the employee and others can be incorporated into the narrative.
- Examples provided in narratives also identify areas for growth and development over the next year, setting the stage for goal-setting.

#### Reason for Rating

Include the reason for rating to help the employee understand why they received a particular score.

#### The Rating

#### Scale

Check with your local HR unit to determine the rating scale used. A simple three point rating scale in which each point on the scale is defined in a consistent and fair manner can be used. Example scale: 3 - Exceeds Expectations, 2 - Strong Contributor, and 1 - Requires Improvement.

#### Rating

Provide rating. If you rate multiple components, calculate an overall rating by averaging scores across each component of the review. Average the ratings rather than using a weighted average or a more complex scoring scheme.

# Performance Evaluation (Cont.)

## Go: Deliver the Review

### 06

#### DISCUSS THE REVIEW WITH THE EMPLOYEE

Your college, campus, or unit may have their own guidelines for delivering performance reviews. The steps below outline the research-supported best practices for having a review discussion, contact your local HR department to learn about the specific guidelines.

<i>Context</i>	If you had formal or informal ongoing check-ins throughout the year, summarize these discussions in the annual review conversation to provide context.
<i>Narrative &amp; Rating</i>	Discuss the narrative, the performance rating, and the rationale for the rating the person received. Discuss both the results the person achieved as well as how they achieved those results (i.e., behaviors).
<i>Input</i>	Ask the employee to share their thoughts and opinions on each portion of the review.

#### Addressing Challenges

<i>Show empathy</i>	If anything surprises the employee (particularly anything negative), consider whether this is the first time they are hearing it. If it is, then let them know that you are aware that this is new information to them and give them time to consider what they have heard.
<i>Give time</i>	Before and during review discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide employees with a written review prior to your discussion so that they a chance to familiarize and reflect.</li><li>• If they react defensively expect that they will need time before they can have a productive conversation about how to address the information. If the employee is receiving regular feedback and coaching* throughout the year, nothing in an annual review should be a surprise.</li></ul>
<i>Plan ahead for the next year</i>	Consider talking about goals and developmental activities for the next year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goals. If you aren't already doing so, consider setting broad annual goals** for next year and then using ongoing flexible goal-setting for specific shorter-term goals. Keep the broad goals specific, important and measurable.</li><li>• Development. The review session is often a good time to begin creating a development plan. Focus on the specific behaviors and skills that will help the person be successful in achieving the goals ahead.</li></ul>

**!** When planning development activities, it is tempting to start by suggesting formal training or development programs. However, the vast majority of learning occurs on the job through development assignments and ongoing coaching.



\*

See the **Quick Guide on Coaching** for more information on the coaching process.

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Refer to the **Quick Guide on Goal Setting** for steps and best practices on setting up goals.