

THE END OF CYCLE EVALUATION



United Nations
Performance
Management

While ongoing dialogue and feedback are critical throughout the cycle, managers must know how to document performance and conduct assessment meetings, which, if done well, can both inspire and motivate staff.

The end-of-cycle evaluation meeting

Conducting an end-of-cycle evaluation means more than completion a form. It involves dialogue between the manager and the staff member in an environment of trust and openness.

At the end of the performance cycle, the manager evaluates the extent to which the staff member has achieved his/her goals.

This is also the stage where feedback from additional manager(s), if any, is taken into account by the manager.

Where it is not possible to have a face-to-face meeting, a dedicated telephone/VTC conversation is sufficient.

The following are the key pre-requisites for a productive meeting:

- An open, trusting relationship between the manager and the staff member
- A collaborative inquiry into the year's performance starting with the staff member's assessment
- A problem identification and solving approach versus a judgmental approach

The Evaluation Meeting

Important Considerations for Managers and Staff

Evaluation meetings go well if they are set in a climate of ongoing feedback. This usually reduces the anxiety or fear connected with such meetings and transforms them into a normal, ongoing and helpful activity.



Managers

- Plan ahead of the initial discussion: Keep a personal record of progress made by staff during the year, dates and sources of information
- Have an initial discussion: Explain the purpose of the meeting and provide sufficient time to prepare
- Request a self-evaluation from the staff member: This allows individuals to review goals, competencies and learning activities, which is a useful starting point for the formal assessment meeting
- Review the staff member's goals: Reflect on how the work accomplished and competencies demonstrated have contributed to meeting the unit goals and to the development of the staff member



Staff Members

- Record progress on the goals throughout the year: Keep a personal record of your accomplishments, dates and sources of information
- Prepare a self-evaluation: This can be a short description of the progress on the goals achieved and competencies demonstrated during the year. It can also include progress made on any learning activities that were planned.



Managers

- Listen carefully: Use non-verbal cues such as nodding
- Be sensitive to what they say: “I see you are frustrated...”
- Be open to any criticism the staff member shares: “Help me understand that...”



Staff Members

- Listen carefully to your manager: Ask questions if you need clarification
- Consider feedback ‘as a gift’: Be open to your manager’s suggestions for improvement and learning.
- Give feedback to your manager: Let him or her know what they have done to be helpful, and what else could be useful, going forward.

Five steps to conducting an effective review meeting:

STEP 1 Open the Meeting

- Open the meeting by making the staff member feel comfortable
- Review the purpose of the meeting and what will be covered

STEP 2 Major Achievements - goals

- Ask the staff member to highlight their accomplishments of the year, and review their progress towards each goal. This starts the meeting on a positive note.
- Be prepared to share your own thoughts on the topic

STEP 3 Competencies

- Follow the same process to review the competencies.
- Give specific examples of improvement areas and strengths that were demonstrated.

STEP 4 Development and Learning Goals

- Ask the staff member to review their learning goals and actions, and ask for specific examples.
- Be prepared to share your own thoughts on the topic.

STEP 5 Evaluate and Rate Overall Performance

- Open discussion. Discuss overall achievements, development opportunities and possible rating.

Tips for Staff



- While the self-evaluation is optional, it is highly recommended.
- Self-evaluation comments should reflect the progress on the goals that you set for the year, along with any additional special projects.
- The self-evaluation is a place to record any career development or learning goals attained, new skills and experiences, etc.
- If there were factors that affected your performance, prepare specific data to support your comments.
- Comments on the demonstration of your competencies.

Writing Effective Evaluations Comments

Tips for Supervisors



- Write your evaluation comments while they are still fresh in your mind. Ideally, within 24 hours of the meeting.
- Record an individual's achievements/outputs. Describe what the staff member has delivered/produced, along with progress in competency development. Ideally, you should describe the specific and observable behaviors you saw, the context in which you saw them, and the impact on you and the team. Lead with action verbs (completed, delivered, encourages, influenced, etc.)
- Describe the staff member's role accurately. Give credit where credit is due. For example: Staff member (name) initiated the ABC project, displayed perseverance and attained XYZ results. If the staff member was not the actual leader, but made a strong contribution, use language that portrays active participation.
- Incorporate the additional manager comments to reflect a fuller range of performance.

Core Values and Competencies Ratings and Overall Ratings

Staff members should also be made aware that they will be appraised in the demonstration of the behavioral indicators that apply to each of the core values and competencies and shall be given one of the following four ratings:

- Outstanding
- Fully competent
- Requires Development
- Unsatisfactory

In general, competency ratings are a basis for staff development but they are also taken into account when determining the final performance ratings.

Each of these four ratings establishes the level of mastery of each of the core values and competencies by the staff member during the performance cycle. The evaluation should be based on the consistency and frequency that the individual has been observed as acting or behaving in accordance with the particular competency or value.

It is best if evaluation meetings do not contain any surprises. Staff should be aware of performance issues as they arise through ongoing feedback. Do not wait until end of cycle to advise a staff member of performance shortcomings.

The final overall rating for the staff member's performance during the performance period should be determined according to the rating descriptions for assessing overall performance (section 9 of ST/AI/2010/5). The first reporting officer needs to consider both the achievement of the goals and the demonstration of the relevant competencies.

Before applying an overall rating, the first reporting officer should discuss the evaluations of all staff members who report to him/her with the second reporting officer, who is also given an opportunity to comment, as appropriate.



Be consistent and balanced

- There must be consistency between the ratings and the comments. Staff members should not receive satisfactory (or high) ratings with commentary that contradicts those ratings.
- It is acceptable for evaluations to contain some areas for development and to assign an overall rating of 'fully successful performance.'
- Most staff members are more skilled in some areas than in others – a fair evaluation will, therefore, most likely have mixed ratings and narratives.
- A staff member's self-evaluation may vary considerably from the first reporting officer's assessment. The first reporting officer should use his/her judgment in such cases and discuss with the staff member before evaluating.
- Factors outside the staff member's control and which had an impact on his/her performance should be taken into account in the evaluation process.

There should be no surprises

- An entry in a performance evaluation should not be the first indication to a staff member of a performance shortcoming or unsatisfactory performance. There should be ongoing performance-related discussions throughout the year in which such issues are discussed.

Watch for bias

- Avoid 'similar to me' bias (e.g., giving a staff member higher ratings because s/he is like you (e.g., same race, gender, age, values, religion, communication /communication style etc.).
- Avoid personal biases (e.g., friendship with a staff member).
- Beware of the 'halo' effect - a staff member who performs exceptionally well on a particular aspect of the job does not necessarily exceed expectations for the entire cycle. Overall ratings cover performance for the entire cycle.
- Beware of the 'horns' effect – don't let an isolated negative incident colour your evaluation of the whole period.
- Beware of 'recency' bias – when evaluating, think about more than the staff member's most recent performance/accomplishments. Evaluations are a balanced view of work throughout the reporting period. Keep notes on performance during the cycle, and use the examples you have gathered in the evaluation.
- Avoid giving undeservedly low evaluations to appear as a 'tough' manager or unmerited positive evaluations to appear as a 'successful' manager
- Avoid the 'central' tendency – i.e., evaluating all staff as being about average, which is often due to difficulty in collecting sufficient work performance information during the cycle.

Evaluations are not recommendations for promotion

- The performance evaluation is a realistic measure of how well the staff member met performance expectations during the performance cycle. The first reporting officer may mention areas for a staff member's potential growth but should not write a promotion recommendation. Eligibility and suitability for higher-level positions is determined through the Staff Selection System (ST/AI/2010/3).

Apply objective performance standards

- See the UN competency development guide ([link](#)), which sets out objective behavioural indicators for all values, core competencies and managerial competencies.
- Apply the same standards to all staff members. First reporting officers should discuss potential ratings with the second reporting officer to ensure consistency and fairness across work units
- Don't compare staff members against one another; instead, evaluate against well-defined and agreed-upon objectives.
- Don't lower your standards to avoid confrontation.

Ratings are not inherited

- Ratings are not inherited from one cycle to another - an 'exceeds performance expectations' rating for one cycle does not automatically lead to that rating for subsequent cycles.