



## Writing Appraisals

At various points during the appraisal period, employees write self-assessments and rating officials write assessments of their employees. This occurs during the progress review, when a close-out is necessary, and at the end of the year. These assessments capture the employee's performance against his or her critical elements. This fact sheet describes some tips for completing self-assessments and employee assessments.

## Self-Assessments

Self-assessments are written by the employee and provide an opportunity for the employee to be an advocate for him or her self by documenting achievements, accomplishments and impacts as relates to the critical elements. Employees should use the opportunity to demonstrate links between performance expectations, what they have accomplished and the organizational mission and goals and to explain how they overcame challenges and dealt with special circumstances.

## Employee Assessments

Although rating officials frequently write employee assessments after self-assessments have been submitted, rating officials should not simply concur with what the employee already wrote. Employee assessments should provide employees with meaningful, constructive, and candid feedback and should address both strong and poor performance. Rating officials should ensure that they are making meaningful distinctions in performance between their employees. To ensure that they have a full and accurate picture of the employee's performance, rating officials may want to solicit observations from other managers or supervisors who have worked with the employee or from customers or peers and may want to include these observations in their assessments.

When writing assessments, ask yourself:

- What did I (or the employee) achieve?
- How well did I (or the employee) do it?
- How did it help the organization?
- What critical behaviors did I (or the employee) exhibit?
- What special circumstances made the accomplishment even more significant?

## Assessment Dos and Don'ts

When writing self-assessments and employee assessments, employees and rating officials should make sure to:

- Set aside adequate time to reflect and write – rushing through the process at the last minute will ensure that achievements are forgotten or inadequately captured!

- Review organizational mission and goals, critical elements, performance standards, and any journals or notes that were captured during the year.
- Be specific and concise – there is no character limit under the Interim Performance Management System, but you don't want your accomplishments obscured by unnecessary details and explanations.
- Spell out any acronyms and describe processes if necessary.
- Focus on accomplishments from within the current appraisal period only.
- Use spelling and grammar check and reread your writing to ensure that it is well-written and clear.

Employees and rating officials should make sure, however, not to:

- Include accomplishments that aren't clearly linked to critical elements.
- Simply list the tasks performed.
- Assume that others who read your assessment will have full knowledge of everything that your Department did or that they are aware of all the challenges you faced.
- Leave the reviewer wondering why the accomplishments you included were important or what the employee did to contribute to a team accomplishment.
- Wait until the last minute and try to write a quick assessment from memory.

## Assessment Model

Although assessments can be written in any format, the following is a helpful formula that you can follow when writing an assessment to ensure that all the necessary information is captured:

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<b>Situation:</b> Provide context so readers understand why you were assigned the critical element and how it benefits the organization.
<b>Challenges:</b> Describe any unusual circumstances you faced.
<b>Results:</b> Describe actual results, including how they benefitted the organization
<b>Actions:</b> Describe the actions you took and the behaviors you exhibited.
<b>Measurements:</b> Describe how well you performance against the performance standards.

## Additional questions?

Additional resources are available at the DON Performance Management and Awards portal:

<https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/PerformanceManagement/Pages/default.aspx>