

# RATER'S GUIDE



**STATE OF ALASKA**

**Division of Personnel**

**Department of Administration**

**2021**

## Limitations on the Use of the *Rater's Guide*

The *Rater's Guide* does not constitute a contract of employment, nor does it modify or alter any contract, collective bargaining agreement or statute that governs an employee's employment with the State. It is subject to change from time to time.

The *Guide* does not alter the employing agency's right to determine, in its sole discretion, whether or not an employee has successfully completed or will successfully complete his or her probationary period. Evaluations provided to a probationary employee are provided for the employee's benefit, not because the employing agency has any obligation to demonstrate that any cause standard has been met in determining that an employee has not or will not successfully complete the probationary period.

The *Rater's Guide* replaces all previous versions of the *Rater's Guide to Performance Appraisals*.

## Authority

*AS 39.25.150(14). Scope of the Rules*

*The Personnel Rules must provide for the development, maintenance, and use of employee performance records.*

*2 AAC 07.295. Personnel Evaluation*

*(a) the director [of the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations] shall prescribe the nature, form, and frequency of personnel evaluations and may require a personnel evaluation at any time during an employee's probationary period.*

*(b) the director [of the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations] may take any action necessary to secure the correction of an evaluation report that is in error.*

*(c) the standards of performance that are established as a basis for personnel evaluation must relate to the duties of the employee's position and the job class to which it is allocated.*

*(d) the employee's supervisor shall discuss each personnel evaluation with the employee, with a goal of assisting the employee to understand the degree to which the employee is meeting the requirements of the position.*

*(e) the appointing authority shall file employee evaluations with the director. An employee evaluation is open to inspection by the employee or the employee's designated agent. The evaluations must also be open for inspection, for employment related considerations, by other officers and employees at the discretion of the director [of the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations].*

The main purpose of the *Rater's Guide* is to provide information about the specific provisions regarding personnel evaluations identified in 2 AAC 07.295.

Some collective bargaining agreements make reference to performance evaluations or contain specific terms related to them. Such provisions are subject to change during the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements. It is not the intent of the *Rater's Guide* to provide up-to-date information on the terms of a particular collective bargaining agreement. Where references are made to collective bargaining agreements, the purpose is to explain the performance evaluation process in the broad context of a human resource system which operates within both merit system rules and collective bargaining.

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## Introduction

The performance management process is an effective management tool for establishing and maintaining a vital communication link between supervisor and employee and improving employee job performance and behaviors. Performance management is a collaboration between employees and their supervisors—both have an essential role to play. The performance management process is a recurring cycle of setting goals and expectations, reviewing performance, and improving performance where necessary. Of course, one cannot evaluate performance if clear metrics do not exist.

Performance evaluations are required, but that is not the main reason we do them. Instead, performance evaluations are one of the primary tools for managers to use to cultivate employees in order to meet strategic organizational goals.

Note: While this guide refers to supervisors, it includes lead positions responsible for writing and contributing to performance evaluations.

For additional training on all subject areas listed in this guide please refer to the Performance Management Curriculum in AspireAlaska.

The Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) form can be found on the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations website. Variations of this form will not be accepted unless authorized by the DOP&LR Director.

## Overview of the Performance Planning Process

Performance planning for the upcoming review period provides an opportunity for supervisors and employees to work together to clarify and set performance expectations, create SMART goals for the future, and identify learning and development activities that will provide growth opportunities for the year ahead. The Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) form provides space to define each of these areas for the upcoming rating period. These fields should be reviewed and updated on the PMLD form each review period.

While it is ultimately supervisors who will determine whether an employee has met (or not met) expectations at the end of the review cycle, these plans should be developed collaboratively at the beginning of each review cycle. For new employees, or for employee's changing positions, performance planning should be completed as soon as possible after the employee is hired into their position.

Below is a summary of employee and supervisor responsibilities to ensure success during the performance planning process.

### 1. Define Performance Expectations

Employees should work with their supervisors to identify performance and behavioral expectations for someone in their position based on their official Position Description, which can be found in the [Online Position Description \(OPD\)](#) system. Performance Expectations are behavioral indicators with measurable results that define the standard for what "meets expectations." If an employee is meeting their performance expectations, they can objectively be determined to be performing well. If not, this signals clear areas for improvement.

These performance expectations are then added to the Performance Expectations section of the Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) plan.

Performance expectations should be:

- Observable (an action or behavior you can see)
- Job-related (tied to their job description)
- Results-oriented (centered on a particular outcome)

*Examples for Accounting Technician 2:*

- *Documents purchasing and invoicing within seven days.*
- *Demonstrates appropriate use of coding, including chart of account year and fiscal period codes.*
- *Analyzes the coding on each RSA to determine recommended billing cycle.*

At the end of your planned review cycle, the supervisor will determine whether the employee met these expectations. They have two options on the form:

- Met Expectations
- Did Not Meet Expectations

## **2. Set SMART performance goals.**

Employees will work with their supervisor to define performance goals for the year (i.e., what you should aim to accomplish over the upcoming year based on your section/division/department's strategic objectives) and record this information in the SMART Goals section of the Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) plan. Performance goals should be "S.M.A.R.T.," so check that they are:

- **Specific:** The goal should be narrowly focused and empower the employee to plan out their year and set milestones.
- **Measurable:** The goal should have a quantifiable component (e.g., length of time, dollar amount).
- **Attainable:** The plan should have a measurable part (e.g., length of time, dollar amount).
- **Relevant:** The goal should be relevant to the employee's work and the department or division's strategic priorities.
- **Time-Bound:** The plan should make it clear when the employee is meant to have met their objective.

*Examples for Accounting Technician 2:*

- *Serve on one interview panel for a technical level position within the Department by September 30, 2021.*
- *Develop an instructions worksheet on RSA functions to provide cross-training to one other Accounting Technician 2 by June 30, 2021.*

At the end of your planned review cycle, the supervisor will determine whether the employee met these goals. They have two options on the form:

- Met Goal
- Did Not Meet Goal

### 3. Outline a learning and development plan

The employee's learning and development plan should be tailored to their specific interests and goals and should identify growth opportunities that directly align with the organization's objectives. There are four steps to constructing a clear development plan that will help an employee reach their development goals.

Employees should ask themselves: how would I like to learn and grow this year? What skills do I need to develop? Employees should record this information to discuss with their supervisor and make sure these ideas get added to the Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) plan.

Supervisors should provide opportunities for training and stretch assignments that help employees meet their current learning and development goals. For example, an employee has expressed interest in becoming a supervisor in the future. The current supervisor could offer to let that employee participate in a hiring panel as a stretch assignment.

### 4. Check in throughout the year

Create a plan to keep track of progress on the Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) form throughout the year. Supervisors should offer frequent, informal feedback throughout the year, and coach employees through their challenges to keep them on track and help them improve.

Employees should engage in regular check-ins with their supervisor and be sure to clarify information when needed, and keep their supervisor apprised of any questions, problems, concerns etc. that may arise.

## Coaching for Performance Throughout the Review Period

Communicating standards and expectations orally and in writing to allow an employee the opportunity to ask for clarification or discussion of the criteria is essential. The greater the mutual understanding about expected job performance between you and your employee, the better. Employees who understand what is expected are more likely to deliver acceptable performance; the sooner the employee is aware of the standards, the greater chance the employee can acceptably perform the work from the beginning.

In an effective organization, job performance is continuously coached. *Coaching is the process of letting employees know that what they do matters.*

Although every supervisor's approach to coaching an employee's performance is unique, the primary method should include these steps:

1. Observe the employee's performance
2. Identify performance gaps
3. Provide timely feedback to the employee
4. Document observations and feedback

### Observe the employee's performance

Observations can be planned or spontaneous. Supervisors should communicate with employees ahead of time about the various ways performance could be monitored. The following are some ways to observe performance.

- Self-Report: Establish a performance expectation requiring an employee to provide regular status reports on his or her performance.

- Meetings: Schedule regular meetings to stay informed about the employee's performance, such as status meetings on a long-term project.
- Feedback from third parties: Lead workers, coworkers, and customers may provide feedback about an employee's job performance.

*Please note: The accuracy of this kind of feedback should be verified.*

- Examples: Collect copies of written documentation or samples of an employee's work product.
- Audits/sampling: Review a portion or percentage of an employee's work product.
- Spot checks: Routinely review the employee's work or do brief check-ins or phone calls.
- Management by walking around: Walk through the employee's work area or schedule "sit-ins" to observe job performance.

### **Identify performance gaps**

Performance gaps are defined as the difference between the employee's actual performance and expected performance based on the performance expectations established in the Performance Planning Session.

Once the performance gap is identified, work with the employee, if possible, to identify the reason and cause to then work on a plan for how to meet that expectation.

Here are some example causes for Performance Gaps:

- Competency: This usually occurs with a new or probationary employee where they have not previously demonstrated the ability to meet the expectation. In this case, supervisors need to help build up the employee's knowledge, skills, or ability through training, job aids, and/or peer mentoring.
- Motivation: This can occur when an employee has demonstrated the ability to meet the expectation or even exceed the expectation, but recently they have not been meeting that expectation. This could be due to a lack of motivation. It is important for supervisors to provide consistent feedback to their employees to help motivate them to achieve more. If the employee is not recognized for the good job they are doing, it can affect their motivation long term.
- Environmental: This can also occur for a multitude of reasons but is often outside of the employee's direct control. Things like a slow computer that won't run the latest software, lack of data necessary to complete tasks, and/or conflicting information. This can be solved by working with whoever needs to be reached to fix the underlying issue.

The following is an example where an Accounting Technician 2 is not meeting one of the performance expectations identified on their Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) form and some of the reasons and potential solutions that can be explored.

Performance Expectation: Documents purchasing and invoicing within seven days.

Performance Gap: Employee is not documenting purchasing and invoicing within seven days.

Cause	Example Reason	Example Solution
Competency	The Accounting Technician 2 is a new employee, and they lack the necessary skills needed to document the purchasing and invoicing within seven days.	Help provide training for the employee to increase their competency. That could mean sitting with another accounting

		technician to see how they process and document the purchasing and invoicing.
Motivation	The Accounting Technician 2 has demonstrated the ability to meet the expectation, but recently they are no longer meeting that expectation because they do not know why things have to be documented within seven days.	Have a discussion with the employee and make sure that they understand why that performance expectation was set with that timeframe. It might also require some additional coaching to help improve employee motivation.  If this is a brand-new position, then you could consider whether a change needs to be made to the expectation as well if it is hindering other work.
Environmental	The Accounting Technician 2 has continually experienced issues with the software that keeps causing delays for documenting the purchasing and invoicing within seven days.	Work with the Admin Staff and OIT to figure out if there are any computer upgrades or software upgrades that need to be made to the employee's computer. If the changes will take time or cannot be made right away, you could consider updating the Performance Expectations.

The proper solution to the performance gap depends on the reason(s). Once causes have been identified, then solutions can be worked out with the employee to help them meet all expectations.

### **Provide prompt feedback to the employee**

Feedback is a valuable tool that supervisors can use to ensure clear, consistent communication about an employee's performance. The most effective feedback occurs when given promptly after an occasion arises that warrants it.

Feedback is an essential component of coaching; especially when the feedback is expressed positively and is specific to defined performance expectations. When giving feedback:

- Avoid being vague or subjective.
- Show the employee how their performance is or is not meeting the expectations and standards.
- Make it individualized—do not compare to other staff but to the bar or established metric for success.

**Praise:** When praise is warranted for improvement, prompt feedback means that the quicker positive feedback is provided to the employee, the sooner the excellent work is repeated. Encourage good work by not letting it go unnoticed, and by being specific.

For example, rather than telling the employee vaguely that they “did a great job with the year-end order”, provide objective, factual job-related feedback and/or examples; such as, “I liked your assistance in helping me with our year-end orders by coming up with that spreadsheet to track the orders and taking the lead in coordinating with the vendors and our accounting staff.”

**Correction:** When correction in performance is warranted, prompt feedback means that the quicker the employee is aware of the need for correction, the sooner they can correct it and improve. Correcting feedback



should be given in private. Start by discussing what you've observed with the employee and then asking how they could have done better.

- If the employee identifies a better way to perform, provide positive feedback to encourage them.
- If the employee cannot determine a better way, make your feedback positive and your solution practical.

**Challenge:** When an employee gets off-track in meeting standards or expectations, challenge their behavior. Like correcting feedback, challenging feedback should be given in private. Start by stating what poor performance you have observed and listen to their response. Remind them of the performance standard or expectation. Ask the employee for a specific solution and then agree together on the solution. Ensure the employee has implemented the solution by follow-up observation.

Asking employees to evaluate their performance regularly can help determine how well you communicate and coach the employee.

### **Informal review**

In contrast with the formal review period, the informal review is based on day-to-day contacts between supervisors and employees where progress is checked, and performance is discussed. During these informal reviews, plans for correcting performance deficiencies or for developing performance may be made, and performance should be monitored for progress in meeting the plans. Inaccurate or inadequate performance expectations may be identified and corrected during the informal review process.

The ongoing informal review is an integral part of the performance appraisal process. When these casual reviews are documented and relied upon in the preparation of the formal evaluation report, the final evaluation report is much like a summary of the informal reviews.

Throughout the entire appraisal period, show the employee how the employee's performance is or is not meeting the expectations and standards. Discuss the results and work with the employee to identify solutions, if needed.

There should be no surprises to the employee in the performance evaluation report, as it should never be the first time the employee learns they are not meeting expectations and standards.

If after implementing solutions and/or feedback with a timeframe for improvement the employee's performance is still not meeting expectations, contact your departmental HR office for assistance with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or other coaching tools.

### **Document observations and feedback**

Keeping notes about performance and collecting other documentation throughout the rating period is a good habit for supervisors. All coaching and informal review activities should be documented and kept in a secure location. They must be available for the employee's review upon request, although you may also copy the employee when you place it in their file. Some collective bargaining agreements require them to be provided to the employee at the time it is originated.

Documentation may include:

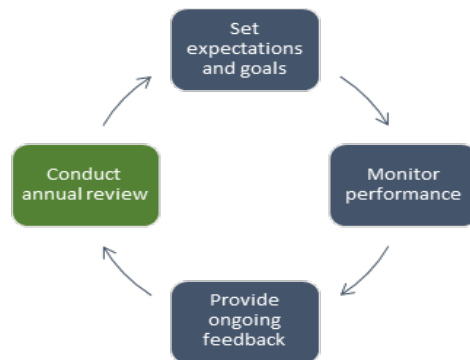
- Performance planning documentation, including performance gap identification
- Notes on feedback and informal performance reviews
- Records of discussions related to work performance

- Activity, audit reports
- Specific instances of work that falls short of the standard or exceeds the standard (redact confidential information such as client names, SSN, etc. OR if the document is protected by law or policy, reference document but do not maintain in the file)
- Commendations (e.g., letters of appreciation, customer feedback) or substantiated (not hearsay or supposition) critical comments received about an employee's work.
- Special activities or awards the employee received that reflect on their or the organization's performance.
- Training records
- Appropriate attendance reports (without medical information)

## Overview of the Performance Evaluation Process

### What are performance evaluations?

Performance evaluations are formal meetings occurring at specific time intervals (typically annual) held between an employee and their supervisor. These meetings are required by the organization, and different from one-on-one coaching sessions or informal feedback discussions.



Supervisors typically come into performance evaluations prepared with data on an employees' results and behaviors to discuss how well they are doing on the job — or “the degree to which the employee is meeting the requirements of the position,” as stated in the State of Alaska's Personnel Rules. Formal performance reviews are to be conducted annually to discuss what has gone well and/or where employees need to improve. Performance evaluations may also be conducted for additional reasons as listed a little later in this guide.

The formal performance evaluation process gives employees and their supervisors a formal opportunity to discuss where performance is strong, where it should be improved, and plan for the next year.

Performance evaluations are directly linked to:

1. **Strategic Planning:** Long-term workforce planning uses performance management results to assess the workforce's effectiveness and whether or not the organization is hiring and retaining the right people.
2. **Recognition:** Visible appreciation leads to higher employee engagement and job satisfaction. Performance evaluations commemorate the work that employees conduct throughout the year, formally acknowledging their achievements.

3. **Learning and Development:** At the end of the performance evaluation, employees and supervisors develop a plan for further growth and development.
4. **Workforce Planning:** Performance evaluations provide data necessary to make merit-based workforce planning decisions. Supervisors can use this information to leverage each employee's strengths and align the right people to the most valuable work.

When clear performance expectations, goals, and development activities have been established during the planning period, and coaching conversations have been held throughout the year, the performance evaluation process should be straightforward.

### **How to Prepare for a Performance Evaluation**

The performance appraisal process is cyclical. Supervisors continuously assign work, communicate performance expectations, coach performance, and evaluate how well the work has been done. Change in any one of these steps may trigger change or a need for action in another.

Some steps in the performance appraisal process, such as coaching performance, are often performed ad hoc in daily interactions or the routine review of work products. Other actions, such as reporting performance or clarifying job duties, are more typically done according to a defined process or schedule, such as an evaluation written at the end of a review cycle or a position description (PD) updated in preparation for recruitment.

### **Determine the Type of Evaluation to be Written**

Below are the most common reasons for preparing a performance evaluation for a State of Alaska classified employee (Note: Specific requirements are subject to the applicable collective bargaining agreement provisions).

**Required:** *The following evaluations are required by statute, regulation, contract or other authority and must be completed.*

Mid-Probation	Probationary employees are due a mid-probation performance evaluation completed halfway through their probationary period. Failure to provide the mid-probation performance evaluation may affect a department's ability to separate a probationary employee. See the applicable collective bargaining agreement.
End of probation	Employees are due a performance evaluation documenting successful completion of the probationary period. This applies specifically to the General Government, Supervisory, Correctional Officer, Public Safety, AVTEC and Confidential bargaining units.
Annual	Permanent employees are due a written performance evaluation annually. This applies specifically to the General Government, Supervisory, Correctional Officer, Public Safety, LTC, AVTEC and Confidential bargaining units. Pay increments are paid only when an annual evaluation recommending such is finalized. For employees in the General Government, LTC, Supervisory, and Confidential bargaining units, an evaluation with an overall rating of mid-acceptable or higher is required for a merit increase to be granted.
Separation from State Service	An employee, including a nonpermanent one, is due a written performance evaluation when they leave state service.

**Recommended:** *Evaluation types described in this section serve useful performance management purposes and are strongly recommended.*

Change of Supervisor	A performance evaluation should be written when there is a change of supervisor.
Change of Position	A performance evaluation should be written when an employee has a change of position whether that is a transfer, promotion, or demotion).
Change of Performance	A performance evaluation should be written when an employee's performance becomes less than mid acceptable or when performance improves to mid acceptable. Employee Relations staff in the Division of Personnel can provide agency guidelines.
Seasonal	A performance evaluation should be written when an employee goes on seasonal leave without pay after seasonal employment of more than 30 days.

**Discretionary:** *Evaluation types described in this section are not required by statute, regulation, contract or other authority. They may be completed at the discretion of the supervisor and are recommended by the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations as good management practice.*

Employee Requested	Employees in some bargaining units may request a written performance evaluation at reasonable intervals.
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When in doubt, supervisors should contact HR staff to ensure all evaluations are in accordance with state and department policy and procedure.

### **Employee Accomplishment Statement**

Employee accomplishment statements allow employees to reflect on and document the contributions they have made to the organization over the performance year. These statements are included on the Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) plan and become part of the employee's performance record.

Before the supervisor rates the employee on their performance during the review period, employees should complete their accomplishment statements for their supervisors to review and consider as they write the employee's evaluation for the review period. These statements should be concise (no more than a couple of paragraphs long) and emphasize the employee's most significant achievements during the rating period.

### **Writing the Evaluation**

Leading up to a performance evaluation meeting, supervisors should set aside time to review the employee's accomplishment statement and fill out the employee's Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) plan, which includes:

- Documentation of the employee's previously agreed-upon SMART goals, performance expectations, and learning and development goals.
- Ratings on whether the employee Meets Expectations or Does Not Meet Expectations for performance throughout the review period.

- Acknowledgment of whether the employee Met their SMART goals or Did Not Meet their SMART goals.
- Acknowledgment of whether the employee Completed or Did Not Complete their learning and development activities.
- The Employee Accomplishment Statement, which describes what they see as their notable accomplishments during the review period.
- An Overall Performance Rating and a Supervisor Narrative Statement to justify this rating.

Below are the steps that should be followed when completing the evaluation:

### 1. **Review documentation**

Based on your records and observations of employees' performance throughout the rating period, as well as the Employee Accomplishment Statement, determine whether or not expectations are being met. It is essential that you document your observations routinely so you don't have to rely on your memory.

You may request an employee provide information and/or documentation on their performance during the rating period.

### 2. **Employee Information**

It is essential that the information in the Employee Information section is correct. Ensure the employee's name, employee ID, position title, the reason for evaluation, home unit code, etc., are accurate. Enter the dates the evaluation covers.

For a Mid-Probation Evaluation, the first date of the rating period is the date the employee was hired into the position. For all other assessments, the first date of the rating period is the next day after the end date of the previous evaluation. For annual evaluations, the GGU collective bargaining agreement limits the beginning date to no more than one year back from the date the evaluation is being written. Consult with HR if you need guidance on reporting coverage dates.

### 3. **Rating Performance During the Review Period**

Review each Performance Expectation, SMART Goal, and Learning and Development Activity outlined on the Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) plan. Consider whether the employee has met or completed each expectation or action. Typically, this analysis requires a review of overall performance in each functional area during a pre-determined period, often a year.

To determine the overall level of performance an employee has achieved, performance documentation should be compared against the established performance expectations for the position.

**Supervisors must rate each item on the PMLD as follows:**

- Rating whether the employee **Meets Expectations** or **Does Not Meet Expectations** for each performance expectation throughout the review period.
- Acknowledgment of whether the employee **Met** their SMART goals or **Did Not Meet** their SMART goals.
- Acknowledgment of whether the employee **Completed** or **Did Not Complete** their learning and development activities.

### 4. **Write the Supervisor Narrative Statement**

Performance narratives help describe why a certain overall rating was given. In an employee's Performance Management & Learning and Development (PMLD) plan, performance narratives justify the rating given on a 5-level scale.

Paired with frequent, informal feedback and coaching, performance narratives help set the stage for improved performance by providing employees with constructive feedback they can use to grow professionally. Additionally, performance narratives help supervisors concretely defend the ratings they select for their employees and paint a picture of performance.

Determine if special circumstances—for example, a new system implementation that caused errors - existed during the rating period that affected the employee's ability to meet standards, negatively or positively. If so, you may need to incorporate this information into the narrative.

A well-written performance narrative will:

- Be specific and accurately describe the employee's performance
- Focus on observable behaviors and measurable results (not attitudes or personality)
- Avoid embellishments and generalizations, and focus on concrete facts
- Address the employee's SMART goals and performance expectations directly

### Examples

Effective Statement	Ineffective Statement
You take detailed notes during meetings so I can focus on facilitating.	You are really organized.
In the past three months, only one of your projects met its deadline.	You don't seem to care about your job.
You raise your voice and pound the table when team members disagree with you, and this disrupts our meetings.	You are always argumentative.

Remember, certain information is never appropriate to include in a performance evaluation narrative. For example, there should be no mention of employee medical information, naming names of other employees, or use of protected leave such as FMLA/AFLA in the performance plan or evaluation. If you need help determining whether information is appropriate to include in a performance plan or narrative, consult your HR staff.

### Examples

Inappropriate Statement	Appropriate Statement
You were out on FMLA due to the birth of your child, but you were still able to complete your projects on time.	You completed your assigned projects within established timeframes.
You rarely work a full work-week because you are always going to doctor's appointments.	You have struggled to schedule your leave in accordance with division policy and expectations.

Your quantity and quality of work has improved dramatically because of the reasonable accommodations put in place for your disability.	Your performance has improved during this rating period, as demonstrated by the reduction in processing errors by 30% and completion of tasks within established timeframes.
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## 5. Select an Overall Rating

The State of Alaska uses a standard performance evaluation form with five possible Overall performance ratings. Supervisors must be able to support the selected rating through their narrative statement, as well as the ratings given on performance expectations, SMART goals, and learning and development activities.

1. Unacceptable
2. Low Acceptable
3. Mid Acceptable
4. High Acceptable
5. Outstanding

Most employees meet their expectations; active feedback and coaching can help employees achieve higher ratings and avoid unwanted ratings of “Unacceptable” and “Low Acceptable.” It is extremely rare for a supervisor to have a large percentage of employees with “Unacceptable” and “Outstanding” ratings.

More information on selecting appropriate ratings can be found in Appendix A.

## 6. Select a Recommended Action

A list of recommended actions can be found in Appendix C.

## Conducting Evaluation Meetings

Performance management is a continual cycle of communicating goals and expectations, monitoring performance, offering frequent, informal feedback, and coaching the employee through specific challenges. Therefore, everything discussed during this meeting should already be familiar to the employee - there should be no surprises.

For mid-probation, end of, or extension of probation and annual evaluations, the appraisal meeting is how supervisors meet the requirement in the Personnel Rules to “discuss each personnel evaluation with the employee, with the goal of assisting the employee to understand the degree to which the employee is meeting the requirements of the position”.

Supervisors should set up the discussion for a mutually convenient date and time about a week in advance. For example, set aside about an hour with no ringing phones or interruptions, and if the meeting is in person, locate a private room for the discussion. Provide a draft of the performance evaluation to the employee two working days before the meeting so they have time to review it (this is a requirement of the GGU collective bargaining agreement.)

Below are essential components of an effective evaluation meeting.

- Review goals and performance expectations set at the last meeting.



- Discuss practical and ineffective performance related to the employee's observable results and behaviors and goals that were reached and not reached.
- Talk through less than acceptable performance areas and identify specific areas for improvement, describing the desired future state. Request the employee's input.
- Discuss goals and career objectives and develop a growth plan that centers around learning and development opportunities.

Consider the employee's input when determining whether or not to revise the evaluation before finalization. Document the new goals discussed during the meeting. If appropriate for any low acceptable or unacceptable ratings, document the consequences for not meeting goals in the proper section. Whether you revise or not, sign and date the evaluation, retain a copy, and promptly provide the original to the employee for their final review and signature.

If an employee does not concur with the evaluation, they may attach written comments, typically known as a "rebuttal," which becomes a permanent part of the evaluation. Most collective bargaining agreements have timelines to submit rebuttals which begin when the signed assessment is provided to the employee. Rebuttals containing medical information or other employee or client names must have that information redacted before forwarding it for final processing.

If the employee declines to sign the evaluation, note that in the employee signature block before forwarding the original copy for final processing. The original, signed copy must be processed and placed in the employee's permanent record.

Note: The State of Alaska performance evaluation process allows for next-level managers (the supervisor's supervisor) to review evaluations before they are presented to the employee being evaluated. Supervisors should follow their department or division guidelines regarding the evaluation review process. The second-level reviewer may be the commissioner, division director, or section or unit manager.

The function of the second-level reviewer is not to redo the evaluation but rather to ensure the rating procedure used by the supervisor is fair, and conforms to the guidelines outlined in this publication and in department policies and procedures. Any disagreements between rater and reviewer should be resolved, and changes resulting from management review should be incorporated into the evaluation prior to the review being seen by the employee. Your department HR Staff is available for consultation.

## **Develop Plan for Future Performance**

The purpose of this step in the cycle is to help supervisors and employees decide how they can work together to maintain or increase employee performance and more fully develop the employee's potential. After each performance evaluation, the cycle begins again with the Performance Planning process outlined at the beginning of this guide.

Future development relies on the following two steps:

### **1. Determine if change is needed**

The purpose of this step is to decide if and how employee performance could be developed. You should answer these questions:

- What does the position need to accomplish during the next rating period? Will the program or mission change?
- Is it necessary to improve performance, or is maintaining performance the appropriate thing to do?



- What is the employee's potential for growth?
- How can that potential be developed to be consistent with agency goals?

## 2. Planning

If it is necessary to improve performance, the proper solution to the performance gap depends on the reason(s) for the gap. Once needs have been identified, planning to meet those needs can begin. Successful planning is a joint effort between you and the employee. It helps to clarify and prioritize the needs and to choose an appropriate technique to meet those needs.

Improvement needs are easily identified by comparing the performance standard objectives with the results achieved. Identify the needs associated with the performance gap analysis and establish priorities.

**Improve performance:** Respond to these needs first so the employee can reach the desired or required level of performance.

- If the performance analysis reveals a competence performance gap, again focus in the planning stage on finding training and/or proficiency development solutions.
- If the performance analysis reveals a motivation performance gap that has not improved with coaching, consult with HR staff for assistance with identifying appropriate goals and consequences if the employee does not change their performance.

**Develop performance:** If an employee is consistently at or above standards focus on how to develop that person's potential for advancement or job expansion consistent with agency goals.

- Expand performance: Change in the agency programs, staff, laws, policies or rules may lead to a change in the employee's responsibilities. This may mean that developing the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities will be necessary to effectively respond to such changes and to maintain quality of job performance.
- Future career performance: You can guide and assist employees in preparing for their career advancement by listening, asking good questions, giving realistic information, and challenging the individual. Responsibility for career advancement rests with the employee, but a supervisor can make an enormous difference in the success of the development by providing a supporting and trusting climate and assisting the employee with seeking developmental opportunities.

**Priority of needs:** You and the employee may identify several developmental needs to work on, but there may not be adequate time to respond to all of them. Identify the needs most important to you and the agency in terms of overall job performance.

**Consider potential development solutions:** HR Staff can help you and employees select the most appropriate training and proficiency development needs whether formal or informal.

Some common types of informal job assistance not previously mentioned are:

- **Supervisory coaching:** The supervisor can help the employee recognize and correct mistakes, learn to apply special talents to the job, and solve or overcome specific work-related problems.
- **Special work assignments:** This gives the employee an opportunity to use and develop special talents in responsibility areas that are not part of the regular job. Generally speaking, special work assignments are closely supervised, short-term experiences.

- **Add new and challenging responsibilities to the regular job:** This is another way to develop an employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities. It is a more sophisticated technique than special work assignments because the new responsibilities become a part of the employee's ongoing workload. Such added duties must be consistent with the job class of the position and the position description must be updated to reflect these new duties, or the updated position description should be submitted for proper classification.


After identifying employee development needs, assigning priorities to them, considering which potential development solution or activity will best meet the most important needs, it is time to meet with the employee to discuss the plan for the next review period.

## Summary

A supervisor who skillfully uses the performance appraisal process clearly defines the job to be done, establishes acceptable performance expectations, carefully reviews and reports performance, and provides the developmental guides necessary to improve future performance. In addition, the supervisor gives the employee the assistance and tools necessary for his or her success on the job. The supervisor also carefully lays the groundwork for job accountability and provides much of the required documentation should an employee's inability to do the job necessitate disciplinary action.

**The key performance appraisal resource for supervisors is your HR staff. Use them.**

## Appendix A - Rating Scale

<p><b>The mid acceptable rating is where the supervisor should start the analysis and then adjust up or down based on the employee's performance</b></p>	<p><b><u>Outstanding:</u></b> This rating is given to an employee working consistently above and beyond all their performance expectations, leaving little or nothing to be desired or for those who have successfully completed unusually demanding special assignments in addition to performing their own duties. Any performance not consistently exceeding expectations is minor or due to events not under the control of the employee.</p> <p>The contributions which result from performance at this level constitute a standard of excellence that may well serve as an example or role model. Just like an employee performing at a high-acceptable level, the supervisor should provide positive feedback.</p>
	<p><b><u>High Acceptable (Exceeds Expectations):</u></b> This rating is given when an employee is exceeding performance expectations, excelling in their job performance, and meeting goals. Their performance is marked by initiative, a high quality and quantity of work and they regularly make valuable contributions to the organization. Their judgment is sound and they demonstrate mastery of their position.</p> <p>The supervisor should provide positive feedback to the employee performing at this level to encourage her/him to continue at this rating or use goal-setting and coaching if the employee chooses to exceed this level of performance.</p>
	<p><b><u>Mid Acceptable (Meets Expectations):</u></b> This rating is given when an employee is meeting all their performance expectations. The employee is not required to improve her/his performance; however, the supervisor may motivate the employee to perform duties to a higher level of performance through goal-setting and coaching.</p> <p>If the employee does not meet their SMART Goals and/or Learning and Development Plan than there should be an explanation provided in the narrative for why they are still considered mid acceptable or higher.</p>
	<p><b><u>Low Acceptable (Does Not Meet Expectations):</u></b> This rating is given when either an employee is not meeting all performance expectations, or is meeting all performance expectations, but some piece of their job performance is unacceptable (ex. consistent bad attitude, rude to other employees constantly). It is marginal work performance and it is intended that an employee should not remain at this level indefinitely but must improve.</p> <p>Management is required to provide short-term coaching efforts to the employee to improve his/her performance to a mid acceptable level. Failure to improve and sustain performance may result in extending probation or a non-retention decision for probationary employees. For permanent employees, it may result in withholding a merit increase or withdrawing a previously granted merit increase. Employees with this rating are not eligible for a pay increment.</p>
	<p><b><u>Unacceptable:</u></b> This rating is given when an employee is not meeting the performance expectations or requires frequent, close supervision and/or redoing of work. Employees cannot continue to perform at this level and must improve.</p> <p>If the rating is due to poor performance, the supervisor typically has already contacted departmental HR staff for assistance with additional short-term coaching often in the form of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). If this rating is due to disciplinary action for misconduct, no PIP is needed. Failure to improve and sustain performance and/or behavior from an unacceptable rating may result in a non-retention decision for a probationary employee. For a permanent employee, it may result in disciplinary action, withholding a merit increase or withdrawing a previously granted merit increase. Employees with this rating are not eligible for a pay increment.</p>

## Appendix B – Considerations and Cautions

There are many pitfalls to avoid in reviewing performance. A supervisor may inadvertently distort the employee's rating or comments/narrative through one or more of the following:

Nature of Error	Definition
Central Tendency	Almost always rating performance as mid acceptable, refusal to rate outstanding or tendency to rate all employees the same. Often most common error.
Unclear Standards	Standards are not clearly understood and agreed upon at the beginning and during the evaluation period.
Insufficient evidence	Basing judgment of an employee on inadequate, inaccurate or incomplete information.
Recency	Recently achieved results are weighted more heavily than those achieved earlier in the rating period.
Halo or Bias	When very good performance in one aspect of the job is carried over into evaluating other aspects, resulting in a higher rating than is warranted. The Bias effect is just the opposite.
Similar-to-me	The tendency to rate people who are like you more favorably.
Personality bias	When a supervisor's personal liking for or dislike of an employee influences the rating.
Leniency and strictness	In any population of raters, some are more lenient or strict than others. If there are extreme variations between supervisors, employee morale suffers.
Position	When a rating is influenced by the perceived importance or lack of importance of a position.

## Appendix C – Recommended Actions

Reason For Evaluation Report		Task Type	Possible Recommended Action
Annual		Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant Pay Increase, if due</li> </ul>
		Off Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exempt Pay Increase</li> <li>2-Step Increase for PX/XE/KK</li> <li>Withhold Pay Increase, if due</li> <li>Withdrawal of Salary Step</li> </ul>
Annual (Seasonal / Non Permanent)	Annual Seasonal	Off Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant Pay Increase, if due</li> <li>Withhold Pay Increase if due</li> </ul>
	Annual Non Permanent	Off Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued Employment</li> </ul>
Mid-Probation		Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued Employment</li> </ul>
Early Permanent Status		Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent Status and Pay Increase, if due</li> </ul>
Extension of Probation (LOA Required)		Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued Employment</li> </ul>
End of Probation		Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent Status and Pay Increase, if due</li> </ul>
Separation from State Service	Resignation/separation	Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended for Rehire</li> <li>Not Recommended for Rehire</li> </ul>
	Non-retention of an initial hire probationary employee	Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non Retention in Probationary Position</li> <li>Not Recommended for Rehire</li> </ul>
	Dismissal	Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not Recommended for Rehire</li> </ul>
Change of supervisor		Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued Employment</li> </ul>
Change of Position	Transfer	Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended for Rehire</li> <li>Not Recommended for Rehire</li> </ul>
	Promotion		
	Voluntary demotion		
	Involuntary demotion	Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not Recommended for Rehire</li> </ul>
Employee Requested		Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued Employment</li> </ul>
Change of Performance Between Annuals		Off-Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued Employment</li> <li>Grant Pay Increase, if Due</li> <li>Withhold Pay Increase, if Due</li> <li>Withdrawal of a salary step (check appropriate contract)</li> </ul>

## Appendix D - Examples of Roles and Responsibilities

Step	Supervisor	Employee	HR Staff
Clarify the job duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read PD and define the roles, responsibilities, and working relationships of the employee's position</li> <li>Update PD when needed to accurately reflect the essential duties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read PD to understand the roles, responsibilities, and working relationships</li> <li>Offer feedback to supervisor if PD appears inaccurate or out-of-date</li> </ul>	Classify position described by new or revised PD
Communicate expectations and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define performance expectations based on the job duties</li> <li>Communicate the expectations and measurable standards to the employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in developing performance expectations, goals, and development activities</li> <li>Ask questions if clarification is needed</li> <li>Communicate to supervisor if expectations or standards will not or cannot be met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available for supervisor consultation and coaching at any step</li> <li>May inform supervisor when performance evaluation is due</li> <li>Review draft standards and expectations, evaluation or disciplinary documents</li> </ul>
Coach performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe employee's performance</li> <li>Perform performance gap analysis</li> <li>Provide prompt feedback to employee regarding his/her performance</li> <li>Consistently document feedback and performance observations including commendations</li> <li>Prepare disciplinary action documents when warranted (Note: <i>Disciplinary action for performance problems is related to performance evaluation, but the subject differs in important ways and is outside the scope of the Rater's Guide</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor own performance</li> <li>Act upon feedback from supervisor to improve performance</li> <li>Communicate to supervisor training, development, and environment needs to address knowledge, skill and performance gaps</li> </ul>	
Analyze performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on records and observed performance, determine to what degree expectations and standards were met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide documentation of performance as requested</li> <li>Notify supervisor of any unique or mitigating circumstances</li> </ul>	
Report performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write timely and accurate performance evaluations</li> <li>Discuss evaluation with employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read performance evaluation or other documentation. Ask questions if clarification is needed</li> <li>Discuss performance information with supervisor</li> </ul>	
Develop Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify specific needs for growth and improvement in performance</li> <li>Communicate performance gap analysis to employee</li> <li>Develop goals with the employee</li> <li>Coach employee to goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify understanding of developmental needs and performance gaps</li> <li>Work with supervisor to set goals and develop plan of action</li> </ul>	