



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY  
—  
HUMAN RESOURCES

# Performance Evaluation Manual for Supervisors

A guide for supervisors to provide comprehensive and effective  
performance evaluations for University staff employees

*Union Performance  
Evaluation  
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## SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide a reference guide for supervisors on evaluating employee's performance and contains a summary of the performance evaluation process for **union** employees.

The approach to performance evaluation described in this manual will assist supervisors in evaluating the performance of their employees by providing both specific performance objectives and standards. These objectives and standards will ensure that all employees are aware of the performance standards which apply to each of their jobs.

### Purposes of a Performance Evaluation System

1. To ensure open and honest communication between supervisors and employees regarding job responsibilities, expectations, performance standards and business goals.
2. To provide the opportunity to review the period of evaluation and to discuss both positive and negative aspects of employee performance and to acknowledge meritorious performance.
3. To enhance overall job performance with subsequent improvement of unit and institutional effectiveness.
4. To encourage employees to identify issues of concern, put forth new ideas, and assist in goal setting for themselves, the unit, and the institution.
5. To provides the opportunity to redefine the requirements for the next evaluation period, as necessary.
6. To permit the supervisor and the employee to discuss opportunities for growth and identify training needs.

A quality performance evaluation places significant responsibility upon the supervisor. Evaluation requires continuous observation, analysis of employee actions, and first-hand knowledge of the employee and his/her work habits. Performance evaluation is not a once-a-year activity. It must be viewed as a continuous process with frequent feedback and observation, all culminating in the formal performance review. A good evaluation system with constant communication assures that there are no surprises during the formal review session.

## SECTION II – SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY’S EVALUATION PROCESS

### Who Will Do the Evaluating?

The immediate supervisor is responsible for completion and submission of the performance evaluation of his/her subordinates. The next level of supervision will review and approve the evaluation.

### The Process

It is important for the supervisor to engage in the performance review conversation with the employee before submitting the evaluation for approval to the next level of supervision, so that the employee and supervisor have an opportunity to exchange information. Although the supervisor may have documented employees’ performance during the year, there may be additional items the supervisor has not considered.

### Frequency of Formal Evaluations

Informal performance evaluations occur on an almost daily basis for most employees. Every time a supervisor communicates with an employee regarding his/her work, an informal evaluation has occurred. In order to improve the quality and quantity of the information being used to rate the employee, supervisors should maintain performance year-long documentation on the employee. This documentation should include information indicating tasks or projects performed and examples demonstrating performance deficiencies (i.e. email communications, notes/letters from customers, peers, managers, etc., summaries of interactions and incidents).

Formal evaluations refer to those times when a written performance evaluation is produced and reviewed with the employee. University formal reviews are conducted annually. Some divisions/departments may choose to conduct formal reviews more often.

The **Performance Communication Discussion Form** must be completed by the supervisor, approved by the next level of supervision and acknowledged by the employee. The employee should be provided a copy of the completed discussion form for their records.

### University Core Performance Values

The core performance values are the core competencies required of all staff employees regardless of their position:

1. **Mission** - Integrates the shared values for the common good: competence, conscience, compassion, community and commitment (5C's) into work; integrates the standards of conduct that promote the common good within the work unit and University community; treats others with respect; courtesy; honesty and compassion; participates and facilitates the participation of others in service related activities.
2. **Customer Service** - For both internal and external customers demonstrates good listening skills, assesses customers’ needs and takes timely action to respond to those needs; provides follow up on all issues and builds rapport; anticipates customer needs and contributes to improving processes and services.
3. **Collaboration and Partnership** - Reports to work regularly, on time and is accountable during the workday; cooperates and interacts with employees inside/outside the work unit contributing to improved operations; demonstrates self-control; aligns individual efforts with team goals.

4. Communication - Represents University in a professional manner relating to all verbal, non-verbal, and written communication; demonstrates good listening skills; conveys information clearly and concisely; uses proper grammar, correct spelling, and proper tone in all written and verbal communication.
5. Technical Skills and Knowledge - Applies knowledge, skills, and mastery of job processes to achieve results; continuously develops and advances technical capabilities.
6. Quality and Productivity - Delivers products and services with little or no rework required; strives for continuous quality improvements; uses time and resources effectively and efficiently; produces value added contributions.
7. Problem Solving - Interprets data from various sources; generates effective solutions to problems; makes sound decisions; generates alternative approaches to problem solving; demonstrates awareness of consequences or implications of judgment.
8. Leadership - Lead tasks and people effectively; guides, coaches, inspires, and motivates others to improve skills and achieve goals; takes independent action; seeks out opportunities for professional development; solicits and considers other opinions; demonstrates strong work ethic and sense of urgency to meet commitments; recommends system/procedure improvements.
9. Diversity - Committed to creating an inclusive community and environment that respects, embraces, and celebrates all expressions of diversity and identity that are in keeping with the Ignatian tradition of being men and women for others.

## Performance Ratings Categories

An employee should be rated on each core performance value and contribution to business goals, and then given an overall performance assessment. The importance of each core performance value and establishment of business goals will vary from position to position and department to department. As such, the supervisor should use his/her judgment and take into consideration whether the position requires a greater skill in a particular performance value, the performance values that are most critical to the position and business goals that have the greatest impact on the unit and University when determining performance assessments. An explanation is required for all performance assessments.

## Ratings

- **Outstanding** – Performance at this level is clearly unique and far in excess of established expectations. The employee consistently exceeds expectations in the outcomes achieved in work quality, quantity and timeliness. The employee exhibits leadership among peers in all dimensions of the field work performed.
- **Exceeds Expectations** – Performance at this level often surpasses established expectations and standards of work quality, quantity and timeliness. The employee exhibits mastery of most dimensions of the field of work performed.

- **Meets Expectations** – Performance at this level meets established expectations and standards for work quality, quantity and timeliness. The employee competently achieves the requirements of the position.
- **Below Expectations** – Performance at this level is below the level expected of the employee. Improvement is required in significant dimensions of the job in order to meet the expectations and standards for work quality, quantity and timeliness.

## Developing Rating Standards

Supervisors should clearly define performance standards so employees understand how to achieve a rating of meets, exceeds, or outstanding for each core performance value, goals and for the overall rating. Rating standards clearly identify what is required to attain each rating. The supervisor should be very specific as to how the standards will be applied, so the employee will understand subsequent ratings.

Good performance standards should be Specific, Pertinent, Attainable, Measurable, and Observable.

- ✓ **Specific** – The standards spell out in detail what is expected and how and when accomplishments are to be achieved. Changes and/or required improvements should be addressed and the expected standard of performance should be put in writing.
- ✓ **Pertinent** – The standards should be clearly related to job performance. It should be seen as important and relevant in the eyes of both the supervisor and the subordinate, and it should allow both the supervisor and the subordinate to focus their attention on the issues of greatest importance.
- ✓ **Attainable** – Standards should be realistic; that is, it should be possible to perform as specified. Obviously, resources and support to reach standards must be provided.
- ✓ **Measurable** – Measures usually involve elements such as quantity, quality, time, etc.
- ✓ **Observable** – Standards should be written in such a manner that the supervisor will be able to see performance and the results.

When rating each of the nine (9) core performance values, the supervisor should have a definition of expectations for each rating of all core values. Ultimately, the supervisor should be able to demonstrate to the employee what performance is necessary to attain a specific rating.

**See Appendix A**

In order to assign an overall rating for the performance evaluation, the supervisor should also define the overall rating standards. Identify what expectation of performance is linked to each rating. Supervisors must keep in mind the duties of the employee's position, required knowledge, skills and ability, and the uniqueness of the position. **See Appendix B**

The supervisor's performance expectations shall remain in effect for future evaluations unless action is taken to modify them and the employee has been provided with a copy of them.

## Rating Errors: Be cautious in the evaluation process

A rating error is any attitude, tendency to respond in a certain way, or inconsistency on the part of the supervisor which impedes objectivity and accuracy in the evaluation process. Psychological research indicates that the following types of errors are the most common:

## *Halo/Horns Effect*

The Halo effect is the tendency to generalize from one specific positive employee trait to other aspects of the individual's performance. For instance, a person who is always willing to help other workers may receive inappropriately high ratings on other related job factors. The Halo effect tends to blind the supervisor to shortcomings in the person being evaluated.

The Horns effect, on the other hand, occurs when a particular negative trait or behavior blinds the supervisor to strengths of the individual being evaluated. An example might be a case where a person who consistently argues with the supervisor over job assignments is rated down on all job factors because of his/her argumentative nature.

The following suggestions can increase objectivity and help prevent this kind of error:

- Consider whether the person being evaluated has done anything unusually good or bad in the last few months - either situation can color your thinking.
- Ask yourself whether you feel the person has a particularly pleasant or unpleasant personality and whether this might be influencing your opinions regarding their job performance.
- Make certain that you are familiar with the job factors being rated – how they differ from one another and why they are important.
- Maintain a performance log.

## *Central Tendency Bias and Leniency Errors*

Central Tendency Bias errors occur when the supervisor does not use either the high or low end of the performance evaluation scale. This means that most, if not all, the ratings end up falling in the middle of the scale. If over 90 percent of the ratings are in the middle category, it is likely that this type of error has occurred.

Positive and Negative Leniency refers to the frame of reference used when rating. Positive Leniency is the tendency to be an "easy grader" and is demonstrated by giving too many high ratings. If more than 20 percent of your ratings are in the top two rating categories ("exceeds expectations" and "outstanding"), you may be rating too easily. Negative Leniency is the opposite and results in a disproportionate number of low ratings.

Some ways to reduce Central Tendency Bias and Leniency Errors include:

- In cases where you have given an employee an "outstanding" or "exceeds expectations" rating, make certain that you are rating on the basis of knowledge concerning the individual's performance.
- Remember that most employees "meet expectations" in most job factors and in the overall rating. Keep in mind that few employees are "outstanding" or "exceeds expectations" at everything.
- Compare your distribution of ratings with that of other supervisors in your unit. If your ratings are consistently higher or lower than theirs, you may be rating inaccurately.

### **Similar to Me and Contrast Errors**

The Similar to Me and Contrast Errors refer to the tendency to give slightly higher ratings to people who are similar to yourself and slightly lower ratings to people who are very unlike you. Similar to Me errors are most likely to occur in a situation where obvious similarities exist between supervisor and the employee. If you find your rating in terms of any kind of stereotype such as “college educated people are brighter than those without degrees...” or “people who enjoy the outdoors are better adjusted...” then you are probably making this kind of error.

Another form of Contrast error occurs when you rate employees relative to each other rather than on the basis of individual performance. Take a case where two employees, John and May, are both “outstanding” in their report writing skills, but May is perceived to be better than John. An example of Contrast error would be to lower John’s rating to the next lower value to reflect the differences in his performance relative to May’s rather than to go ahead and give him “outstanding” as his individual performance deserves.

To reduce Similar to Me Contrast errors:

- Resist the urge to change ratings on the employee due to the ratings you gave another employee on a subsequent evaluation. Remember, you should be rating employees against fixed standards—not against each other.
- Study the ratings you have given to determine whether you have given higher ratings to individuals more similar to yourself. Be particularly alert for this problem when rating an employee who is a good friend or with whom you socialize.
- Also, study your ratings to see if you are giving lower ratings to employees who are very dissimilar to you or whom you dislike.

### **Planning and Conducting the Performance Evaluation Review Session**

Even the best designed performance evaluation system cannot overcome the apprehension that most people have about being evaluated. Since the objective of most of the performance evaluation review session is communication, it is important to plan and conduct the session with great care.

For purposes of planning for the performance evaluation review session, the session itself can be broken down into seven parts:

1. Review session preparation
2. Setting a positive tone
3. Outlining the review session
4. Review session communication
5. Planning for the future
6. Closing the review session
7. Sharing final ratings with employee

#### **Review Session Preparation**

Review session preparation refers to the “homework” the supervisor must do before the review session.

- ✓ Ask the employee to complete and submit the Employee Self-Assessment and review.
- ✓ Review the employee job description and be prepared to discuss with the employee for accuracy. If a job description is not accurate, contact your HR consultant to identify how to make updates.



- ✓ Study rating definitions, define rating standards and review the core performance values and goals.
- ✓ Study the information recorded in the performance documentation.

Set a definite date, time, and place for the review session with the employee several days in advance. When setting the review session appointment, provide the employee with a copy of the rating definitions and share the rating standards you have defined.

### Setting a Positive Tone

This deals with those verbal and nonverbal interactions which occur during the first few minutes (even the first few seconds) of a review session. Research has shown that the first five minutes of a review session often set the tone for the entire session— discomfort created early may be impossible to overcome during the session.

It is particularly important to put the employee at ease. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is to briefly review with the employee the evaluation system and the purpose of the review session. Each employee should be told that all employees are subject to evaluation on an annual basis.

The review session will get off to a good start if you:

- Show concern for the physical setting.
- Express concern for the employee's comfort (for example, offer the employee a cup of coffee).
- Convey warmth and receptiveness.
- Make sure the review session is conducted in private. Schedule a small conference room or borrow a private office if your office is not private.
- If the review session is held in your office, move from behind your desk. A small table or even a couple of chairs away from the desk is desirable. If such a setting is not possible, sit on the same side of the desk as the subordinate.
- Strive for a level of informality (but not too informal), since this will facilitate communication.

### Outlining the Review Session

Let the employee know what will happen in the review by outlining the review session and the actual events that will occur during the session. Discuss the objectives of the review session. Usually, the objectives include one or more of the following:

1. Review job description to ensure accuracy of qualifications, duties, responsibilities, knowledge, skills and abilities
2. Provide specific feedback on performance
3. Discussion of general issues or concerns about job performance
4. Discussion of opportunities for growth or improvement
5. Formulation of an employee individual development plan (IDP)
6. Note the time periods under consideration; for example, should be reviewing performance for the last calendar year and setting performance objectives for the next calendar year.

You may find it helpful to prepare, in advance, a written outline of the points you want to cover during the review session.

### Review Session Communication

The review session provides the opportunity for open communication between supervisors and employees. As much as 70 percent of the meaning in the communication process is imparted by means

other than word choice. Voice pitch, volume, stress on certain words, body posture, and facial expressions supplement (or even change) the meaning of the words used.

There are some specific skills that can be developed through practice to improve the quality of communication. These skills include attending, facilitating, paraphrasing, clarifying, and feedback. Each skill is discussed below.

- **Attending:** This skill refers to behaviors that show the employee that you are listening to what he or she is saying. Some things you can do to show that you are attending include:
  - Maintain eye contact. Look directly at the employee when you are speaking and when you are listening.
  - Maintain a relaxed posture. This can convey to the employee that you are comfortable.
  - Make verbal statements that “follow” what the employee has said. In other words, your statements should be consistent with the topic that he/she is discussing. For example, if the employee is talking about the desire to attend a particular training session, you should not ignore this point and jump to the employee’s unwillingness to work with Joe Smith.
  - Try not to interrupt the employee.
  - Throw the ball to the employee and ask how he/she feels things are going on the job. Then listen.
  
- **Facilitating:** This skill includes behaviors designed to make communication flow more smoothly. By facilitating, you are helping the employee say more about a particular topic, to give more specific examples, and so on. Some things you can do to facilitate:
  - Make specific verbal invitations that encourage the employee to state a position or to explore further a stated position. Some facilitating expressions might be:
  - “I’d like to hear more about that.” “Can you give me an example?” “Can you give me more detail?” “Do you see any problems we should discuss?” “Do you have any suggestions for improving the way we are operating?”
  - Make specific nonverbal invitations to encourage the employee to talk, such as: head nods, eye contact, leaning forward, narrowing physical distance by moving closer together.
  - It is inappropriate to argue or state strongly your own position at this time. Doing so will disrupt, if not cripple, the communication process. If the employee does express some concerns or does raise some areas which you may agree with or disagree with, it is a good idea to take notes during the review session so that you will be sure to return to these points later in the review session.
  
- **Paraphrasing:** This communication skill involves brief restatement by the supervisor of some prior verbal communication made by the employee. The restatement communicates the same meaning in fewer words. By paraphrasing, you accomplish a number of things:
  - The employee is assured that you are listening and following thoughts and feelings.
  - The employee’s thoughts are condensed or presented in a more concise way.
  - The employee is able to determine that you understand what he/she has said.

- **Clarifying:** During the review session, it is likely that the employee will express some incomplete thoughts, have difficulty expressing some thoughts, will say things you don't understand, or will simply lose you. Offer specific invitations for the employee to clarify his/her statements:
  - "I'm confused." "Can you give me an example?" "I lost you there." "I need more information about that."
  - It is important to note the emphasis here upon "I" statements as opposed to "You" statements. Saying "I'm confused" has a more positive effect on your subordinate than "You're confusing me."
  
- **Feedback:** Feedback refers to specific information you share with the employee concerning your observation of his/her performance during the review period. As you give feedback, be sure to:
  - Identify specific critical incidents. Indicate what happened, when it happened, where it happened, and how often it happened.
  - Address previously agreed upon objectives.
  - Focus on important job dimensions. Don't deal with infractions of little cognizance. The time to discuss those problems is when they occur. Discuss them at that time—then forget them.
  - Give recognition for performance which you would like to see continued.
  - Check and clarify to ensure clear communication is understood by both employee and supervisor.

### Planning for the Future

Once the employee's past performance has been discussed, the focus should shift to the future. What will or can be done to maintain or to improve performance in the next review period? Performance improvement is likely to occur only if specific plans are developed and specific performance objectives are set. You may wish to ask the employee to develop a plan for achieving the desired performance objectives.

### Closing the Review Session

The review session can be considered finished only when the following areas have been discussed:

#### *Past Performance*

Did he/she perform the duties and achieve the performance objectives?  
 How well did he/she perform in meeting performance factors?  
 How well did he/she rate?

#### *Future Performance*

What are the duties and performance objectives for the next performance period?  
 Which are the most important?

What standards and rating values will be used to rate the employee's performance?  
 What specific goals will the employee strive to achieve?

#### *Areas of Agreement*

If performance has met standards, what will be done to maintain that level of performance?

If performance has not been acceptable, what will be done to improve performance?  
When?

If further employee development is an objective, what will be done to ensure this  
development? Who will do it? When?

### *Areas of Disagreement*

How will these be resolved?

Many supervisors have found that it is best to have the employee summarize the points listed above since it is all too easy for the boss to summarize with the employee nodding his or her head in agreement and then leaving with a clear understanding of what was discussed and agreed upon.

### **Sharing final ratings with employee**

After the initial review session held with the employee, the supervisor will need to complete the **Performance Communication Discussion Form**. After the form has been approved by the next level of supervision, the supervisor should schedule a meeting with the employee. The employee will have an opportunity to add comments to the evaluation before acknowledging it.

## **Quick Performance Evaluation Checklist For Union Employees**

Supervisors of union employees can use this checklist to ensure that the required steps are taken:

At the beginning of the performance evaluation review period:

- Make sure that the employee understands how the evaluation process and rating system works
- Define the duties, discuss required employee contributions to goals and objectives, and develop performance rating standards
- Provide the employee with a copy of the job description and discuss performance standards for each core performance value and overall rating

During the Evaluation Period:

- Observe employee performance
- Maintain documentation of examples of employee's good and bad performance
- Communicate on a continuing basis through informal evaluation
- Monitor progress toward established business goals and individual development plan

Before the Review Session:

- Set appointment with the employee several days in advance
- Ask employee to complete and submit self-assessment
- Review documentation and other notes related to employee performance
- Review core performance values, business goals and overall rating
- Arrange a private setting
- Prepare preliminary employee future goals for the next review period
- Plan for specific performance improvement memorandum and/or performance management action if applicable

During the Initial Review Session:

- Be businesslike but be pleasant and informal
- Involve employee and solicit employee comments - encourage discussion
- Finalize future business goals for the next review period
- Establish a clear understanding of standards and rating values – do not share specific ratings at this time. Communication of the overall ratings should not be shared until the evaluation has been approved by management
- Agree on individual development plan (IDP)
- Close on a positive note

Completing the Evaluation and Sharing the Ratings with the Employee:

- Complete the **Performance Communication Discussion Form**
- Have the next level of supervision approve and sign the form
- Schedule a time to discuss completed evaluation and ratings with your employee
- Provide a copy of the evaluation to the employee
- Send a copy of the evaluation to HR for the employee's personnel file

Preparing for the Next Evaluation Review Period:

- Ensure that the job description accurately describes the employee's job duties. If an employee's job description needs to be updated, work with HR to ensure that all revisions remain within the job specifications for the position.
- Follow up to ensure that approved training/professional development is being pursued by the employee.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix A:

#### Sample of Core Performance Value Rating Standards for a Custodian

Supervisors should clearly define expectations of each rating for all nine (9) Core Performance Values. This example shows how a core performance value can be defined for a Custodian. Supervisors should share rating standard definitions with employees for clear understanding of how to attain rating values.

<b>Core Performance Value</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Below Expectations</b>
<b>Quality and Productivity</b> - Delivers products and services with little or no rework required; strives for continuous quality improvements; uses time and resources effectively and efficiently; produces value added contributions.	<p>Follows schedule and completes assigned tasks on time.</p> <p>Work is consistently accurate and requires little rework.</p> <p>Adheres to all quality and productivity standards.</p> <p>Applies applicable safety practices in performance of duties.</p>	<p>Routinely completes assigned tasks ahead of schedule.</p> <p>Work is always accurate and rarely requires rework.</p> <p>Completes additional assignments outside of regularly assigned tasks when requested.</p> <p>Demonstrates initiative and makes suggestions for improvements in quality and productivity.</p> <p>Applies applicable safety practices in performance of duties.</p>	<p>Consistently completes assignments ahead of schedule.</p> <p>Work is always accurate and rarely requires rework.</p> <p>Volunteers for additional tasks and assignments.</p> <p>Anticipates needs and is innovative and creative in problem solving.</p> <p>Develops process improvements for department.</p> <p>Serves as a technical expert and resource for others.</p>	<p>Fails to follow daily schedule and complete work on time.</p> <p>Work is consistently inaccurate and often requires rework.</p> <p>Fails to meet quality and productivity standards.</p> <p>Routinely receives complaints from building occupants regarding quality of work.</p> <p>Fails to apply applicable safety practices in performance of duties.</p>

## Appendix B:

### Sample of Overall Rating Standards for a Custodian

Supervisors should clearly define expectations of the overall performance ratings. This example shows the four (4) ratings defined for a Custodian. Supervisors should share rating standard definitions with employees for clear understanding of how to attain rating values.

<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Below Expectations</b>
The employee meets expectations and goals established for the position. The employee is competent and demonstrates solid performance in core performance values. The employee contributes to the efficiency of the department.	Performance at this level consistently surpasses established expectations and the employee exhibits mastery of most dimensions of the job. The employee has made significant and noticeable contributions to the efficiency and performance of the unit. The employee initiates process improvements.	Performance at this level is consistently exceptional and far exceeds established expectations and the employee exhibits mastery and leadership in all dimensions of the job. The employee has made many significant and unique contributions to the efficiency and performance of the unit.	Performance at this level is below established expectations. The employee is not contributing to the efficiency and performance of the unit. Significant improvement is required in order to meet expectations.