

Writing Effective Self-Assessments

What is a Self-Assessment?

A self-assessment is your description of accomplishments related to the critical elements and performance standards identified in your performance plan. It should provide the supervisor with a clear picture of your performance and accomplishments during the rating period.

Getting Started

Review your organizational goals and critical elements, then review records of your work (emails, memos, project files, and/or productivity records). This will help you address all related work performed during the rating period.

Establishing a Recording System

Create a system for recording accomplishments. This can be hard copy or electronic, depending on what works best for you. Some suggestions include:

- Files of work products
- Statistical data or other metrics
- Email folder (create a separate folder for performance-related items)
- Letters, memos, or email correspondence. Record on a word document and update as needed
- Notes on a planner or calendar
- File folder(s) to maintain copies of documents
- Establish a process for reviewing and recording your accomplishments on a regular basis (ex. once a week). Make a note of significant items or put a copy in your file. Identify the critical element which is linked to the accomplishment.

Characteristics of Significant Accomplishments

The self-assessment is not a record of your daily activities. It is a record of work products that were:

- high visibility
- had a high level of difficulty
- required innovation
- required problem solving skills
- may have had an organizational or unit-wide impact such as:
 - lead on a special group or project
 - short deadlines
 - wide scope of coordination
 - first time such as successful implementation of a new program or process

Self-Assessments Using the STAR Format

The S.T.A.R. format is an easy and short way to capture performance activities and accomplishments. Each letter represents a component of the assessment input:

- ❖ Situation: Describe the conditions under which you achieved your critical element. What was the situation I faced?

- ❖ Task: Describe what you did during the year to create the results you achieved. What was/were my tasks in that situation?
- ❖ Activity/Action: Include additional activities you completed, or actions you took that contributed to your results. Remember the characteristics: Difficult, First Time, High Visibility, etc.
- ❖ Results: Describe what you accomplished. What result did my action produce?

Self-Assessments are Optional

They are but remember: you are your first and best advocate! Self-assessments for the Progress Review and the Annual Appraisal are entered into the automated Performance Appraisal Application Tool.

- Review your critical elements
- Review your record of accomplishments
- Determine which accomplishments are the most significant in terms of contribution to mission and organizational goals
- Must have at least one accomplishment for each critical element

Writing the Self-Assessment

Draft and save as a word document addressing each critical element. Focus on results, your contributions to the mission and accomplishments. Remember to be specific, factual, clear, and concise using action verbs and an active voice. When finished, check the grammar and spelling.

Helpful Hints

Things you do not want to do:

- Do not use terms or acronyms that others may not know
- Do not assume your supervisor is familiar with every detail of your job
- Do not list accomplishments without referencing the critical element
- Do not use task orientation language from your Position Description

Things you want to do:

- Be aware of limited space in the Automated Tool
- Progress Review Self-assessment is limited to 2000 characters per critical element
- Annual Appraisal Self-Assessment is limited to 2000 characters per critical element

Summary

The employee self-assessment is a critical part of the Performance Appraisal Program. It provides an opportunity for you to highlight your significant accomplishments and focuses on results. Always remember that substance is more important than writing style. The self-assessments are reviewed by your rater and are considered in preparing your annual appraisal. While it is optional, your own self-assessment provides an opportunity for you to communicate with your rater on your performance.