

Stage A: Performance Planning

The following steps guide *supervisors*, *employees*, and *reviewers* through Stage A Performance Planning.

Table of Contents

Purpose	2
Overview	2
How to Prepare for the Performance Planning Meeting	3
The 5 Steps of Stage A: Performance Planning	4
Step 1: Overview of EPRS	4
Step 2: Align the Employee's Role with Department Objectives	4
Step 3: Clarify and Document Job Duties	5
Step 4: Define and Document Performance Criteria for Each Job Duty	5
Step 5: Signatures & Printing	6
Preparing for Stage B	8
Supervisor Check List for Stage A	9
Reviewer Check List for Stage A	9
Employee Check List for Stage A	9
Appendix A: Example Job Duties and Performance Criteria	10
Appendix B: How to Write Effective Job Duty Statements	11

Purpose

During Performance Planning, often referred to as Stage A, supervisors and employees collaborate to clearly define successful job performance for the employee. The goal is to ensure that employees understand the expectations and responsibilities essential for achieving success in their role.

Overview

There are five steps in ensure a successful Performance Planning meeting:

1. Overview of the ERPS process

Supervisors are responsible for explaining the stages in the EPRS process to ensure the employee understands the purpose of each formal performance meeting.

2. Discussion of the Employee's Role

Supervisors are responsible for discussing the role of the employee in the agency to ensure that the employee understands how their job contributes to the overall success of the agency.

3. Define Job Duties

The supervisor and employee discuss and document job duties to ensure both are in agreement and understand the key responsibilities of the employee.

4. Define Performance Criteria

The supervisor and employee discuss and document performance criteria for each job duty to ensure that the employee understands how successful performance is defined.

5. Signatures

After the Performance Planning meeting is over, supervisors, employees, and reviewers must all sign the EPRS form to indicate understanding of the job duties and performance criteria.

How to Prepare for the Performance Planning Meeting

Prior to conducting the Performance Planning meeting, employees should:

1. Conceptualize what the Performance Planning meeting will look like.
2. Review your Position Description (Form 30) if your agency has provided you with a copy.
3. Review your prior year's EPRS, if you have one on file.
4. Come to the meeting prepared with questions.

Prior to conducting the Performance Planning meeting, supervisors should:

1. Meet with the reviewer (their supervisor) to discuss job duties for their employees.
2. Ask the reviewer for a copy of the agency's mission, goals and objectives, and ask if there are any new goals for the department that should be discussed with employees during Stage A.
3. Review the [EPRS Overview](#) to ensure preparedness for employee questions during the meeting.
4. Review the employee's Position Description (commonly referred to as a Form 30).
 - a. Keep in mind which duties occur the most frequently and are most important for the fiscal year.
 - b. If the Form 30 needs to be updated, the supervisor should work with the reviewer and their agency's human resources department to make the necessary updates.
5. Meet with the reviewer to ensure alignment and agreement on the job duties and performance criteria expected of the employee.

Note: Performance criteria may be discussed with other supervisors with employees completing the same work.

6. Prepare the EPRS form. *
7. Share with the employee the following documents, ensuring they have time to review prior to meeting:
 - i. The employee's Form 30
 - ii. A copy of the agency's mission, goals, and objectives
8. Review the [EPRS Rating Scale](#).
9. Find a quiet, private place to hold the Performance Planning meeting. If you are in a hybrid work environment, holding these meetings in person is recommended.

*If using MyPath, this process is automated via the onscreen instructions. If using the [paper form](#), ensure the top is completed prior to meeting.

The 5 Steps of Stage A: Performance Planning

Step 1: Overview of EPRS

The supervisor begins the Performance Planning meeting by introducing the employee to the EPRS process. This step is aimed at ensuring the employee's understanding and ease with the evaluation system. Here is what should be covered:

- Introduction to EPRS:
 - EPRS, or the Employee Performance Review System, is a structured method for planning and evaluating job performance. It consists of three stages and is completed in [MyPath](#), the Commonwealth's learning and performance hub.
- Stages of EPRS:
 - Stage A: Performance Planning
 - During this stage, job duties are discussed and recorded. Performance criteria is documented to define what successful performance entails.
 - Between Stage A and Stage B informal check-ins between supervisors and employees are held.
 - Stage B: Progress Review
 - During this stage, supervisors and employees will meet for a formal mid-year check-in to assess progress in the completion of the defined job duties and performance criteria. During the meeting, the supervisor will highlight successes and address areas for improvement. Advisory ratings will be assigned to each job duty, culminating in an overall progress review summary rating to assess performance as a whole for the first half of the year.
 - Between Stage B and Stage C informal check-ins between supervisors and employees are held.
 - Stage C: Annual Review
 - During this stage, an employee's performance for the year will be assessed and a formal annual review completed. Supervisors will discuss attendance and offer an optional Employee Development Plan. Like Stage B, each job duty will be rated, and an overall performance rating, known as the annual review summary rating, will be assigned. However, there is one additional step during this phase. During Stage C, the reviewer will assign the Final Annual Review rating.
- Performance Ratings:
 - Ratings (Exceeds/Excels, Meets, and Below) may be used when making personnel decisions like transfers, reassignments, and promotions as outlined in the relevant Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Supervisors should provide the employee with a copy of the rating scale.
- Appeal Process:
 - The employee may appeal their evaluation, as outlined in their CBA or through the Civil Service Commission.

Step 2: Align the Employee's Role with Department Objectives

Next, the supervisor should illustrate to the employee the significance of their role in advancing the agency's mission. While the agency's mission statement, goals, and objectives might be extensive it is essential to distill the key points relevant to the employee's role and

work unit. The supervisor should take the following steps:

- Provide the employee with pertinent sections of the agency's mission, goals, and objectives.
- Discuss the employee's role in the broader context:
 - Describe the agency's mission, goals, and objectives.
 - Elaborate on the objectives specific to the unit and explain how they contribute to achieving the agency's overarching objectives.
 - Explain how the employee's job duties directly support the unit in fulfilling its objectives.

Recent mission statement examples:

The Human Resources Division (HRD) FY24	The mission of the Human Resources Division (HRD) is to attract, engage, educate, develop, and retain a high-performing and diverse workforce.
The Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) FY24	Our mission is to provide secure and quality digital information, services, and tools to customers and constituents when and where they need them.

Step 3: Clarify and Document Job Duties

Next, both the supervisor and the employee engage in discussions about the employee's job responsibilities and record the primary job duties on the [EPRS form](#). This ensures mutual understanding of job requirements. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for sample job duties.

The supervisor will:

- Provide the employee with a copy of their Form 30. Section 6 of the Position Description outlines the role's most frequent and significant duties.
 - If there have been changes in the employee's duties have changed, the supervisor should draft a new duty statement. Additionally, supervisors should consult their supervisor and agency HR department before making any changes.
- Review the Form 30 with the employee to identify the most frequently occurring and important duties for the current year.
- Document the main job duties on the EPRS form.
 - Directions for adding job duties can be found in [MyPath](#).
 - If using the [paper version](#), supervisors should list one duty per box.
- Remind the employee that they are accountable for all job duties assigned, even if they are not explicitly listed on the EPRS form. All duties will be considered in the overall evaluation.

Step 4: Define and Document Performance Criteria for Each Job Duty

In this step the supervisor and employee collaborate to outline what successful performance looks like for each job duty. Typically, there are usually 2-4 criteria per duty. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for sample performance criteria.

The supervisor will:

- Consider each job duty and envision what constitutes successful performance. Determine whether the criteria are primarily related to work product or work action for the employee.
 - Work product criteria may include:
 - Quality or work performed

- Amount of work performed
 - Timeliness of task completion
 - Cost-effectiveness of work
- Work action criteria may include:
 - Collaboration with others
 - Adherence to procedures
- Performance criteria should be:
 - Observable
 - Clear and specific
 - Realistic
 - Easy to track throughout the year
 - Consistent with those of other employees in similar roles to ensure fairness and mitigate potential conflicts.

Examples of criteria for a cook:

Job Duty: Prepare lunch for residents daily according to the menu provided by the dietitian to ensure nutritional requirements are met.

The criteria might be:

- *The taste of food (**quality**)*
 - *Hot food is served hot, and cold food is served cold (**quality**)*
 - *Enough food is prepared for all residents (**amount**)*
 - *Meals are ready by the set mealtime (**timeliness**)*
 - *Food is not wasted during preparation (**cost-effectiveness**)*
 - *Complaints are addressed courteously (**collaboration**)*
 - *Directions from the dietitian are followed (**collaboration**)*
 - *All health regulations are followed (**procedure adherence**)*
 - *Food is cooked to the correct temperature (**procedure adherence**)*
- Discuss the criteria with the employee, aiming to achieve mutual agreement on the performance criteria. If consensus cannot be reached, ensure a shared understanding at the very least.
 - Document the criteria for each job duty on the EPRS form.

NOTE: Both supervisor and employee may agree to review the performance criteria again later in the year to ensure they are workable. If necessary, adjustments can be made by the supervisor.

Step 5: Signatures & Printing

Once the meeting for Stage A has concluded, the supervisor will:

- Check off the Stage A checkboxes as completed to signify the completion of each section.
- Explain to the employee what each signature means.
 - The **supervisor's signature** means that what is written on the EPRS form will be used to judge the employee's performance for the year.
 - The **employee's signature** means that they understand the job duties and performance criteria for each duty, **even if they do not agree with them.**
 - The **reviewer's signature** means that the reviewer (the employee's indirect supervisor) accepts the job duties and performance criteria developed by the supervisor and employee.
- Ensure all parties involved have signed for Stage A.
- Mention to the employee that any party is welcome to provide comments on the EPRS.
- Once fully signed, ensure that the supervisor, employee, reviewer, and human resources department have a copy of the EPRS.
 - If electronically accessing EPRS, each participant may enter MyPath to print

their own form.

- If completing the paper form, ensure a copy of the original is stored and that the employee and reviewer both have copies.

Preparing for Stage B

The supervisor should let the employee know that informal progress review meetings will occur throughout the year following the completion of Stage A. The employee is also encouraged to ask for informal review sessions if they feel it necessary.

The supervisor should set up regular short informal sessions, perhaps every other week or once a month. **Having at least two informal sessions before the formal mid-year review is key.**

Informal sessions help the employee by:

- Letting them know how they are doing.
- Ensuring they understand areas where they are doing particularly well.
- Creating a space for open dialogue regarding any areas of improvement.

Addressing small areas of improvement can prevent big problems from forming.

Between the completion of Stage A and the start of Stage B, it is possible that duties or criteria may change. If that is the case, ensure that the employee's Form 30 is up to date and that the job duties and performance criteria are updated as well.

Supervisor Check List for Stage A

This checklist is a useful tool for supervisors. It can be used to keep track of important steps leading up to and during Stage A of the EPRS performance review process.

- ☐ Have the 3 EPRS stages been reviewed?
- ☐ Have you reviewed section 6 of the employee's Form 30 with them?
- ☐ Has the employee's role in the unit been discussed?
- ☐ Have the job duties and performance criteria been discussed?
- ☐ Have the job duties and performance criteria been recorded on the EPRS?
- ☐ Was Stage A signed by you, the employee, and the reviewer in MyPath?
- ☐ Have you printed a copy of the performance review for your record?

Reviewer Check List for Stage A

This checklist is a useful tool for reviewers. It can be used to keep track of important steps leading up to and during Stage A of the EPRS performance review process.

- ☐ Have you met with the supervisor to discuss the job duties and performance criteria expected of the employee?
- ☐ Have you reviewed and signed Stage A in MyPath?
- ☐ Have you printed a copy of the performance review for your record?

Employee Check List for Stage A

This checklist is a useful tool for employees. It can be used to keep track of important steps during Stage A of the EPRS performance review process.

- ☐ Have you met with the supervisor for a formal Performance Planning (Stage A) meeting?
- ☐ Have you reviewed and signed Stage A in MyPath?
- ☐ Have you printed a copy of the performance review for your record?

Appendix A: Example Job Duties and Performance Criteria

Duty 1: Types material from rough draft or straight copy according to standard agency format, making minor corrections in grammar/punctuation/spelling, in order to produce finished work in final form.

Performance Criteria:

- a. Type copy is near, accurate, and in appropriate format
- b. Minor corrections in grammar/punctuation/spelling are made
- c. Typed copy is completed within prescribed deadlines

Duty 2: Covers telephone for Langley Office by transferring calls, taking messages, providing information, maintaining lists of calls to that each staff member promptly receives telephone calls/messages.

Performance Criteria:

- a. Messages taken are accurate, clear, and referred to the appropriate person
- b. Manner on telephone is courteous and helpful
- c. Telephone is answered promptly at all times
- d. Information provided is accurate and clear

Duty 3: Telephones information into central office/other field offices on a routing basis to provide daily/weekly updates on activities/assignments.

Performance Criteria:

- a. Information is provided accurately
- b. Information is telephoned promptly or on schedule

Duty 4: Process incoming mail, memoranda, packages, etc. by receiving/sorting/stamping/routing/distributing materials received to ensure prompt receipt by addressee.

Performance Criteria:

- a. Mail is properly processed and distributed
- b. Mail is processed and distributed within prescribed deadlines

Appendix B: How to Write Effective Job Duty Statements

Crafting a clear job duty statement is crucial for ensuring that employees understand what is expected of them. Each job duty should begin with an action verb and provide a comprehensive overview of the task.

- Start with an **ACTION VERB**
 - Begin each duty with an action verb to clearly outline the task.
- Specify **WHAT** the employee does
 - Be specific about the task at hand to avoid ambiguity.
- Detail **HOW** the work is done
 - Briefly outline the methods, procedures, or equipment used to execute the task effectively.
- Explain **WHY** the work is done
 - Provide a brief explanation of the purpose behind the task to give context.

For example:

Prepare lunch for residents daily according to the menu provided by the dietitian to ensure nutritional requirements are met.

- Action Verb: *Prepare*
- What: *Prepare lunch for residents*
- How: *according to the menu provided by the dietitian*
- Why: *to ensure nutritional requirements are met*

Other examples:

- Administer employee benefits programs, including enrollment and changes, accurately and in compliance with regulatory requirements to support employee well-being and satisfaction.
- Design and develop high-quality software solutions following best practices and coding standards to meet project requirements and quality standards.
- Resolve client inquiries and complaints promptly and courteously, striving to achieve first-call resolution to enhance client satisfaction.
- Manage incoming correspondence, including emails and phone calls, promptly and professionally to ensure effective communication within the office.