



Stage C: Annual Review

The following steps guide *supervisors*, *employees*, and *reviewers* through the Stage C Progress Review.

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Purpose

In the Annual Review Stage the supervisor will let the employee know how well they have performed their role over the year. Ratings assigned during Stage C may inform future personnel decisions.

Summary

There are five (potentially six) steps that the supervisor will follow in the Annual Review. They will:

1. **Begin the Annual Review** meeting by explaining the Stage C process so the employee knows what to expect.
2. **Discuss and rate performance for each duty** so the employee understands how well they performed each duty over the year.
3. **Discuss and rate overall job performance** so that the employee knows exactly how they performed overall for the whole year.
4. **Discuss and write down an Employee Development Plan** *if the employee chooses*, to allow the employee the opportunity to conceptualize and plan for career development.
5. **Sign the form and get signatures** to show that the supervisor, employee, and reviewer all understand the ratings and comments.
6. **Create a Remedial Development Plan** for any non-confidential employee who receives a “Below” rating either at Stage B or Stage C, so that the employee has the opportunity to achieve a “Meets” or “Exceeds/Excels” rating.

How to Prepare for Stage C

Before the Stage C meeting begins, both the supervisor and employee should prepare for the meeting.

1. The supervisor should ensure that the employee has a copy of the rating scale before the Annual Review meeting.
2. The employee should review the job duties and performance criteria before the Annual Review meeting.
3. The supervisor should ask the employee to think about their performance for each job duty.
4. The supervisor should ask the employee to think about their overall performance for the year.
5. The supervisor should review the employee's performance and any notes regarding their performance. These should be compared to the job duties on the EPRS form.
6. Supervisors are reminded to keep an open mind during the meeting and take into account the employee's responses regarding their performance before making any ratings.
7. **Pencil in** employee performance on the EPRS form (this can be accomplished by selecting the **Save for Later** button in the Stage C task). **Do not** make any final decisions on ratings until performance has been discussed between the supervisor and employee.
8. Employees and supervisors should think of employee development activities to discuss in the event that an employee would like to create an Employee Development Plan.
9. It is best practice for the supervisor to speak with the reviewer on ratings thoughts **before** meeting with the employee.
10. Find a quiet, private place to hold the Annual Review.

The Steps of Stage C: Annual Review

Step 1. Begin the Annual Review Meeting

The Annual Review meeting will begin by the supervisor explaining the structure of Stage C so that the employee knows what to expect.

Here are some examples of what might be said by the supervisor during an Annual Review meeting:

- *“Together we have used EPRS to plan your work and gauge performance throughout the year.”*
- *“The main goal of this meeting is to review your work for the year as a whole. The secondary optional goal is to assist you in conceptualizing and planning for your career development.”*
- *“After our conversation has concluded and been recorded in MyPath, the Reviewer will make a final rating.”*

Supervisors are reminded to listen carefully to what the employee has to say regarding their performance during the discussion. The employee understands the details of their day-to-day work in depth.

Employees have two ways to appeal the evaluation. Union members can use the appeal procedure of the Collective Bargaining Agreement if they receive an overall rating of **“Below”** expectations. Civil service employees may appeal either to the Civil Service Commission or through their Collective Bargaining Agreement to the Merit Arbitration Panel. If the employee inquires, the supervisor should provide them with these options.

Step 2. Discuss and Rate Performance for Each Duty

This is a key function of the Annual Review meeting. When possible, the supervisor should provide examples of job performance that have been observed. This step is easier to complete when regular informal progress review sessions have taken place.

The supervisor and employee should both have copies of the EPRS rating scale.

EPRS Rating Scale

Rating	Definition
Below	<p>Performance generally fails to meet criteria or requires extremely high levels of supervision. The employee is not doing the job at the level expected. Unsuccessful job performance is due to the employee's own lack of effort or ability. The employee's performance may hurt the performance of the work group overall. The employee's performance is unsatisfactory.</p> <p>When a supervisor rates performance on one job duty, they should consider the criteria listed on the EPRS form for that duty.</p> <p>Note: Supervisors and reviewers must always explain a "below" rating. If an overall rating of below is selected, a Remedial Development Plan must be created and your EPRS Coordinator must be notified.</p>
Meets	<p>Performance satisfies the job requirements. Generally, the employee performs according to the criteria, doing a good job. The employee is doing the job at the level expected for employees in this position. This good performance is due to the employee's own effort and ability. Usual levels of supervision are needed. The employee may make a strong contribution to meeting the work group's goals. A large number of employees will fall in this category/ this rating includes a broad range of performance, from just barely satisfactory to highly satisfactory.</p>
Exceeds/Excels	<p>Performance is greatly above the job requirements. Generally, the employee does well beyond the performance criteria, doing outstanding work. Job performance is excellent, and above and beyond what is expected of employees in this job. The employee requires less than usual supervision. Performance that exceeds criteria is due to the effort and ability of the employee. Any performance below criteria is minor or due to events not under the control of the employee. The employee's performance may have an important positive effect on how well the work group does overall. The employee's performance is superior.</p> <p>Note: Supervisors and reviewers must always explain an "exceeds/excels" rating.</p>

Note: If a job duty is no longer performed, please select "N/A- Duty No Longer Performed"

During the discussion, the supervisor and employee should:

1. Go over the rating scale, which should be supplied to the employee before the meeting. The differences between each rating should be discussed. The employee should be asked if they understand these ratings.
2. Review each duty recorded so far in MyPath.
 - Go over the individual job duties and performance criteria. For each duty:
 - While reviewing the job duty and performance criteria, the employee should be asked how they feel they have been doing. The employee should provide details, if not the supervisor should inquire about additional supporting information.
 - The supervisor should explain their view of how the employee has performed each job duty. Specific details regarding performance should be provided.
 - The supervisor will communicate to the employee how they view the employee's performance while being as specific as possible.
 - Both parties must remember that they are discussing job performance in a professional capacity. **They must remain objective.**
 - Supervisors are encouraged to focus on the positive. If the employee is doing

90% of the job correctly, then 90% of the meeting should be spent discussing what the employee has done right. This open communication will encourage employees to continue performing at their current level or higher.

- The two can discuss areas where they agree and disagree. Key areas of the job can be discussed, remember not to focus on unimportant details.

3. An annual rating for each job duty will be assigned by the supervisor in MyPath. The EPRS rating scale must be referenced when selecting a rating.

- While it is recommended that the supervisor writes comments to explain their ratings, ratings are only required if they are a “Below” or “Exceeds/Excels.”

Job Duty Annual Rating Example with Comments

Duty 1- Process incoming mail, memoranda, packages, etc., by receiving/sorting/stamping/routing/distributing materials received to ensure prompt receipt by the addressee.

Mail is properly processed and distributed.
Mail is processed and distributed within prescribed deadlines.

Start Date : 7/1/2024
Due Date : 6/30/2025
more...

 LoreLai Gilmore (Manager) Rated :Exceeds/Excels Review : TEST 2 - FY25 EPRS Time : 5/13/2024 1:30 PM
 Michel consistently has gone above and beyond completing this job duty. All mail processing is done well before the deadline (often times a full 48-hours before the deadline) and he often assists his peers.

Note: The employee in this example has an “Exceeds/Excels” rating so a comment is required in this instance. According to their supervisor they have gone above and beyond what is required of them, and their rating reflects!

Step 3. Discuss and Rate Overall Job Performance

Once duties have been rated, overall job performance can be reviewed. During this portion of the performance review, the supervisor will use their best judgement and consult the rating scale definitions to assign an Annual Review Summary Rating. The overall rating is not necessarily the average of all of the ratings on the job duties. Some duties are more important or frequent than others so averages should not be used. Employees are rated based on duties assigned.

Overall Annual Rating Example with Comments

PROGRESS REVIEW SUMMARY RATING:

 Lorelai Gilmore (Manager) Rated :Meets Review :FY25 EPRS Time : 5/13/2024 1:36 PM
Michel is adapting well to our procedures here at the Dragonfly Inn. All job duties are being performed as expected.

Note: The employee in this example has a meets rating so a comment is not required in this instance. Please remember that comments are required if an “Exceeds/Excels” or a “below” rating is selected. Additionally, a “Below” rating should prompt the creation of a Remedial Development Plan and the [EPRS Coordinator](#) should be contacted.

If a Remedial Development Plan is needed, supervisors should give notice and begin coaching the employee by **April 1st**.

Step 4. Discuss and Write an Employee Development Plan (Optional)

After the EPRS ratings have been completed, the employee and supervisor can discuss future job goals and develop an **Employee Development Plan** if the employee chooses so. Employees are eligible to create an Employee Development Plan if they receive an overall rating of “Meets” or above. An Employee Development

Plan is formulated to help the employee learn new job skills that can be used in their present position, for future job goals, or for general career development. Employee Development Plans benefit everyone.

Even though these plans are optional at the employee's discretion, the supervisor should have development suggestions prepared in the event an employee is interested. The reviewer or agency training staff may have development activity recommendations available for the supervisor. The supervisor is encouraged to discuss recommendations with the reviewer to ensure alignment.

Employees and supervisors should keep in mind that development activities can only be utilized if they can actually be provided. For instance, if a supervisor recommends an employee attend a special training program, but there aren't funds available, both parties will be disappointed. This is why it is key for the supervisor to have recommendations prepared prior to the Annual Review meeting.

If an employee chooses to create a development plan, the supervisor and employee should discuss the following:

1. Discuss why the employee would like to create the plan. What is their goal?
2. They should review the different types of development activities available to the employee, such as:
 - o On-the-job training, for skills that can be taught at work by observing other employees or trying new activities.
 - o Specific skill or technical training, such as memo writing, counseling, report creation, etc.
 - o Conferences or seminars relating to the job.
 - o Career advancement training, such as supervisory training, accounting, leadership, etc.
 - o Courses at state colleges and universities, by using the Tuition Remission Program for either single courses or while working towards a degree.
 - o Courses developed as a result of the Collective Bargaining Agreements.
 - o Career counseling sessions.
 - o MassAchieve training
 - i. MassAchieve trainings can be assigned within the Employee Development Plan template in MyPath by using the learning connection.
3. Employees are reminded that any training or development program should be consistent with the policies of the agency.
4. Supervisors should support an employee's efforts to better themselves. If an employee chooses to pay for education or training themselves, the supervisor and employee should discuss further.
5. Both the employee and supervisor should keep in mind that the development plan should lead to growth in the employee's current job or to prepare the employee for future job responsibility.
6. A copy of the Employee Development Plan is available in MyPath to the supervisor and employee.
7. Once complete, the employee can upload a copy of the plan to their EPRS once their Stage C task is assigned.

Step 5. Form Signatures & Printing

After the job duty ratings, summary annual review rating, attendance, comments, and Employee Development Plan option has been recorded and reviewed, each party will be assigned a signature task. The supervisor will sign first. After the supervisor signs, the form will progress to the employee for review, comment, and signature. After the employee submits their form, the reviewer will be assigned a task for review, comment, and signature. And then finally, the employee will once more be assigned a task for review, comment, and signature.

The supervisor's signature means that they have done the annual ratings and discussed them with the employee. It also means that they have offered the employee a chance to write an Employee Development Plan.

The employee's signature means that the employee understands the evaluation and comments written on the EPRS. It also means that they have made a choice regarding the optional Employee Development Plan. If they do not agree, the employee is encouraged to add comments before signing the form.

The employee has two signatures to provide during Stage C. The first signature presents itself after the employee records whether they "agree" or "disagree" with the supervisor's Annual Review Rating. The second signature presents itself after the employee records whether they "agree" or "disagree" with the reviewer's Final Annual Review Rating. If the employee disagrees with the ratings, they are encouraged to record in the comments the reason for their disagreement. The employee has two days to think about each rating before signing.

The reviewer's signature means that they have read the annual ratings and comments from the supervisor and employee.

Each party involved should print a copy of the EPRS for their record. If an employee would like to print their performance review, please review [this job aid: How to Print as an Employee](#). If a supervisor or reviewer would like to print an employee's performance review, please review [this job aid: How to Print as a Supervisor](#).

Step 6. Create a Remedial Development Plan (Situational)

This step is only necessary if an employee has received an overall "below" progress review rating. The purpose of the EPRS Remedial Development Plan (RDP) is to assist employees who would benefit from receiving additional assistance to improve performance. RDPs are formulated jointly between the supervisor and the employee if a "below" rating is received during Stage B or if the supervisor anticipates a "below" rating will be given during Stage C. **If a Remedial Development Plan is needed, supervisors should give notice and begin coaching the employee by April 1st.**

Please note, confidential employees are not eligible for Remedial Development Plans.

Remedial Development Plan Creation Guidelines:

1. "Below" summary rating participants will be re-evaluated 30 days after the completion of Stage B and/or Stage C.
2. The RDP is to be placed in the employee's personnel file.
3. The employee is to be re-evaluated every thirty (30) days until a "meets" or "exceeds/excels" rating is achieved or six (6) months pass, whichever is first.

4. Employees nearing a “below” rating should be counseled by their supervisor three (3) months in advance of Stage C to allow for ample time to change the performance trajectory. The goal is to work with the employee to help them attain a “Meets” or “Exceeds/Excels” rating.
5. During the thirty (30) days re-review, if the employee continues to receive “below” ratings they have the ability to make a one-time appeal via the Merit Arbitration Board.
 - o This appeal must be filed within ten (10) days of the last review rating.
 - o Any decision in favor of the employee will be from the month of the appeal forward.
 - o Such appeal may not be filed if the employee has already filed an appeal at the time of the final unsatisfactory review.
6. Once the employee receives a “Meets” or “Exceeds/Excels” rating during the review process, they will become eligible for the denied step and/or denied salary increases. Salary increases will go into effect on the date that the employee receives the “Meets” or “Exceeds/Excels” overall rating.
7. The employee’s anniversary date for step purposes will not be affected by this process.
8. Any employee who may be adversely impacted by an untimely evaluation will be made whole upon the completion of the performance review and upon achieving a final rating of “Meets” or “Exceeds/Excels.”
9. All financial considerations (i.e., merit increases/step rate increases) are based on the employee’s most recent, final annual evaluation.
10. When work-related circumstances occur over which the employee/agency has no control, the employee is not to be prevented from attaining an overall rating of “Meets” or “Exceeds/Excels.”

Ending Stage C and Preparing for Next Year

As soon as Stage C concludes, next year’s evaluation cycle will begin. A time should be set with the employee to begin Stage A. Be sure that a copy of the Employee Development Plan, if one was created, is referenced when starting Stage A.

Supervisor Check List for Stage C

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

- Have you prepared for the Annual Review meeting?
- Has Stage C been reviewed with the employee?
- Have you discussed and rated performance for each duty?
- Have you discussed and rated overall job performance?
- Has an Employee Development Plan been offered to the employee?
- If the employee would like an Employee Development Plan, was one recorded in MyPath?
- Does the work unit have the resources to execute the Employee Development Plan?
- Is the Employee Development Plan workable?
- Was a Remedial Development Plan created if the employee was assigned an overall "Below" rating?
- Was Stage C signed by you, the employee, and the reviewer in MyPath? (Please keep in mind, the employee signs twice during Stage C).
- Have you set aside time for the next fiscal year's Performance Planning meeting?

Reviewer Check List for Stage C

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

- Have you reviewed the EPRS rating scale?
- Have you ensured that you are not averaging ratings and instead assessing overall performance?
- Were comments made by the supervisor on all "Below" and/or "Exceeds/Excels" ratings?
- Was a Remedial Development Plan created for any employee with an overall "Below" rating?
- If a Remedial Development Plan was created, was a time scheduled for the employee and supervisor to meet (within 30 days) to review the employee's progress with the RDP?
- Have you recorded the final Annual Review Summary Rating?
- Have you signed the EPRS?

The reviewer makes the final rating, based mainly on the supervisor's rating, the reviewer's knowledge of the employee's performance and on the comments on the form. The reviewer must write a comment on the form if the final rating is a "Below" or an "Exceeds/Excels." If the reviewer's final rating is different from the supervisor's, the reviewer should discuss this with the supervisor. Then a joint meeting of the employee, supervisor, and reviewer **must** be held for the reviewer to explain the new rating.

Employee Check List for Stage C

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

- Have you met with the supervisor for a formal Annual Review (Stage C) meeting?
- Have you made a choice regarding the optional Employee Development Plan?
- Have you reviewed and signed your first Stage C task in MyPath?
- Have you reviewed and signed your second Stage C task in MyPath?
- Have you printed a copy of the performance review for your record?