**The Annual Performance Review**

A formal performance review must be conducted each year consisting of discussion(s) between the supervisor and the staff member and a written record of the appraisal.  Discussions should occur more frequently if needed, such as when changes in the job require the assignment of new responsibilities, when new objectives are developed, or if the staff member requires a more structured approach in order to encourage improved performance.  **The content of the formal appraisal discussion should not be a surprise to either party!**

[**Criteria for Assignment of Overall Performance Rating**](http://ucanr.edu/sites/ANRSPU/files/171129.doc)

**Guidelines for Building a Complete and Fair Appraisal**

**Frequent Communication**

* Planned frequent communication and feedback on job performance helps overcome fear during the actual formal performance appraisal session.

**Judge Your Own Performance**

* Evaluate your own performance before you evaluate the staff member's performance.  Are you responsible for their good or bad performance?

**Warm-Up Period**

* Take the time to develop rapport and discuss the advantages of an appraisal.
* Review the information on hand to measure the staff member's performance.

**Be Candid & Be Specific**

* Candidly get right to the point in discussing a staff member's performance on the job.  Honesty and candor will result in a big payoff for you and the staff member.

**Build on Strengths**

* This approach enables the staff member to work toward their greatest potential.
* The staff member must use their strengths to accomplish a job; they cannot use their weaknesses.

**Be a Positive Listener**

* Listen attentively.  Non-verbal communication often says more than words.

**Judge Performance - Not the Person**

* Judge a staff member’s performance and results.  Don't judge personality or personal traits.

***Avoid Evaluation Errors***

Though supervisors try to be objective in evaluating staff members' performance, personal biases manifest themselves in the use of performance rating scales.  These are often referred to as rating errors and include:

**Halo Error**

* Managers tend to generalize from one aspect of a person's performance to other aspects of it, causing a halo error.  If a staff member performs very well in one area of the job, the manager may rate the overall performance as outstanding (Performance Level 5) even though performance in other areas is not at this level.

**Recency Error**

* Recency error occurs when the rating is based mainly on performance near the end of the review period, positively or negatively.  The rating in this case may not accurately reflect the entire job performance.

**Contrast Error**

* Contrast error occurs when a manager rates two or more staff members who differ substantially in level of performance.  For example, a staff member who is performing at a competent level (Performance Level 3) may, in comparison, with a marginal staff member, be rated Performance Level 5.  This error could work in the opposite direction: the competent staff member may be rated at below standards (Performance Level 2) because of the contrast with a distinguished level of performance.

**Constancy Error**

* This occurs when managers use only a portion of the rating scale in accordance with  
  their own set of performance standards.  Lenient raters concentrate their ratings at the top end of the scale.  Other raters show a central tendency error, believing no one is really unacceptable or outstanding, and therefore never using these extreme ratings though they may be applicable.

**Morale Building Error**

* This error occurs when managers give above standards ratings (Performance Level 4 or 5) to increase the morale or to avoid causing low morale when performance does not justify it.  Meeting standards of the job should not imply a negative rating or "average" performance.  It should indicate that the staff member did the job as expected of him or her as established at the beginning of the review period.

**Generosity Error**

* This occurs when managers give above standards ratings (Performance Level 5) to increase the amount of merit increase to be granted.  It is not fair to the staff member or other staff members and it creates a level of expectation for future performance ratings.

[Edit Guidelines for Building a Complete and Fair Appraisal](https://ucanr.edu/sb3/admin/pageasset.cfm?assetnum=60941&pagenum=43114)

**Planning the Appraisal Discussion**

The guidelines below are provided to help supervisors develop their own approach and style.

**Getting Prepared**

* Identify the main points of the review and discussion.  What must be said and what conclusions must be reached?
* Be aware of the staff member's past experience, education, work history, and other related information.  Review the staff member's strengths and weaknesses, and any circumstances that may have contributed to the performance.
* Review notes from the last appraisal discussion, particularly with respect to the Future Plans and Development section.
* Review the job description and performance standards, noting any changes which should be made, and establish preliminary performance standards for the new rating period.
* What is the difference between what was expected and what has occurred?
* What facts, records, and events are available to support the evaluation?

**Setting the Stage**

* Prepare notes to help guide the discussion.
* Schedule an appointment with the staff member in advance.
* Suggest the staff member prepare a list of accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses.
* Arrange for a suitable meeting place where it is quiet, relaxed, and private.
* Review all materials and information gathered.
* Bring a "draft" not a final copy of the Performance Appraisal.

**Conducting the Appraisal Session**

Conducting the discussion is the critical step.  It can have an important bearing on future relationships and will profoundly influence a supervisor's ability to motivate future performance.  The following are guidelines provided to help supervisors develop their own style and methods.

**Setting the Tone of the Discussion**

Clearly state the purpose of the meeting and explain the ground rules and the process.  Tell staff member what can come out of meeting, including future assignments, clear communication, and increased duties. Minimize the negative connotations of "evaluation," "rating," and "records of evidence."

* Help the staff member feel at ease and receptive.

**Communicating Information**

* Explain and discuss the Performance Appraisal form
* Avoid making the rating form and specific ratings the principal issue of the discussion
* Avoid criticism of personality or personal traits
* Use hypothetical questions to help staff member search out underlying problems and solutions
* Don't cross-examine; allow staff member to speak (voicing opinions and feelings; making plans for self-improvement; discussing job-related problems)
* List disagreements, don't gloss over them; use listening skills to separate facts from opinions and to shift from details to major points or problems
* Explain ratings proposed for each of the staff member's key responsibilities;  cite specific examples
* Come prepared with clear, understandable (written) statements which express expectations concerning future changes in performance; agree on process to monitor areas requiring change with on-going and specific target-dated reviews  (Areas for Improvement section)
* Be prepared to make development commitments which are appropriate and feasible to support necessary changes in behavior; discuss plans for staff member's self-development and how these relate to performance expectations  (Future Plans and Development Activities section)
* As appropriate, discuss advancement opportunities and how the staff member can achieve career goals; include in this discussion the specific knowledge, skills, and experience the staff member must acquire in order to advance; agree on specific methods for acquiring them (Future Plans and Development Activities section)
* To establish a new position description for the next evaluation period, arrive at mutually agreeable modifications, additions or deletions in the staff member's responsibilities and related objectives.

**Closing the Appraisal Discussion**

* It is important to conclude the discussion on a positive note.
* Discuss plans to build on strengths and correct weaknesses to enhance future performance
* Conclude with a summary of the main points of the discussion
* Inform the staff member of the option to respond to the appraisal in the "Employee Comments and Recommendations" section
* Have staff member sign the form if he/she does not wish to add any comments;  OR set a mutually agreeable date for signing the final form, incorporating any changes, and including any comments made by the staff member.

[Edit Planning the Appraisal Discussion](https://ucanr.edu/sb3/admin/pageasset.cfm?assetnum=60942&pagenum=43114)

**Supervisor's Self Evaluation**

After the interview process has been completed, consider the following:

* Did things go well/poorly?  Why?
* What topics were handled successfully/unsuccessfully?
* What subjects aroused the staff member's interest and involvement?
* Were all important points thoroughly discussed?
* What remains as unfinished business?
* What points should be raised at the next meeting?
* What performance should be monitored in the future?
* What...objectives should be set?  ...skills should be developed?

## You Should Do the Following

1.       Reassure your staff member by building on strengths, give him/her confidence.

2.       Use a "we" approach when discussing problems.

3.       Be specific when discussing performance.

4.       Keep the interview on track.

5.       Draw him/her out by:Asking thought-provoking questions (not yes or no type), then listen.  Restate or reflect the staff member's statements.  Listen with warmth, frankness, and real interest.

6.       Talk about job results, not activities.

7.       Function as a coach, not as inspector. Counsel -- don't advise.

8.       Close properly:Summarize, plan for improvements and changes.  Write down the results.

## But Don't

1.       Use negative words or too many negative criticisms.

2.       Use a "you vs. me" approach.

3.       Give insincere or excessive praise.

4.       Use generalities that cannot be backed up by specific examples.

5.       Dominate the conversation.

6.       Place emphasis on personality traits.

7.       Be fussy, picayune or harried.

8.       Be or seem hurried.