



Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated 09/10/2008)

Introduction:

This document serves to provide answers to frequently asked questions on the use and functionality of the on-line performance appraisal system (PERforM) implemented for state employees in Fiscal Year 2008.

For most supervisors, the biggest change is that the process for documenting performance objectives and evaluating the employee's job performance is automated. This automated process holds supervisors and managers more accountable for conducting performance appraisals, and allows each agency's management to report on the results of appraisals conducted for employees in their agency.

For employees, the appraisal process does not change too much. Each employee required to have an appraisal receives performance objectives for their position, and receives an annual performance appraisal rating for standard components. The final rating is provided to the employee with a copy kept in their personnel file, and also maintained in the PERforM system.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What types of performance appraisals can be conducted in the system?

The PERforM system accommodates the following three (3) types of performance appraisals:

Annual

Employees required to receive an appraisal will have one (1) annual rating per year between January 1 and March 31. Each agency will notify their employees of the specific timeframe in which the annual appraisal should be completed.

Probation

Probationary appraisals may be optional for some agencies and required by other agencies. They generally occur at the end of an employee's probationary period and serve to indicate whether the employee's probation should be ended or extended.

Special

Special appraisals are also optional but may be required by some agencies. Examples of special appraisals include, but are not limited to: interim performance appraisals scheduled as quarterly, semi-annually, etc.; as a means to improve specific areas of employee performance (i.e., improvement plan); changes in supervisor; or lateral transfers.

2. Who should receive an annual appraisal?

Any employee who...

- Has 12 months of state service by January 1 in the year in which the appraisal is being completed (based on SAM II-HR Leave Progression Start Date); and
- Is in a benefits eligible position as designated by the agency.

Other employees may be directed by state policy, agency policy, or the Director of the Division of Personnel to receive an annual appraisal.

Employees who do not meet the criteria above may receive an annual appraisal at the discretion of the appointing authority, consistent with the policies of the agency.

3. When are annual performance appraisals conducted for employees?

Annual performance appraisals are completed between January 1 and March 31 of each year, following the appraisal period that ended on December 31st.

4. What is a performance component?

A performance component is a major area of responsibility critical to the success of each employee's job. The PERforM process establishes five (5) "across-the-board" performance components for every state employee, regardless of job classification.

- Knowledge of Work
- Quality of Work
- Situational Responsiveness
- Initiative
- Dependability

In addition to the 5 components listed above, individuals designated as supervisors or managers by their agency are also evaluated on 3 additional components:

- Performance Planning and Documentation
- Leadership
- Management Skills

5. What is a performance objective—are they different from performance components?

While performance components indicate the major areas to be appraised, performance objectives describe the level of performance the employee is expected to achieve for each component. Supervisors are responsible for developing specific and measurable performance objectives for each component on the employee's Performance Plan. This can also be a collaborative process between supervisor and employee. Some performance objectives may be routine based on tasks or assignments that the employee is expected to do on a regular day-to-day basis; other performance objectives may change with each appraisal period (i.e., special projects), and some objectives may be developmental to help the employee increase his or her skill level.

6. Can my performance objectives change?

Yes, they can be modified to address such issues as changes in duties, a change in supervisor (rater), etc. At a minimum, each employee's performance objectives should be reviewed annually to ensure they remain appropriate.

Each time objectives are revised, they should be clearly communicated to the employee to ensure that he or she has a clear understanding of what is necessary to achieve or exceed a successful rating for each performance component. The rater, reviewer, and employee document this communication by signing a new performance plan document.

7. Is the PERforM system capable of printing the employee's Performance Plan (containing components and performance objectives) and Performance Appraisal (containing ratings and comments)?

Yes. Supervisors (raters) have the ability to print these documents for employees.

8. Does the employee need to sign the Performance Plan document and Performance Appraisal document?

At the beginning of each appraisal period, supervisors (raters), employees and reviewers are required to sign the employee's Performance Plan document indicating that the objectives for each component have been discussed with the employee. Similarly, at the conclusion of each appraisal period, the supervisor (rater), reviewer and employee are again required to sign the Performance Appraisal document indicating that the appraisal was completed, reviewed and discussed with the employee.

9. How is an overall performance appraisal rating determined for an employee—is the employee rated on a component, the objective or just the employee's overall performance?

The employee's supervisor (rater) scores the employee on a 1 – 10 scale for each component. This score reflects how well the employee performed with respect to all the stated objectives for the component—not each individual objective. Using the supervisor's scores, the PERforM system automatically calculates and indicates the employee's overall performance rating on the employee's Performance Appraisal. Each employee receives one of the following performance ratings:

- Exceptional
- Outstanding
- Successful
- Needs Improvement

10. How does the system calculate the totals to come up with the rating—is there rounding of numbers—and if so, couldn't that affect someone's overall performance rating?

The PERforM system accommodates rounding to one decimal without jumping anyone up, or moving anyone down to a different rating category.

11. If an employee is promoted during the year, for which job is the employee's annual appraisal based upon?

Typically the employee is evaluated for the position he or she occupied on December 31st. The rater may collaborate with the employee's former supervisor, or may refer to any special ratings that may have been conducted for the employee in the previous position. However, if the employee's current supervisor does not feel he or she can adequately assess the employee's performance, the supervisor (rater) may seek approval from the next level supervisor (reviewer) to exempt the employee from the appraisal process. Such exemptions must be done in accordance with all applicable state and agency policies.

12. Are performance appraisals evaluated by anyone other than the supervisor (rater)?

Yes. Once the rater finishes the performance appraisal, the rater submits the appraisal to his or her immediate supervisor (reviewer) for approval. The reviewer can approve the appraisal or—if he or she disagrees with the appraisal rating or performance comments related to the rating—disapprove the appraisal and recommend changes to the rater (as the reviewer cannot physically make changes to the appraisal). Once the appraisal is approved by the reviewer, it is presented to the employee.

13. Who will conduct my performance appraisal rating if my supervisor is absent during the rating period?

Normally, if this situation occurs, the next level supervisor (reviewer) will conduct performance ratings during your supervisor's (rater's) absence.

If the reviewer is absent, the same chain of review will be in place. In effect, the reviewer's immediate supervisor will act as the second approval in the performance appraisal process.

14. Can an employee respond to, or disagree with a performance appraisal he or she receives?

Employees who believe the rating or comment given for a component – or the overall rating received for the appraisal period – is not accurate may request in writing to have their appraisal reviewed. This process should be conducted in a manner to resolve issues quickly and fairly. Information received from the employee is reviewed by the individual designated by the employee's agency.

If the employee's appraisal should be changed, it will be overturned in the system. In PERforM, the employee's supervisor (rater) will re-evaluate the component rating(s) and/or comment(s) under dispute and resubmit the appraisal to the reviewer for approval. An updated appraisal document will be generated, printed, signed and given to the employee.

If the rating remains unchanged, the supervisor attaches the employee's comments to the printed Performance Appraisal document as a permanent record.

15. If the employee's appraisal is changed, is the situation considered in the performance appraisal rating of the supervisor (rater) who conducted the overturned appraisal?

The fact that the employee's rating is changed does not necessarily indicate poor performance on the part of the supervisor (rater). Supervisors—and employees—will constantly learn more about the appraisal process over time. Certainly, however, if the supervisor's methods to accurately and fairly evaluate and measure employee performance need improvement, this issue should also be noted and addressed during the rater's own performance review process.

16. Is PERforM a "pay for performance" system?

No, PERforM is not a pay for performance system. However, employees' overall performance ratings may be used as a factor in determining various personnel decisions such as identifying developmental needs, succession planning, order of layoff, and pay increases based on performance.

If the Pay Plan recommended by the Personnel Advisory Board includes pay increases tied to performance and is adopted in the appropriations process, employees' ratings may be used to determine eligibility for specific salary advancements.

RATER AND REVIEWER INFORMATION

1. What type of training is provided on PERforM? Does training include instruction on how to conduct performance appraisals and communicate with employees?

System users—primarily supervisors and managers—should receive information and training to help them navigate through the PERforM screens. Each agency may conduct PERforM training to demonstrate use of the PERforM system which covers the various steps involved in the appraisal process. Additionally, the online system itself contains some “built-in” instructions to familiarize and remind users about how the system works. However, the online system is only a small part of the appraisal “big picture.” Consequently, training also focuses on the “human element” of the appraisal cycle—the one-on-one process of establishing performance objectives and discussing developmental opportunities, observing and providing feedback on performance throughout the year and finally evaluating and communicating performance ratings to employees to promote future success and ongoing professional development.

2. I do not have a personal computer (PC). How can I conduct appraisals for the employees I supervise?

Supervisors (raters) who do not have access to a PC (and the online PERforM system) should immediately inform their next level supervisor (reviewer) and contact their agency personnel or human resources office to seek the appropriate assistance. The lack of computer access does not excuse the rater from his or her performance appraisal responsibilities. The rater, reviewer and agency personnel office will determine the most efficient method to enter and retrieve the required employee data.

3. I am having difficulties logging on to PERforM. What is my User Name and Password?

Your User Name is your PC domain followed by a backslash and then your PC userid. (PC domain\PC userid) Your User Name can be determined by referring to “Logon Information,” which is displayed by pressing the Alt, Ctrl, and Delete keys on your keyboard simultaneously. Your PERforM Password is the same password used to log on to your work PC.

4. If I experience difficulties using PERforM, who can I contact?

You can send your question or a description of your problem to perform@oa.mo.gov or use “Contact Us” provided at <http://www.perform.mo.gov>.

5. What is a delegate rater?

A delegate rater is an individual designated by an agency to perform data entry of annual performance appraisal ratings or rating exemption when normal processes of developing objectives, creating appraisals, and/or approving appraisals cannot be completed in the PERforM system by the rater and/or reviewer.

6. As a rater, can I choose to use a delegate rater rather than using PERforM myself?

No. Delegate raters are designated by an agency for raters or reviewers in the chain of review that do not have the ability to perform normal processes in PERforM. This may occur when supervisors (rater or reviewer) do not have PC access or when supervisors (rater or reviewer) work in a different agency than the employee they are required to rate.

In instances when a delegate rater is utilized by an agency, the rater and reviewer are not excused from their performance appraisal responsibilities. Instead, a paper process is used to develop performance plans and to conduct annual performance appraisals. These documents will serve as the official documentation of the appraisal process. For reporting purposes, the ratings or exemption contained on the Performance Appraisal are entered into PERforM by a delegate rater in the employee’s agency.

7. How does this system serve as a management tool?

The PERforM system is a standardized and automated system of performance appraisal that holds state employees as well as their managers and supervisors accountable for continually reaching for the highest levels of performance, regardless of their job functions. Where other performance evaluation processes did not make adequate distinctions in performance and the results were not monitored or enforced via consistent reporting data, the PERforM system better enables state agencies to continually monitor and address performance related problems, plan and implement critical workforce development strategies and recognize exceptional performers to encourage commitment to State service and improve overall job satisfaction.

8. Does the system include a list of the employees for whom supervisors (raters) must conduct appraisals?

Supervisors (raters) are provided the names of employees he or she must evaluate on their PERforM home page. This list is agency specific and does not include employees under the rater's responsibility that are employed by a different agency. If the name of an employee in the rater's agency is not listed, the rater should contact their personnel or human resources office.

The rater accounts for annual appraisals of staff employed by a different agency through use of the delegate rater entry process.

9. How is the list of employee names for whom supervisors (raters) must conduct appraisals maintained as employees come and go?

The reporting structure is maintained in the SAM II-HR Payroll System based on position numbers. The supervisory position number that a position reports to in the organizational structure is stored in the Position Control User Defined Window 3 (PUD3), and used to identify raters and reviewers within the PERforM system. Each agency is responsible for maintaining this information as changes occur.

10. Why are names included in my employee list for staff that I do not supervise?

The information contained on the PUD3 screens in the SAM II-HR Payroll System creates the "chain of review" which populates the PERforM system.

When PUD3 screens contain inaccurate position numbers, the employee lists in PERforM will be incorrect. There is also the possibility that a position within the chain of review is vacant. When this occurs, the rater and/or reviewer responsibility is adjusted up to the next level supervisor in the organizational structure. Supervisors (raters) should contact their personnel or human resources office for assistance as needed in determining which factor is causing the situation.

11. How do dual occupancies affect PERforM?

If more than one employee occupies a position (dual occupancy), the names of all employees will appear in the supervisor's (rater's) list.

If more than one employee occupies a supervisor position (dual occupancy), only one of the individual's PERforM pages will contain the employee list. The population of the list is determined by the SAM II-HR ID. The rater with the lowest internal ID (normally the employee with the most state service) will have access to the employees under the responsibility of the position.

12. Can my PERforM session time out?

Yes. PERforM will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity. Saving often while working in PERforM is recommended. A warning is displayed 5 minutes prior to timing out when editing appraisals or objectives, allowing time for the user to save their work and refresh their session.

There must be communication with the PERforM server to keep your session from timing out. To avoid a loss of data, you must perform some type of action such as saving or navigating between screens within PERforM. However, typing text, viewing PERforM Reports, and use of the Back button will not keep your session open.

13. Why is one of my staff being evaluated on eight (8) components when he/she is not a supervisor, and no names appear in their employee list?

This is occurring because the employee's position number is denoted as a supervisory or managerial position on a PUD3 window in the SAM II-HR system. Questions about this designation should be directed to your personnel or human resources office.

14. How many objectives are required for each component?

At a minimum, the employee should be provided with one (1) objective per component. Typically, 3 – 7 (or more if necessary) objectives are recommended to provide the employee with a clear understanding of what is necessary to achieve or exceed a successful rating for each performance component.

15. Is there a limit on the length of objectives?

Yes. Each objective can be no longer than 400 characters (including spaces). A character counter is located in the bottom left corner of the screen to assist supervisors (raters).

16. Can I use one set of objectives for all types of appraisals?

No. Performance objectives are associated with the appraisal type (Annual, Special, or Probationary). Duplicate or similar objectives can be used for annual, special, and/or probationary planning documents; however, a separate (specific) set of objectives must be developed for each corresponding type of appraisal that will be completed for an employee. To assign an appraisal type to objectives, the rater utilizes the drop down box that is displayed on the screen used to develop objectives. When duplicate objectives are used for multiple appraisal types, the rater can use the copy functionality to expedite the development process.

Example: The rater is supervising a new employee and is aware that both a probationary appraisal and an annual appraisal will be conducted for the employee within the next year. In PERforM, the rater develops a set of **probationary** objectives for the **Probationary** Performance Plan which will later populate the **Probationary** Appraisal. The rater also develops a separate set of **annual** objectives for the **Annual** Performance Plan which will later populate the **Annual** Appraisal.

17. How often can I modify an employee's performance objectives?

An employee's performance objectives can be modified anytime during the appraisal period; however, a new Performance Plan document must be printed and signed by the employee anytime changes are made to performance objectives. The revised objectives become effective after they have been communicated to the employee and the Performance Plan has been marked as reviewed in the system.

18. Can objectives be copied from one employee to another employee?

Yes. PERforM has a Copy Objectives feature that allows a rater to copy all or only selected objectives from one employee to another employee under his/her supervision. Similarly, an employee's objectives can be copied from one type to another. As an example, an employee's probationary objectives can be copied and also used as his/her annual objectives.

19. Are there any limitations on the Copy Objectives feature?

Yes, because the number of components for an individual employee can vary based on their supervisor responsibility.

All employees are rated on five (5) standard components; however, employees designated as supervisors or managers by their agency are also evaluated on three (3) additional components.

Objectives can be copied from one employee to another employee if they are rated on the same number of components. This includes copying objectives from one designated supervisory employee to another supervisory employee.

Objectives for an employee with 5 components can also be copied to a designated supervisory employee because the standard components are common between both categories of employees.

However, PERforM does not allow objectives of a designated supervisory employee with a total of 8 components to be copied to an employee with only 5 components. The number of components are disproportioned between the two categories of employees. Objectives under the supervisory components are not relevant to employees only being rated on the standard components.

20. Does the reviewer approve the Performance Plan (objectives) in the PERforM system?

No. The reviewer's signature is obtained on the Performance Plan document which indicates agreement with the objectives that the employee will later be appraised on during the rating period. The reviewer is capable of viewing current objectives by using the [View Objectives of All Employees | Review](#) link provided on his/her home page.

21. What needs to occur after all necessary signatures are obtained on the Performance Plan?

The rater indicates the objectives have been communicated to the employee by using the [Develop/Update Performance Objectives](#) link to return to the employee's objectives page in PERforM. The rater clicks the "Yes" radio button that follows the statement, "All [appraisal type] Performance Objectives have been reviewed with your employee and all the necessary signatures have been obtained on a Performance Plan document. Is this correct?"

The rater also provides a copy of the signed Performance Plan to the employee.

22. What happens to an employee's objectives if he/she changes employment and is no longer under my supervision?

If the employee continues in state employment, the existing objectives are transferred to his/her new supervisor (rater). Often, this requires the new rater to revise the objectives to reflect new expectations.

23. What happens to an employee's Performance Plan when their employment ends? Do I have to delete it?

No action is required. The Performance Plan, which contains the objectives, is transferred to the new supervisor (rater) if the employee continues state employment. If the employee leaves state employment, his/her Performance Plan (objectives) is removed from the system after your personnel or human resources office processes the appropriate personnel action in the SAM II-HR Payroll System.

24. When can I create annual appraisals?

Annual appraisals can be created during the rating period, which is January 1 – March 31 following the appraisal period that concluded on December 31st. Annual appraisals cannot be created early; however, no time constraint applies to the probationary and special appraisals. For each appraisal type, there is a limitation of one incomplete (unfinished) appraisal per employee, per appointment.

25. Do I have to re-enter objectives when I create an appraisal?

No. The set of objectives used to create the Performance Plan automatically populates the Performance Appraisal based on the specific appraisal type (annual, probationary, or special).

26. Why does my employee's annual appraisal contain incorrect header information and/or the wrong number of components?

The information contained on the appraisal is driven by the employee and position records that are effective in the SAM II-HR System on the day the appraisal is created. Transactions (promotion, reclassification, supervisory change, etc.) in SAM II-HR impact an employee's PERforM data. An employee's appraisal will reflect transactions processed after the end of the appraisal period and prior to the creation of his/her annual appraisal.

27. When should I create a new Performance Plan for the next annual appraisal period? Can this be done before I complete the Annual Appraisal for the previous appraisal period that ended on December 31st?

It is recommended that Performance Plans for the new annual appraisal period (calendar year) be presented to employees during the rating period, before or in conjunction with their Annual Performance Appraisal.

Before revising objectives to be included on the Performance Plan for the new appraisal period (calendar year), you should create the Annual Performance Appraisal for the previous appraisal period (calendar year). You do not have to rate/populate the Annual Appraisal at the time of creation, but must save it to indicate that it is "In Progress." Once the appraisal is in this status, changes made to the (annual) objectives are only applied to future annual appraisals that are created.

28. Do I have to print a Performance Plan for the new appraisal period (calendar year) if there were no changes to the employee's objectives?

Yes, you should print a new Performance Plan for an employee each year. The document reflects the current dates of the new annual appraisal period. The Plan should be reviewed with employees each appraisal period to reiterate their objectives. Again, appropriate signatures should be obtained and the rater should indicate in the system that the Performance Plan has been reviewed.

29. How are annual appraisals sent to the reviewer in PERforM when he/she is in a different agency than the rater and employee?

In this situation, the rater can develop the objectives and create the Performance Plan in PERforM. However, the Performance Appraisal should not be submitted to the reviewer in the system. Instead, a delegate rater (entry person) in the employee's agency should be utilized to enter the employee's appraisal (rating or exemption) into the PERforM system.

30. What are the various statuses that an appraisal can move through from start to finish?

Incomplete:

In Progress – Appraisals that have been saved but not submitted to the reviewer.

Pending – Appraisals submitted but awaiting action (approval) by the reviewer.

Approved – Appraisals reviewed and approved by the reviewer, but not marked as “complete” in PERforM to indicate that the rating was communicated to the employee.

Disapproved – Appraisals reviewed and disapproved by the reviewer.

Complete: Appraisals that have been approved by the reviewer, communicated with the employee, and marked as such in PERforM.

Exempt: Approved annual appraisals that are equal in status to Complete, but contain an explanation for exemption (in the Overall Comments) rather than component ratings.

Missing: For reporting purposes, this status refers to required annual appraisals that have no information saved in PERforM.

31. Are comments required on an appraisal?

The answer varies based on the action being taken. Generally, comments are not required but are encouraged for the purpose of supporting the rating given and to ensure that the employee understands how he/she is performing. However, comments are required when an employee is given the lowest (1) or highest (10) rating for a component, or when an employee is exempted from receiving an annual appraisal rating.

32. Is there a limit on the length of comments included on an appraisal?

Yes. Comments provided for each component can be no longer than 500 characters (including spaces). The overall comments are limited to 1,000 characters (including spaces). A character counter appears at the bottom left corner of the screen to assist raters when they are working in a comment field. If the provided text boxes do not accommodate all necessary comments, the rater may choose to add an external document to the appraisal via PERforM’s attachment feature.

33. Is there a mechanism for maintaining documentation that may have been provided to an employee over the course of the year with the performance appraisal?

Supervisors (raters) have the ability to attach external documents regarding performance to each of his or her employee’s appraisals via PERforM’s attachment feature. For annual appraisals, this feature only functions as the appraisal is being created (i.e., from January 1 – March 31). For probationary and special appraisals, the attachment can be used anytime throughout the year.

34. How do I exempt an employee from receiving an annual appraisal rating?

When insufficient information exists to determine the rating of an employee on all components, an exemption may be given. The Rater creates an annual appraisal and provides an explanation for the exemption in the Overall Comments, which then requires approval from the Reviewer.

35. As the reviewer, how do I know when an appraisal has been submitted to me for review?

The PERforM system does not provide notification when an appraisal has been sent to you for review. Therefore, it is recommended that raters notify (email) reviewers when appraisals have been submitted. To check for pending appraisals, click on the [Review/Approve Pending Appraisals](#) link located under Reviewers on your home page.

36. As the rater, how do I know when the reviewer has taken action on a pending appraisal?

The PERforM system does not provide notification when the reviewer has taken action on an appraisal. Therefore, it is recommended that reviewers notify (email) raters of any action taken. To review pending, approved or disapproved appraisals, click on the [Update Incomplete Appraisals](#) link located under Rater on your home page.

37. Is the appraisal process complete after all necessary signatures are obtained on the Performance Appraisal document?

If the employee received a rating, the rater must mark the appraisal as complete in PERforM by using the [Update Incomplete Appraisals](#) link. The rater clicks the "Complete Appraisal" button located at the bottom of the appraisal page. This step is not necessary for exemptions. Exempted appraisals are finalized in the system when the reviewer approves the appraisal and the status changes from "Exempt-Pending" to "Exempt."

38. How can I modify a complete or exempt annual appraisal?

If a complete or an exempt annual appraisal requires revisions, the rater uses the [Update Incomplete Appraisals/Overtake Complete Appraisals](#) link to access the appropriate employee appraisal. The rater clicks the "Overtake Appraisal" button which changes the appraisal status to "In Progress." This allows the appraisal to be edited. When revised, the appraisal must be re-submitted to the reviewer and move through the remaining steps of the appraisal process.

39. What happens to incomplete probationary and special appraisals that are created but incomplete when an employee's employment ends?

Incomplete probationary and special appraisals are purged from PERforM when your personnel or human resources office processes the personnel action in the SAM II-HR Payroll System to indicate the employee's change in employment status.

40. Who is responsible for an employee's annual appraisal if employment changes occur during the annual rating period?

If the rater and reviewer are aware that an employee will change employment during the rating period, it is recommended that the annual appraisal be completed prior to the employee's separation.

If an annual appraisal is not created by the time an employment change occurs, the new rater will be responsible for completing the annual appraisal. Where supervisors can collaborate within the agency, division, or work unit to rate the performance of an employee, the annual appraisal rating should occur. In other circumstances when insufficient information and/or resources exist to determine the rating of the employee on all components, the employee may be exempted consistent with the policies of the agency.

If an annual appraisal is created but incomplete at the time an employee separates, the rater who started the appraisal is responsible for completing the appraisal process consistent with the policies of the agency.

If the rater or reviewer changes employment during the annual rating period, when at all possible, he/she should complete the annual appraisals for his/her employees before the date of separation. In this situation, the processing of incomplete appraisals will be the responsibility of the new rater or reviewer. Appraisals will follow the chain of review that was in place on the date it was created. In circumstances when incomplete appraisals cannot be processed, an agency administrator should be contacted to determine the best course of action.