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# *Merit*

&

# Performance Evaluation Manual



**A Joint Labor Management Project**  
(Per Article 32.2g)

*Prepared by:*

*The Department of Human Resources & the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association (UCPEA)*

(updated 2/07)

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

The annual performance review is an opportunity to motivate effective job performance. This meeting should be the culmination of on-going daily feedback resulting in positive collaboration between employees and supervisors. Not only will it aid supervisors in identifying any areas which might need improvement, it will also allow for positive feedback, and success in achieving goals. Remember, supervisors succeed if their employees succeed.



## **DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Performance evaluation is an important process for both supervisors and employees. It is a tool that can enhance the management of an organization, and it is also a process that allows employees to be both recognized for good performance and provided with recommendations for improvement. When done properly, it strengthens the relationship between employee and supervisor, increases communication, points out expectations and appraises past performance. Since performance evaluation is communication between supervisor and employee, it is an extremely important supervisory responsibility, with far-reaching consequences for the employee's career. It is also a contractual obligation.

Article 21.1 of the UCPEA contract states, "For the purpose of promoting, maintaining and enhancing excellence in job performance, each department shall provide for evaluations of each UCPEA employee at least once a year. Such evaluations shall permit the continuing assessment of the quality of the individual's performance relative to the required duties described in his/her official job specifications and internal departmental job description (if applicable)."

While performance evaluation is not simple, it nevertheless remains a primary responsibility of those functioning in a supervisory role. Supervisors consciously and unconsciously evaluate staff performance daily. The written evaluation permits the supervisor to organize judgments about performance in an orderly manner so that they may be translated clearly and consistently to the staff member. As is stated in article 21.2 c. of the UCPEA contract, "For the purpose of documenting and appraising the employee's performance during the period, as well as for providing suggestions for improvement, each supervisor of UCPEA staff, including supervisors in UCPEA positions, shall prepare a written evaluation with criteria appropriate to the department or unit."

A written evaluation also provides an occasion for both the staff member and the supervisor to reach or refresh their mutual understanding of the staff member's role in relation to the organization's goals.



## OBJECTIVES OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

All University professional staff in the UCPEA bargaining unit must have their performance evaluated in writing at least once a year. Performance appraisal has the potential to motivate employees and increase their productivity. The written performance evaluation provides an opportunity for supervisors to:

- Express appreciation of good performance
- Discuss deficiencies openly and establish methods for overcoming each deficiency
- Review or update position descriptions
- Clarify job expectations
- Set standards of performance
- Assist the supervisor in evaluating him or herself
- Establish that an employee has successfully completed his/her probationary period



## DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF MERIT

Article 32.2 f. of the UCPEA contract states that: "Performance merit shall be granted to bargaining unit members who receive outstanding and very good evaluations. Performance Merit shall be based on a system of "Merit Increments (MI)", where a Very Good evaluation is worth one increment (1 MI), and an Outstanding is worth two increments (2 MI). The value of an increment shall be determined by multiplying the number of members receiving outstanding and very good evaluations by the number of increments assigned to that rating, summing the total number of increments for the two categories, then dividing the total dollars in the "Performance Merit" pool by the total increments calculated.

Article 32.2 e states: "In general, university merit shall be awarded to those individuals who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- 1) Whether the employee has significantly advanced the achievement of either the University, division or department objectives;
- 2) Significantly improved operational efficiencies; or
- 3) Contributed in unique and meaningful ways to the advancement of the profession." (Article 32.2e.)

University merit is discretionary and is in addition to the general wage increases. In order for an employee to be considered for university merit, his/her supervisor must complete and submit a merit recommendation form. The immediate supervisor, regardless of bargaining unit or exempt status, shall make recommendations about merit distribution, but the final awards will be determined by the Vice President or Vice Provost.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MERIT?



- Employees, who throughout the totality of the evaluation period (May 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>), were either permanent or on an end-date appointment are eligible for merit.
- Employees, who served less than six (6) months of probation during the evaluation period (May 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>) and were permanent during the remaining period, are eligible for a pro rata amount of the performance merit award. These individuals are also eligible to be recommended for university merit.

## CONDUCTING PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

### BEFORE THE INTERVIEW



- Don't procrastinate about scheduling the interview.
- Set consistent follow-up goals between evaluations.
- Keep accurate records on employee performance.
- Plan out the interview with adequate detail and allow plenty of time.
- Honestly assess your own contribution to the employee's success or failure in meeting standards.
- If you choose to do so, within the boundaries of the contract, request an annual report of activity and achievement from the employee.

### ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Article 21.2 b. of the UCPEA contract states that, "Management may require employees, or employees may volunteer, to provide an annual report of activity and achievement to be used as a source of information for evaluations. If management makes such a requirement they must do so in advance of the period for which they want the reporting. Employees shall be given a minimum of two weeks' notice for providing the requested reports. Final reports of activity and achievement for an evaluation year must be submitted by April 15<sup>th</sup> for consideration in the evaluation process." Employees may also use the annual report of activity and achievement to describe those achievements that they feel should make them eligible for discretionary merit.

### WHEN TO PREPARE AN EVALUATION



The performance evaluation process is continuous throughout the career of all professional employees. It should be emphasized that although employees are evaluated at least once a year, a supervisor may initiate a performance evaluation at any time he/she believes it will be helpful, or at reasonable intervals upon a staff member's request.

For non-probationary employees, there is a structured timeframe for conducting evaluations. Under Article 21.1 a, "The evaluation period shall be May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year." It is also stated in Article 21.2c. that "While an evaluation may be done at any time during the evaluation year, one must be prepared and presented to each employee between April 15<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year."

Performance evaluations for probationary employees are linked to the employee's hire date. "Approximately halfway through and at the end of his/her probationary period, each employee shall be given a written evaluation of his/her performance." (Article 20.3)

Written evaluations for non-probationary UCPEA staff must be conducted annually, and completed between April 15 and May 1 of each year.

Renewal of an end-date employee depends, among other things, on the availability of funding and is independent of the performance evaluation process. A performance evaluation does not imply that an employee with an end-date will necessarily be renewed. **Please indicate end-date employment status on the cover sheet.**



## EVALUATION TIMELINE

**Mark your calendar with these important dates:**

**By March 1:** Human Resources will issue notice to employees that they will be required to provide an Annual Report of Activity and Achievement for the following evaluation cycle. At this time supervisors must also remind employees that the current year's report of Activity and Achievement is to be submitted to supervisors by April 15.

**By April 15:** Deadline for employees to submit Annual Report of Activity and Achievement. Supervisor prepares the performance evaluation and makes arrangements to discuss it with the employee by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**By May 1:** Deadline for presenting performance evaluation to employee (Article 21.2c)

**May 15:** Deadline for evaluations to be received in Human Resources, Unit 5075.

**June 1:** Deadline for submitting merit recommendation forms to the Division's Vice President or Vice Provost.



## EVALUATION FORMS

Suggested forms for professional staff evaluations may be obtained from the Labor Relations web page at: <http://lr.uconn.edu/forms/>

Please indicate the employee's appointment status (permanent, end date, or probationary) on the performance evaluation cover sheet.

## PERFORMANCE EVALUATION RATINGS

### **DEFINITION OF RATINGS:**

\*An employee need not be rated as Outstanding or Very Good in every category to receive these overall ratings.

<b><u>RATINGS</u></b>	<b><u>RELATION TO POSITION REQUIREMENTS</u></b>
<b>OUTSTANDING:</b>	Far exceeds requirements and standards of regular duties. Outstanding performance is marked by initiative and high quality of work. An outstanding performance rating far exceeds the requirements and standards of the position.
<b>VERY GOOD:</b>	Exceeds requirements and standards of regular duties. Very good performance indicates that the employee regularly exceeds all position requirements.
<b>GOOD:</b>	Good performance is that which meets the regular requirements of the position adequately and competently. Good is not marginal, if performance is considered marginal, it should <b>not</b> be given a rating of good.
<b>IN NEED</b>	



**OF IMPROVEMENT:** Staff in this category are performing marginally and are not meeting the requirements of the position. Specific plans should be outlined for correcting areas of below standard performance. Deficiencies should be clearly identified and a timeline for improvement established, including follow-up evaluation(s). Employees in this category should be cautioned about the consequence of continued less than satisfactory work.

**UNSATISFACTORY:** Performance, which is unsatisfactory, does not meet the requirements of the position. Staff in this category should be identified and counseled regarding their performance prior to issuing an unsatisfactory annual review as they may be denied salary increases or terminated.

### **THE EVALUATION INTERVIEW**

The performance appraisal process is continuous throughout the employee's career. All professional employees must see and have the opportunity to comment on their evaluations. The supervisor may make adjustments to the written evaluation after receiving input from the employee and appropriate supervisors in the chain of command. "The written evaluation and cover sheet shall normally be discussed with the employee within seven (7) calendar days of the time they are prepared. The employee shall normally sign the evaluation within seven (7) calendar days from receipt for the sole purpose of indicating that he/she has read it." (Article 21.2 e.) The communication should be two-way: the supervisor should use the opportunity to convey his/her assessment of the staff member's work,



and encourage the staff member to comment on his/her own work. This is a good time to solicit suggestions for improving how the job is done.

There is space on the form for the staff member's comments and signature. The staff member's signature acknowledges that he/she has seen and had an opportunity to discuss the evaluation, not necessarily that he/she agrees with it. After the supervisor and staff member have discussed and signed the evaluation, the supervisor should give a copy to the employee for his/her records. If they wish, employees may append the evaluation. "An employee shall have the right to append to his/her evaluation a written statement presenting his/her concerns as they relate to the evaluation. This will be attached to the evaluation, become a part of the permanent record, and will be the final documentation associated with the performance evaluation." (Article 21.2 f.) With an unsatisfactory rating, the supervisor should schedule a follow-up interview within three months to review the employee's progress.

**Employee performance evaluation goals (not related to university merit criteria)** – Each year, supervisors should review employee goals to ensure that the agreed-upon goals from the previous year are:



- 1) necessary and achievable;
- 2) harmonious with both the employee's internal and generic job descriptions;
- 3) fair in relation to the employee's ability and performance; and
- 4) stated clearly.

During the evaluation interview, compare the goals to the employee's job description to develop a working document that clearly indicates what is expected of the employee. Discuss whether goals set the previous year were met and how the employee can improve his/her performance in the coming year.



### **DURING THE EVALUATION INTERVIEW**

- Put the employee at ease and establish rapport.
- Structure the interview; inform the employee of the rationale of the evaluation process.
- Do not rush the interview or do all the talking; allow adequate time for interaction with the employee.
- Be as specific as possible about performance activities; explain the "why" of the rating.
- Do not get sidetracked or bogged down in detail.
- Do not over-praise.
- Involve the employee adequately in the planning/goal setting process.
- Listen positively; pursue new information or suggestions the employee offers.
- Do not over-emphasize the negatives. Be positive where possible.
- Realize that some "facts" may reflect unconscious assumptions or attitudes toward

- the employee.
- Write down all the key points, goals, objectives and target dates mutually agreed upon.
  - Close with a summary that leaves the employee with a clear understanding of where he/she stands, what is expected to meet performance standards, and how (and when) the supervisor will provide assistance.
  - Reassure the employee of your interest in his/her progress and indicate willingness to have continued communication.

## **AFTER THE EVALUATION INTERVIEW**

- Reinforce the interview with on-going contact on the job.
- Take notes on the outcome; track follow-up agreements and commitments.
- Concentrate equal attention on all employees; show adequate concern for average and better employees as well as marginal or problem individuals.
- Follow up on training and development commitments.
- At the beginning of the next discussion, review progress made toward improvement and how effective the employee's efforts have been.



## **EVALUATION ROUTING PROCEDURE**

Evaluations must be prepared and presented to each employee **between April 15 and May 1** of each year. (Article 21.2c.) As discussed earlier, employees may append the evaluation. The evaluation should be signed by the employee, "the immediate supervisor and the first supervisor outside the bargaining unit, provided they are not the same person." (Article 21.2 g.)

Please send a complete copy of all evaluations to the Department of Human Resources, Unit 5075, no later than **May 15, including the cover sheet**. A list will be compiled of those employees who received a very good or outstanding evaluation and forwarded to the appropriate division head (President, Provost, Vice Provost, Vice President) no later than **May 21**. A copy of the evaluation must also be placed in the employee's personnel file.

A copy of probationary employees evaluations should also be sent to the Department of Human Resources, Unit 5075. This copy will then be routed to the employee's personnel file.

**IMPORTANT:** Supervisors must contact Human Resources at 486-5684 **before** meeting with employees whose evaluations result in an overall unsatisfactory rating.



## **CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETING PERFORMANCE REVIEW FORMS**

Beginning April 15<sup>th</sup> the evaluation form should be prepared for sharing with the employee by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Please complete parts II through VI for all employees. Don't forget to complete the cover sheet and submit a copy of the document to the Department of Human Resources at Unit 5075.

- Cover Sheet (Part I)**
- Performance Evaluation Criteria (Part II)**
- Performance Narrative (Part III)**
- Statement of Employee Performance Goals (Part IV)**
- Probationary Employees Only Recommendation (Part V)**

Download forms at: <http://ir.uconn.edu/forms/>

## **UCPEA PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PACKET**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES & SUPERVISORS FOR EMPLOYEES**

Article 2 of the UCPEA Collective Bargaining Agreement defines a Professional Staff Member at the University of Connecticut as an employee with either a four-year college degree or advanced professional training who is engaged in work predominantly intellectual and varied in character, as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work. Professional work is of such character that the output produced cannot be standardized in relation to a given time period. Professional staff members should consistently exercise discretion and good judgment in their performance of their duties and strive for excellence, accuracy, appropriate restraint and respect for the opinions of others. In line with this definition, we have developed performance guidelines for you.

**Special Note to Probationary Employees:** Article 20.1 of the UCPEA contract identifies a probationary employee as “a new employee who has not completed a working test or trial period. Such a period shall not exceed one year.” Under Article 20.3 of the UCPEA contract a probationary employee is entitled to be provided with a written evaluation of his/her performance “approximately halfway through and at the end of his/her probationary period.”

Article 21.1 of the UCPEA contract states, “For the purpose of promoting, maintaining and enhancing excellence in job performance, each department shall provide for evaluations of each UCPEA employee at least once a year. Such evaluations shall permit the continuing assessment of the quality of the individual’s performance relative to the required duties described in his/her official job specifications and internal departmental job description (if applicable).”

In the following section of the performance evaluation form, you will see lists of suggested performance standards clustered within the six main criteria necessary for all University employees. (Definitions of the five possible ratings are provided in the Merit & Performance Evaluation Manual.) These six criteria describe skills, behaviors and knowledge that define a model of management effectiveness at the University that may not be relevant for every position. They are to be used in combination with your function in the department and your job description, as follows:

- 1) To attain consistent and measurable appraisals which support equal treatment of employees and serve as tools to identify employees’ training or skill development needs;
- 2) As a measurable guide that demonstrates why an employee was or was not rated satisfactory in a particular area, with a goal toward improved performance; and
- 3) As a development planning aid and checklist for the employee and manager with the goal of achieving and maintaining excellent performance.

You should take an active role in the evaluation process. Ongoing discussions with your supervisor about your performance and your progress are encouraged. Under Article 21.2b. of the UCPEA contract, “Management may require employees, or employees may volunteer, to provide an annual report of activity and achievement to be used as a source of information for

evaluations. If management makes such a requirement they must do so in advance of the period for which they want the reporting. Employees shall be given a minimum of two weeks' notice for providing the requested reports. Final reports for an evaluation year must be submitted to supervisors by April 15<sup>th</sup> for consideration in the evaluation process."

The annual report allows you to communicate your achievements to your supervisor. If you choose, you may provide a report to your supervisor on a more regular basis. You may also use the annual report of activity and achievement to describe those achievements that you feel should make you eligible for discretionary merit. You may only be required to provide the report if your supervisor follows the process outlined in Article 21.2b of the UCPEA contract.



### **FOR SUPERVISORS**

Performance evaluation is an important process for both supervisors and employees. It is a tool that can enhance the operation of the University, and it is also a process that allows employees to be both recognized for good performance and provided with recommendations for improvement. Remember that if your employee succeeds, then you as a supervisor succeed. **While performance evaluation is not simple, it nevertheless remains a primary responsibility of those functioning in a supervisory role.**

All University professional staff in the UCPEA bargaining unit must have their performance evaluated in writing at least once a year. For non-probationary employees, there is a structured timeframe for conducting evaluations. Under Article 21.1 a, "The evaluation period shall be May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year." Additionally, Article 21.2 c states: "While an evaluation may be done at any time during the evaluation year, one must be prepared and presented to each employee between April 15<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year."

**Special Note for Supervisors of Probationary Employees:** Article 20.1 of the UCPEA contract identifies a probationary employee as "a new employee who has not completed a working test or trial period. Such a period shall not exceed one year." This probationary period allows the supervisor the opportunity to judge whether an employee is carrying out the duties in his/her job description. In order for an employee to succeed, s/he must be provided with appropriate supervision, and adequate feedback. Under Article 20.3 of the UCPEA contract probationary employees are entitled to be provided with a written evaluation of his/her performance "approximately halfway through and at the end of his/her probationary period."

The performance evaluation form you will complete for the probationary employee is the same as the form used for non-probationary employees. On the cover sheet however, you will need to identify whether the review is a 6-month or final review. You will also be asked to recommend, or not recommend that the employee be continued in his/her appointment after the six-month review, or that an employee be reappointed as a permanent employee at the completion of his/her probationary period.

Article 21.1 of the UCPEA contract states, "For the purpose of promoting, maintaining and enhancing excellence in job performance, each department shall provide for evaluations of each UCPEA employee at least once a year. Such evaluations shall permit the continuing assessment of the quality of the individual's performance relative to the required duties described in his/her official job specifications and internal departmental job description (if applicable)."

Sections I, II, III, IV and V of the Performance Evaluation Review Form must be completed by the immediate supervisor. In Part I, supervisors should complete the staff member and evaluator's identification, and check off the type of evaluation and the status of the employee. Once the rest of the sections have been completed, supervisors should select an overall rating which reflects the ratings and narrative comments in the other parts of the evaluation. The appropriate discretionary merit box should also be checked. In Part II, supervisors should rate staff members on all *relevant* evaluation criteria, indicating "Not Applicable" for any criteria, which do not apply to their current position, (i.e., Leadership or Supervisory Skills.) Within each of the nine areas listed in Part II, please choose between the five rating categories, outstanding, very good, good, in need of improvement and unsatisfactory, described in the Merit and Performance Evaluation Training Manual. Check the box for the appropriate rating. Review the descriptions of each of the five ratings carefully to ensure that the ratings you give are appropriate. Employees need not be considered outstanding relative to all of the standards of performance to receive an outstanding or very good rating in that category.

In Part III, supervisors must complete the performance narrative. In Part IV, the supervisor should suggest performance goals for the upcoming evaluation period. Employee input on both goals and performance evaluations are important. Only those evaluating probationary employees must complete Part V, although there is a checklist on that final page which you may find helpful.

Remember that during the evaluation interview the communication should be two-way: the supervisor should use the opportunity to convey his/her assessment of the staff member's work, and encourage the staff member to comment on his/her own work. Following the discussion, supervisors may make adjustments to the written evaluation if necessary. Also remember to give the employee a copy of the evaluation for his/her records.

# UNIVERSITY MERIT

## WHEN TO PREPARE THE RECOMMENDATION FOR MERIT



The process for university merit pay is separate from the performance evaluation process. **Article 32.2e. of the UCPEA contract states that, “The immediate supervisor, regardless of bargaining unit or exempt status, shall make recommendations about merit distribution, but the final awards will be determined by the Vice President or Vice Provost.”** Final recommendations for merit consideration must be submitted by June 1<sup>st</sup> to the Division’s Vice President or Vice Provost.

## MERIT RECOMMENDATION FORMS

The merit recommendation form is only to be used if the employee has met one of the following three criteria:

- 1) whether the employee has significantly advanced the achievement of either the University, division or department objectives;
- 2) significantly improved operational efficiencies; or
- 3) contributed in unique and meaningful ways to the advancement of the profession (Article 32.2 e.)

This form is only to be used for employees that are recommended for university merit. Any employee who has received either an outstanding or very good performance evaluation rating shall be entitled to performance merit (Article 32.2 f). This form may be obtained from the Human Resources web page at <http://lr.uconn.edu/forms/>. A copy of the university merit recommendation forms will be housed in the employee’s personnel file.



## MERIT RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

- 1) Early in the evaluation period, supervisors should meet with employees to discuss objectives for the employee that could result in recommendation for university merit. In some cases, this will include an explanation of the division or department goals and what the employee can do to advance those objectives. In others, a discussion of what the employee might do to increase operational efficiencies, or contribute to the advancement

of the profession will be appropriate. Supervisors should encourage employees to take initiative during the year to pursue these types of objectives. It should also be conveyed to employees that the supervisor will be reviewing whether an objective was merely carried out satisfactorily or at a significant enough level to recommend the employee for university merit.

- 2) The supervisor should explain to the employee that s/he will be monitoring his/her progress towards university merit objectives during the year and will provide feedback. The supervisor should also remind the employee to communicate his/her progress towards university merit objectives in the form of a report of activity and achievement. (This report may only be required if requested at the beginning of the evaluation cycle. See Article 21.2b.)
- 3) Employees should be notified on their performance evaluation whether or not they are being recommended for university merit. The supervisor must complete the merit recommendation form, share it with the employee and submit the form to the appropriate Vice President or Vice Provost no later than June 1. Employees being recommended for merit must sign the Merit Recommendation form to indicate that they have read it. The supervisor's recommendation should clearly document the significant contributions of the employee but not indicate an amount or level of award. The employee should be informed that the decision of whether s/he receives university merit, and how much, will be determined by the Vice President or Vice Provost. At the Vice level, the achievements of the employee will be weighed in relation to the achievements of other employees.

