

# Guidebook for the Wright State University Performance Evaluation Process

## Overview

Wright State University is committed to our students and the community we serve, as well as our faculty and staff. We believe in innovation, inclusion and the development of our entrepreneurial spirit. As one of the largest employers in the region, we recognize that we are a vital part of our community and our success and mission are important to those around us.

To achieve this shared outlook, we need a community of high performing individuals and teams to go beyond what is merely required to achieve extraordinary results. We also need to cultivate a culture of service and a commitment to a workplace that is trusting, inclusive, creative, and respectful.

Our employees want to be successful contributors to the important work of our University. They want to know what is expected of them, how they can most effectively meet those expectations, and how they can continue to learn and grow. **The performance evaluation process is a powerful tool to help employees understand the importance of their contributions and to better align their own work with unit and University goals.**

The Wright State University performance evaluation process is a continuous responsibility for all our leaders, supervisors and employees. In our process, conversations occur throughout the year to provide feedback on accomplishments and challenges and are recorded formally on an annual basis. This process is designed to capture the essence of the conversations held and also provide a formalized opportunity for the employee and supervisor to reflect on previous performance, share their outlook for the future, and commit to achieving goals that will move our institution forward.

The focused attention and commitment to ongoing dialogue by both supervisors and employees will:

- Align every employee's work with Wright State University's goals
- Establish expected behaviors to meet goals and objectives
- Assess individual progress toward attaining University and departmental objectives
- Recognize every employee's contributions
- Increase role clarity and enhance communication regarding future expectations

Both the *Self-Appraisal Form* and the *Performance Evaluation Forms (Formal or Alternative)* include elements that further an open, honest communication between employees and their supervisors about the employees' strengths and areas for improvement as well as employee-initiated development opportunities. It also features elements to encourage cooperative goal-setting for the upcoming evaluation period.

Providing employees with continuous, honest feedback and direction is vital to the engagement of our employees and is also essential to the growth and development of Wright State University.

### Continuous Performance Conversations

In order to be engaged and high-performing, employees need continuous guidance and feedback about what is expected of them and how well, or poorly, they are meeting those expectations. Having a single, annual conversation about the setting and achievement of goals is inadequate. Conversations must be taking place at frequent, regular intervals in order for employees to have a fair chance to correct course and improve performance that is lacking. Additionally, employees that are doing well will perform at an even higher level when supervisors are invested in providing them with regular constructive feedback on what it takes to exceed expectations.

Supervisors are expected to communicate goals and expectations clearly and at regular intervals. Employees should expect regular feedback, both positive and constructive, from their supervisor.

Feedback should also be a collaborative conversation and effective supervisors will ask for feedback to be provided by their employees about how their own performance could improve.

### Annual Form Completion Process

The annual performance evaluation form serves as a summary record of regular feedback conversations. Below is an illustration of the process for completing and submitting the annual performance evaluation at Wright State University. We use two key document types: the *Self-Appraisal Form* and the *Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative)*. The process is weighted heavily on communication between the employee and supervisor since the annual evaluation process is designed to foster open, honest communication and also because it should be a summary of the conversations that have been happening during the year. That said, it is understood that this process is open to modification by departments as needed to avoid making this process unnecessarily burdensome.

Additional information about each of the steps is provided on the two pages.

## Model Process Steps and Information

1	Evaluation Period Ends	The evaluation period for 2026 runs from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026
2	Employee is given the opportunity to draft a <i>Self-Appraisal Form</i>	Each employee at the university has the opportunity to complete and submit a self-appraisal. However, no employee will be required to complete one. The self-appraisal is NOT to be presented to Human Resources; it should remain a part of a supervisor's departmental personnel files. It should NOT be turned in by the supervisor in place of the employee's formal evaluation.
3	Employee and Supervisor discuss the employee's self-appraisal	The <i>Self-Appraisal Form</i> and <i>Performance Evaluation Forms (Formal or Alternative)</i> were designed for different reasons and are intended to accomplish different purposes. For an understanding of these differences, please see a later section of this guidebook.
4	Supervisor reviews any feedback given to the employee over the evaluation period	After discussion of the self-appraisal, the supervisor should collect all relevant information about an employee's performance over the evaluation period. This can include commendations, notes of appreciation, constructive feedback, discipline and other documented strengths and deficiencies. It is a best practice to collect all of this information throughout the evaluation period to avoid the evaluation being skewed by recent performance.
5	Supervisor develops an initial draft/outline of the <i>Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative)</i>	The supervisor should then use the collected information to develop an initial draft/outline of the performance evaluation. This draft should reflect the supervisors thoughts about the employee's level of achievement of the goals and objectives for the evaluation period. It should also include thoughts regarding the employee's accomplishments and areas for development.

<p><b>6</b> Supervisor discusses the initial draft/outline with his or her supervisor</p>	<p>Once the initial draft is complete, the supervisor should discuss the draft with his or her own supervisor. The second level supervisor should provide direction and feedback on the accuracy of the employee evaluations as well as assess the supervisor's overall rating of all direct reports to ensure that the supervisor is being thorough and fair.</p>
<p><b>7</b> Supervisor and Employee discuss draft <i>Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative)</i></p>	<p>After the supervisor makes any changes based on the discussion with his or her supervisor, he or she should meet with the employee to share the initial outline of the evaluation. Employees should be permitted to provide input and should be allowed to add any achievements that may have been overlooked.</p>
<p><b>8</b> Supervisor and Employee finalize the <i>Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative)</i></p>	<p>Once the discussion has been had, the supervisor should draft a final proposed version of the <i>Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative)</i>. This should then be shared with the employee for final input and feedback. Any reasonable feedback should be incorporated and further discussion should be had if the situation warrants it.</p>
<p><b>9</b> Supervisor collects all of the required signatures</p>	<p>After the <i>Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative)</i> is complete, the supervisor should print it and collect all requisite signatures (employee, supervisor and his or her next level supervisor).</p>
<p><b>10</b> Supervisor sends the signed <i>Performance Evaluation Form</i> to Human Resources</p>	<p>Once all signatures are obtained, the supervisor should send the final <i>Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative)</i> to Human Resources to be logged into the system and filed in the employee's Human Resources personnel file. The <i>Self-Appraisal Form</i>, if completed by the employee, should remain in the employee's departmental or supervisor level file.</p>

## Timeline for 2025-2026 Performance Evaluation Process

- Performance evaluation period closes (started April 1, 2025) - March 31, 2026
- Self-Appraisal Form to be submitted to supervisor - April 17, 2026
- Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative) to be signed by employee - May 29, 2026
- Signed Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative) delivered to Human Resources - June 19, 2026
- Human Resources to report supervisor compliance with process to Deans/VPs - July 31, 2026

## Distinct form types

Below is a summary of the differences between the types of forms (*Self-Appraisal* and official *Performance Evaluation* – whether the *Formal Form* or *Alternative Form* is used) that are expected to be used during the annual performance evaluation process at Wright State University. These types of forms were developed for different reasons and are intended to accomplish different purposes.

### Differences between Employee Self-Appraisal and the Performance Evaluation Form

#### Person Completing Form

The two forms are designed to work together to collect a summary of both the employee's and supervisor's perspective to form a complete picture. The employee is to be given the opportunity to complete the Self-Appraisal Form and it is the supervisor's responsibility to complete the Performance Evaluation Form (either on the Formal or Alternative form).

Information from the Self-Appraisal Form can appear on the Performance Evaluation Form but the Self-Appraisal Form itself should not be turned into Human Resources. The Performance Evaluation Form is turned into Human Resources and is to be completed by the supervisor with consideration of the employee's input.

The Self-Appraisal Form is NOT to be used as the employee's final performance evaluation and employees are NOT to complete the official Performance Evaluation Form. It is a supervisor's responsibility to complete an annual evaluation on each of their direct reports.

#### Location of Final Product

The Self-Appraisal Form, if the employee chooses to complete one, remains in the supervisor's departmental files. This is because the information solicited on the form is designed to encourage open, honest dialogue between the employee and the supervisor. Additionally, as elaborated below, the Self-Appraisal Form discusses information outside the employee's control and outside the evaluation period. This information is best kept in the departmental files instead in the employee's official personnel file.

The Performance Evaluation Form (Formal or Alternative) is kept in the official personnel file in Human Resources. This is the official record of a person's employment history and is readily available as a public record under state law. Supervisors should be aware that an honest, thorough evaluation is essential. A disproportionately positive or negative one mitigates the effectiveness of the performance evaluation process.

#### Duties vs. Purpose

The Self-Appraisal Form requests information about an employee's specific job duties and asks the employee to 'rank' those duties in order of importance (from the employee's perspective). This is designed to create conversation between the employee and supervisor so that both can be clear about the others' perspective and assist the supervisor in clarifying which duties are most essential to accomplishing departmental and university goals and objectives.

Although the Formal Performance Evaluation Form is more specific than the Alternative Form, both are intended to share the purpose of the employee's position. It is important for an employee to understand why their position

exists and what its fundamental purpose is. It is essential to employee engagement that the employee understands how their work achieves the university's mission, vision, values and goals as well as the college, division or departmental goals.

#### Level of Employee Control

The Self-Appraisal Form discusses items outside the employee's control. Items such as resources and work relationships are vital to an employee's ability to perform the functions of their position successfully. Having a conversation and understanding these elements help an employee and a supervisor strategize how best to work with and/or around these elements. The official Performance Evaluation Forms limit the discussion to those items that are within the employee's scope of control. This is because the evaluation is assessing only that employee's specific abilities, competencies, accomplishments and areas for development.

However, any employee's reaction and response to items outside their control is applicable information that can be relayed.

#### Timeframe of Appraisal/Evaluation

The Self-Appraisal Form asks employees to share things that are beyond the end of the evaluation period. Items such as 'career plans' are things that employees have shared with administrators as things that are asked during the employment interview and never asked again. The Self-Appraisal Form gives the employee a venue to share whether they are interested in career progression or happy to remain as an essential contributor where they are.

The official Performance Evaluation Forms bind the discussion to within the evaluation period and discusses only those items that set the stage for the next evaluation period. Some of the items on the Formal Performance Evaluation Form may overlap with the broader career discussion, especially in the Professional Development Plan section, but are discussed in a more limited sense.

## Meeting Specific Needs of a College or Division

These tools can be supplemented with other departmental level tools to strengthen relevance for a specific college, school or division. It is understood that some areas may currently use customized assessment tools to evaluate employees. Use of other performance tools is acceptable for informal meetings and coaching opportunities. However, to ensure that all employees are evaluated using the same set of metrics, only the performance evaluation tools maintained by Human Resources will be accepted as official documentation for annual performance evaluations at Wright State University. Any limited exceptions to this must be pre-approved.

Human Resources is available to review supplemental assessment tools to ensure compliance with Wright State University Policies and any local, state or federal regulations.

## Two official Performance Evaluation Forms (Formal and Alternative)

From 2014 to 2019, Wright State University used only the combination of the *Self-Appraisal Form* and the *Formal Performance Evaluation Form*. In 2019, due to changes in leadership as well as financial difficulties and other challenges, university leadership elected to offer the option of the *Alternative Performance Evaluation Form* to streamline the process while still helping employees connect their day-to-day work to the broader work of the university. It was decided to keep both official evaluation forms available as options for departments/units to choose from based on their operational needs and performance management styles. Some of the essential differences and uses for each of the forms is listed in the table below:

<b><u>Formal Performance Evaluation Form</u></b>	<b><u>Alternative Performance Evaluation Form</u></b>
Detailed and specific in items covered	Narrative and flexible in content
Communication tool between employee and supervisor	Communication from leadership conveyed
Explicit and consistent scale of core competencies	Feedback on competencies can vary by role
Detailed Professional Development Plan	Expects that professional development is occurring outside form
Definitive goals developed and formalized	Commits to development of goals outside form

## Performance Management Process Expectations

### What Should Supervisors Expect?

Performance management is an ongoing, continual process. It must contain frequent, regularly scheduled communication between the employee and supervisor. Supervisors should ask open questions, listen actively, provide constructive feedback and set expectations and professional development needs.

A performance evaluation ‘year’ should contain several significant discussions, both formal and informal. These should occur to gauge progress toward agreed upon goals. All information collected can then be used to ease the annual performance evaluation process.

Specifically, first-level supervisors should:

- Help employees align their individual goals with departmental goals and University goals
- Provide feedback throughout year and conduct several mid-year progress checks
- Review the *draft* evaluation with their supervisor BEFORE meeting with employee to discuss the evaluation

Second-level supervisors should:

- Meet with direct reports that are supervisors to discuss ratings of those supervisor's subordinates
- Validate legitimacy of ratings and ensure an honest, fair process
- Discuss unusual circumstances requiring recognition or corrective action

### What Should Employees Expect?

Performance management is an interactive process. In order for it to be effective it must contain frequent, regularly scheduled communication between the employee and supervisor. Employees should ask questions for clarification, listen actively, be open to constructive feedback and participate in setting goals and requesting professional development needs.

Every employee should expect to:

- Have the opportunity to submit a self-appraisal
- Receive feedback throughout the review period and a formal review at end of the performance evaluation period as well as participate in goal-setting activities.
- Sign his or her review form and receive a copy of the completed review
- Have the ability to appeal a review that he or she deems unwarranted. There are two steps for appealing a performance evaluation. They are:

- Verbal Appeal: If an employee has concerns which he or she feels have not been resolved after meeting with the immediate supervisor, the individual may request an appointment with the next level manager, up to and including the vice president or dean of the respective area.
- Written Appeal: In the event the employee continues to have a difference in opinion after meeting with appropriate management in his or her reporting structure, the employee has the option of following up with written comments which will become part of the employee's permanent file maintained in Human Resources.

## Formal Performance Evaluation Form: Performance Rating Guidelines for Core Competencies/Expected Behaviors

Employees want to know how they will be evaluated and what it takes to reach the highest rating. There are three rating categories on the *Formal Performance Evaluation Form: Meets Expectations (Demonstrated)*, *Does Not Meet Expectations (Development Needed)* and *Exceeds Expectations (Role Model)*. To aid in consistent application of these terms, please consider the following information.

Supervisors must be honest in their assessments of their employees if the evaluation process is going to be effective. Employees and supervisors should understand that “*Meets Expectations (Demonstrated)*” is an appropriate rating for the majority of employees on campus. This rating does not imply that an employee is minimally meeting expectations or is unremarkable. It indicates a fully-functional, contributing member of the team that is wholly meeting all expectations that the supervisor sets.

An employee who has had multiple instances of performing substandard work should be given a rating of “*Does Not Meet Expectations (Development Needed)*” so long as they have been given the opportunity to correct the behavior and have not successfully done so. Employees given this rating should expect their supervisor to work with them to develop a plan to improve the behavior.

Only a limited number of employees are anticipated to achieve the *“Exceeds Expectations (Role Model)”* on most items. This category is to be reserved for truly exceptional performance. This rating should be supported by documented instances where the employee went above and beyond the expectations set by the supervisor. These employees may be ready for new challenges and opportunities.

Supervisors and employees should keep in mind that it is highly probable that individual employees will receive ratings in multiple rating categories depending on the core competency/expected behavior being rated. Very few employees are expected to receive ‘across-the-board’ ratings of *“Exceeds Expectations (Role Model)”* or *“Does Not Meet Expectations (Development Needed)”* on all core competencies/expected behaviors. As a matter of fact, it is highly possible that an individual employee can receive ratings of **both** *“Exceeds Expectations (Role Model)”* or *“Does Not Meet Expectations (Development Needed)”* in the same evaluation period for different core competencies/expected behaviors. Supervisors should look at each individual core competency/expected behavior individually and determine which rating is best supported by the individual employee’s performance throughout the rating period.

Additionally, any core competency/expected behavior that receives either the *“Exceeds Expectations (Role Model)”* or *“Does Not Meet Expectations (Development Needed)”* rating must be supported by examples of the performance that warranted the rating. A lack of adequate examples and/or justification for any rating outside *“Meets Expectations (Demonstrated)”* may be cause for the evaluation being sent back to the supervisor for additional information.

#### Guidance Specific to Meets Expectations (Demonstrated)

Meeting expectations is a strong rating that reflects that an employee is consistently doing what is expected. Employees rated at this level regularly meet, and occasionally exceed, expectations. They rarely, if ever, do not meet expectations in the area of the competency or behavior being rated. A rating at this level indicates that the

employee is a competent, productive, and valued member of the team. The employee requires little to no supervision to complete tasks. Some of the expected behaviors in this category are:

- Produces quality work to meet, and occasionally exceed, expectations within time and cost restraints
- Applies logic and reasoning successfully when making decisions; makes infrequent errors due to oversight and/or misunderstanding
- Applies appropriate judgment in responding to and referring questions or resolving problems
- Willingly contributes new and innovative approaches while considering the concerns and suggestions of others
- Continuously tries to improve work performance and supports departmental and university goals
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge of relevant procedures and functions

#### Guidance Specific to Does Not Meet Expectations (Development Needed)

Employees at this level fail to meet one or more major responsibilities in the competency or behavior being rated. The employee may also show either an unwillingness or an inability to improve. When performance is at this level, a development plan should be created to identify specific actions needed to improve performance. It is expected that the supervisor will have counseled the employee, before the annual performance evaluation, on issues that led to this overall rating. Employees with significant ratings in this category should not receive merit-based increases in pay. Some of the behaviors exhibited in this category are:

- Performs in an unreliable or inconsistent manner when completing work
- Fails to complete tasks without frequent reminders; often exceeds the expected time frame to complete assigned tasks
- Often looks for reasons why assignments cannot be accomplished rather than figuring out how to complete work

- Fails to anticipate or respond effectively to crises, obstacles, and/or changes
- Requires considerable to substantial supervisory monitoring, consultation, and modification to implement goals and priorities in a timely and/or effective manner
- Often fails to recognize and identify routine problems

### Guidance Specific to Exceeds Expectations (Role Model)

This category is reserved for employees who provide an exceptional level of performance or service and who regularly and substantially exceed overall expectations in the competency or behavior being rated. Outstanding performers generate output that is exceptionally high in quality, quantity, and timeliness. The outcomes of those employees who exceed expectations are of such quality that they will consistently occur among only a small number of individuals. Some of the expected behaviors in this category are:

- Routinely volunteers for extra work/responsibility while maintaining strong job performance
- Readily assumes responsibility; consistently exceeds quotas or production standards
- Often suggests new policies, procedures, techniques as a need emerges rather than waiting until the need is overwhelming
- Effectively juggles multiple priorities, tasks, and/or user requests; works with minimal supervision and is a role model for other employees
- Helps facilitate change in a positive manner; recognized for exceptional expertise and leadership
- Communicates clearly; fosters communication in every direction by actively engaging in the exchange of information and encouraging this activity other staff

### Development Plan versus Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

Any employee receiving multiple scores of “*Does Not Meet Expectations (Development Needed)*” or who have significant professional shortcomings listed in the *Alternative Performance Evaluation Form* should be provided

with a development plan to improve their performance. This differs from a *Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)* in the following ways:

<u>Development Plan</u>	<u>Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)</u>
Can be to meet expectations or to grow	Only used for performance that is not meeting expectations
Independent of Human Resources	Must work with Human Resources to develop
More flexible	More structured
Stays in departmental file	Maintained in the official personnel file

A *PIP* is a tool for supervisors to use (generally as a final step before moving into formal progressive discipline) for issues on which constructive feedback and coaching have been ineffective. A *development plan* is a document that supervisors and employees develop to address issues as a result of the performance evaluation or coaching/counseling process. A *development plan* can also be used to further grow acceptable performance.

### Setting Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are set throughout the performance evaluation cycle for three primary reasons: to make expectations clear, to provide a measurement for performance and to give employees a focus and/or connection to the wider university. Goals and objectives should be developed jointly by the employee and the supervisor and should tie to the department and/or university goals. Participation by both the employee and supervisor in the goal-setting process results in better outcomes because of the communication and planning required.

In order to be effective, goals and objectives must be reviewed at regular intervals during the timeframe set during the planning process. These review periods should document progress and/or adjust or change the goal as external influences necessitate. Sometimes it becomes apparent that a goal or objective is no longer relevant and it should be replaced with another, more reasonable, one. Other times, the goal is reasonable but needs to be adjusted to either shorten or lengthen the timeframe in which the goal should be accomplished.

Setting effective goals is vital to the employee's ability to achieve them. In order to make them effective, you should make sure that certain elements are present in the goals and objectives you set. Remember that one of the primary purposes of a goal is to help the employee F.O.C.U.S!

- **Feasible** - The goal must be within the employee's resources and capabilities. The employee must have, or be able to attain the skills and abilities to accomplish it.
- **Observable** - The goal must result in an appreciable change or outcome that can be measured or reported. The end result must be different than the beginning.
- **Communicated** - The employee must be aware of the goal and, preferably, had some input into its creation. Goals developed together tend to have stronger outcomes.
- **Unambiguous** - The end result desired and the time frame the goal is to be accomplished must be clear. There should be no question as to what is to be achieved and by when.
- **Suitable/Stretch** - The goal must stretch the employee without being outside their sphere of authority. The employee should be encouraged to grow in appropriate ways.

## Resources

Wright State University's annual performance evaluation tools are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Please use only the current information found on the Human Resources website at

<https://www.wright.edu/human-resources/policies-and-resources/performance-evaluation-process-overview>.

That information includes:

- The forms: *Self-Appraisal Form* and official *Performance Evaluation Forms (both Formal and Alternative)*
- A link to this guidebook
- A list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the process
- Information about the training resources available

For general questions not answered in the FAQs, or to obtain copies of previous performance review forms, contact Human Resources. For assistance addressing new or existing employee performance issues contact the Human Resource Business Partner assigned to your area.

Thank you for your participation in this vital process. Providing employees with continuous, honest feedback and direction is vital to the engagement of our employees and is also essential to the growth and development of Wright State University.