

Frequently Asked Questions Information for Team Members, Supervisors and Managers

Should managers and supervisors do appraisals to evaluate work completed in 2017 for their direct reports in PERforM?

No. For 2017, supervisors do not need to complete a formal annual appraisal for any team member. Moving forward, supervisors and managers will have frequent, less bureaucratic professional development discussions with team members. You will be updated on any other changes in requirements.

If I have questions or need guidance, is there someone that I can turn to?

All staff can find essential information on ENGAGE, including videos, guides, and other resources, at <https://oa.mo.gov/engage>. Additionally, each team member, supervisor, and manager can consult with his or her respective supervisor and/or assigned department human resources (HR) office for information. Staff in the Division of Personnel will also work with agency HR staff as needed.

Will there be a computer system that supervisors, managers, and HR staff use to track employee performance?

No. At this time, managers and supervisors should focus on getting “back to the basics.” Their focus should be on regular (i.e. at least monthly) face-to-face conversations with their team members to discuss expectations, goals, performance, and professional development opportunities.

Moving forward, should managers and supervisors do formal annual reviews for their direct reports?

Not now. Managers and supervisors should meet at least once a month with their team members. As the ENGAGE process evolves, we may decide to include some form of end of year record that summarizes the previous monthly conversations.

The new process seems less regimented than PERforM. Will managers and supervisors still be able to address serious performance concerns with this less formal approach?

Absolutely. By meeting more frequently, managers, supervisors, and team members should be able to develop better relationships. Better relationships, and more frequent professional development-centered conversations, should allow performance issues to be addressed more quickly, and more effectively.

What about “special appraisals” or probationary appraisals? Will those be done?

Not formally. The ongoing focus of supervisors, managers, and team members should be to have more frequent, regular, face-to-face, development-centered meetings. In the event a team member is not meeting expectations, managers and supervisors should continue to consult with their assigned agency HR office as needed and follow its guidance.

How often should supervisors, managers, and employees have these one-on-one performance and development conversations?

Each team member should schedule a conversation with his or her supervisor once a month. The first of these conversations should last roughly 30 minutes to discuss major goals and development objectives for the year. Monthly meetings thereafter should last 15-30 minutes. In addition to your scheduled monthly conversations, we encourage quick feedback discussions whenever appropriate (i.e. after a meeting or presentation; in response to a draft memo; etc.). Managers supervising supervisors should make it part of their regular supervising discussions to inquire whether regular development conversations have occurred.

If supervisors or managers have to counsel employees, is any additional action required?

If performance issues become more serious, verbal counseling and reprimands, written counseling and reprimands, and performance improvement plans remain important tools available to supervisors working in conjunction with HR staff. All of these should be reflected in individual personnel files.

Since PERforM is gone, will there be any specific forms to fill out?

No. You will no longer have to complete formal forms or submit anything through PERforM.

Instead, if you are a team member, you are encouraged to have a notebook for your development conversations with your supervisor. Before a development conversation, you should record in your notebook the major priorities you want to cover in the next conversation. During the development conversation, you can use the notebook to take notes of the conversation and your "takeaways." Such takeaways can range from specific points of feedback to suggestions about how you can accomplish tasks more efficiently and effectively.

If you are a supervisor, you are encouraged to have a notebook for each team member (your direct reports). This notebook should be used to plan for and then record pertinent information from the conversations (i.e. specific expectations shared in the meeting; goals that have been agreed upon during the meeting; significant examples of employee performance that have come up, etc.)

Do managers and supervisors need to meet with all of their direct reports regularly, or just the ones that appear to be having performance issues?

Supervisors are expected to meet regularly and individually with all team members. Team members with specific performance concerns may need additional coaching and redirecting. However, the highest performing staff also need time and attention from their supervisors. Team members need to hear from supervisors both when they are doing a great job and when they have an area that needs development.

Specific categories were used in PERforM and sometimes the work items didn't seem to fit cleanly in a category or the categories were too restrictive. Do managers and supervisors have to use any kind of formal categories?

No. The nature of the work and the diversity of identified development opportunities should guide a supervisor and team member as they identify goals and discuss progress. As the ENGAGE process evolves, we may

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offer suggested categories to facilitate the development conversation process. We are deliberately minimizing the amount of formal paperwork.

Without having the appraisal to focus on and guide our conversations, what should we talk about in these meetings?

The idea is to keep it simple. There are several things employees need to know in order to be effective: their work expectations; how their role fits into the mission, vision, and values of the organization; how they are doing; and what opportunities for professional development may be available.

Supervisors can also benefit from the perspectives shared by team members and should be open to receiving feedback during the conversation. Supervisors should also consult with their own managers about their teams and the feedback they plan to provide. These conversations will help supervisors calibrate their feedback to each individual team member.

Without having a formal system to type in goals and record employee performance, should documentation be kept regarding performance/development conversations?

Yes. Managers and supervisors should document discussions with team members. To help with progress tracking and follow-up, documentation should be kept regarding expectations, performance, development opportunities, etc.

It is also important for team members to keep a notebook to write down important information discussed or provided during conversations. This will help team members to remember expectations, timelines for completion of tasks, discussion items for upcoming meetings, etc.

We recommend that all team members have a notebook for their development conversations, and that all supervisors have a notebook for each one of their direct reports.

Is there a process for team members to provide feedback to their respective supervisors?

Yes. These conversations should be real conversations. It may take time to build a professional relationship, but the conversations should be two-way. Team members may be able to share valuable insights on the best ways the supervisor can work and communicate with them, and possibly with other team members too. These conversations also present the opportunity to discuss other workplace concerns.

Is there any value in asking team members to evaluate themselves periodically?

While not required, there are a number of potential benefits from some form of self-assessment. Such efforts reinforce that performance development is the responsibility of both the supervisor and the team member. Both should take responsibility for, and ownership of, the process. Regular self-appraisal can help team members more regularly monitor their own work, achievements, and development, and take initiative to make needed changes. We will continue to assess whether or not more formal self-assessments should be integrated into the ENGAGE process in the future.

Will anyone be receiving an actual performance rating from his or her supervisor similar to what was done in PERforM?

No. Supervisors should clearly inform team members about how they are doing, but without a numerical score. Also, our experience with PERforM indicated that scoring was not done in a way that appropriately distinguished performance among team members. As the ENGAGE process evolves, we may offer suggested standard terms or categories to help team members better understand their progress and to facilitate the development conversation process.

When we used PERforM, my supervisor only talked to me about my performance once a year. Will I get a chance to meet with my supervisor more frequently?

Definitely. Supervisors should meet with each team member at least once a month. We encourage real-time feedback whenever possible. The goal is to establish a more regular dialogue of expectations to accelerate professional development and improve performance.

Sometimes my supervisor would just hand me my PERforM appraisal and we would not even talk about it. Are these new meetings going to be like that?

No. In fact, to ensure that team members have a chance to prepare for meetings, each team member is encouraged to take the initiative and schedule the meetings. Of course, when scheduling meetings, it will be important to be flexible and sensitive to your supervisor's other commitments.

I have some ideas about ways that we can do things better in our office. Is it okay for me to bring ideas up during these meetings?

Yes. If you have new ideas or suggestions to improve the way work is done you should bring these to your supervisor's attention. Your supervisor should encourage you to try new methods and should be open to good suggestions.

During previous annual PERforM review meetings, my supervisor didn't seem interested in talking to me. He/she seemed distracted and I'm not sure that he/she even heard what I was saying? How will this change?

Experiences like that can be disheartening and discouraging. It will be very important during these meetings, for both supervisors and team members to be engaged and actively listen. This helps to build relationships and ensure that "real" communication is taking place.

These conversations sound helpful. As a team member, what can I do to help these conversations be as effective as possible?

There are a number of things that team members can do. Here are a few things to try:

- Prior to the conversation, take time to review your notes and get your thoughts together.
- Before you meet, take time to think about questions you would like to ask your supervisor.

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- Try to look at your own performance as your supervisor might (i.e. Do you think you are doing a good job? How can you do better? What things have you done well?)
- As you listen to feedback from your supervisor, don't get defensive. It should not be personal. Take it as a chance to improve your own development and impact.
- Ask questions during the conversation to make sure that you understand your supervisor and that you both are on the same page.
- Take notes during the meeting. Notetaking tends to keep people more engaged. Your notes will be a good resource as you reflect and plan your next steps to act upon the feedback you received.
- Let your supervisor know how he or she can help you to perform better. You may have great ideas that your supervisor just never considered.

Is this a good time to bring up training opportunities or professional development?

Yes. Supervisors and team members should use these conversations to discuss training and professional development as needed. The ENGAGE process is designed to encourage everyone to improve and develop his or her skills.

What if I can't find time once a month to meet with the people I supervise?

Good management and supervision requires that you spend time with the team members who report to you. It is important to make this time available each month. Remember most of the conversations have a limited commitment (15 minutes). The best supervisors and managers provide regular feedback outside of formal meetings.

Will HR staff be able to access past PERforM appraisals?

Yes. PERforM data, in the event it is needed, will still be available through HR reports for those staff that need to have access.

If needed, will HR staff be able to run queries to access information that was previously in PERforM?

Yes. The PERforM data that has been added to the HR data warehouse will still be available.