



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The Mission of Extension is:

*to provide information and education, and
encourage the application of research-based knowledge
in response to local, state, and national issues affecting individuals,
youth, families, agricultural enterprises, and communities of Colorado.*

Colorado State University Extension Vision Statement:

Colorado State University Extension is the front door to Colorado State University providing the extensive knowledge, research capabilities and resources of this premier land grant university to Coloradans from all walks of life.

Extension is dedicated to serving current and future needs of Coloradans by providing educational information and programs that safeguard health, increase livelihood, and enhance well-being.

Colorado State University Extension has skilled and highly trained professionals (agents, specialists, and others) helping Colorado's citizens, businesses, and communities apply unbiased, research-based knowledge. Extension's Performance Appraisal System is designed to recognize and support their program leadership and performance. It is designed to accommodate the unique and diverse position responsibilities with Extension.

Appreciation is extended to the members of the task force who developed the Performance Appraisal System completed in December 2017.

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Colorado State University Extension Performance Appraisal System

INTRODUCTION

Colorado State University Extension supports a performance appraisal system to enhance employee capabilities to deliver effective educational programs to Coloradans. Appraisals offer both the supervisor and employee valuable opportunities to focus on work activities, set goals for future efforts, identify concerns and develop strategies for resolutions, and encourage positive future performance; thereby enhancing performance of the entire organization.

The primary purposes of performance appraisal system are to:

- Foster meaningful and open communication between the employee and the supervisor concerning performance roles in developing, delivering, evaluating, and reporting the results/impacts of educational programs.
- Enhance the continued development and improve job performance of all employees.
- Support continuous quality improvement throughout the organization and promote the accomplishment of the educational mission of Extension.
- Provide input to the salary administration process.

The guidelines provided in this document do not cover “personal conduct” issues that may give rise to immediate action and/or termination. Refer to the [CSU Extension Employee Handbook, Human Resources–Guidelines for Continued Employment](#).

APPRAISAL PROCESS

Extension’s performance appraisal system is intended to provide a fair and consistent review and appraisal of each employee’s performance during the prior calendar year. Because appraisals are intended to focus on those aspects of the employee’s performance done well and those areas in need of improvement, performance efforts of all Extension employees will be formally reviewed and evaluated annually.

Step 1: The annual performance appraisal actually begins with the prior year’s appraisal. Individual Skills for Success are reviewed for continued appropriateness and those to be emphasized in the subsequent performance appraisal are identified. It is at that time the supervisor and the employee review past performance and develop plans for improvement and/or goals for the upcoming performance appraisal period. Changes, if any, are to be documented in a letter or email from the supervisor to the employee.

Step 2: In order for a supervisor to appropriately assess the performance of an employee, the appraisal process should be conducted throughout the performance period. Thus, it is advised that the supervisor visit informally with the employee throughout the performance period. Such visits (face-to-face, email, by phone, observations of work) may include discussions regarding the employee’s progress toward goals and/or plans for improvement, employee activities, accomplishments, struggles, etc. The goal of such interactions between supervisor and employee is to strengthen the relationship between the two parties and for the supervisor to have more information with which to provide a more complete and beneficial assessment of the employee’s performance during the performance period.

Step 3: Following the conclusion of the performance period, the supervisor will initiate the performance appraisal by scheduling a mutually agreeable time to meet formally with employee. These meetings typically occur January - April.

Step 4: The supervisor may solicit input from the employee's peers, clientele, and other people germane to the employee's performance during the performance review period. See "Peer and Client Input Process" for more details.

Step 5: At least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting (or shorter period at the discretion of the supervisor), the employee shall provide the supervisor a *performance review packet*. The packet may be delivered electronically or by hardcopy, and include:

- a. A copy of the completed performance appraisal document indicating the employee's self-assessment of his/her performance and brief documentation for the selected rating if needed or desired.
- b. Copies of all Plans to Invest and Contribution Reports from the Colorado Planning and Reporting System (CPRS) for the performance year, see directions.

Step 6: The supervisor reviews the *performance review packet* submitted by the employee and prepares to discuss the information with the employee.

Step 7: The employee and supervisor hold the performance appraisal meeting. The discussion should be considered a dialogue.

Step 8: Following completion of the appraisal meeting, the supervisor shall provide the employee with a summary of the discussion points of the meeting and an initial performance rating recommendation. Within fifteen (15) working days of the appraisal meeting, the supervisor shall provide the employee with Section V: Overall Performance Rating summarizing the discussion points of the meeting and providing a performance rating recommendation.

Step 9: If the employee agrees with the performance rating, s/he may provide comments and must sign, date, and return Section V: Overall Performance Rating to the supervisor within ten (10) working days.

If the employee disagrees with the initial performance rating, s/he should provide comments on Section V: Overall Performance Rating. The employee shall sign, date, and return the form to their supervisor within five (5) working days; as well as send a copy to the Regional Director. If you report directly to a Regional Director, you will send a copy to the Director of Extension. The Regional Director or Director of Extension will review the documentation and initial performance rating; determine and share—in writing—with all appropriate parties, a final overall performance rating within five (5) working days of receipt of the employee's signed Section V: Overall Performance Rating objection.

Step 10: The initial ratings of all employees are subject to further review by the Regional Directors and the Director of Extension. Any changes to the initial rating, along with the rationale for such changes, will be officially reported in writing to the appropriate employee. The employee shall have the opportunity to provide additional comments which will be incorporated into the performance appraisal document. If the employee does not agree with the final rating, s/he has recourse in the CSU grievance procedure outlined in Section K of the [Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Staff Manual](#).

Step 11: Completed appraisals are distributed with one copy to the employee, one copy to the supervisor, and an original to the Regional Director for the employee's personnel file.

PEER AND CLIENT INPUT PROCESS

From time to time, at the discretion of the director or supervisor, there may be a need for peer and clientele input to the performance appraisal system. When that occurs, the following process shall be followed.

Each employee and his/her supervisor will jointly develop a list of eight to twelve (8-12) clients and peers from whom to solicit input. Contacts selected should be relevant to the performance year being evaluated, represent the diversity of the individual's position, and be capable of providing a variety of perspectives. People providing such input may include individuals who have worked with the employee in a collaborative or partnership role, regional or campus-based specialists, clients who have participated in educational activities, peers with similar job responsibilities, members of an Extension team(s) on which the employee serves, advisory group members, etc. Employees having county/area director responsibilities or other administrative roles should include in their lists of clients and peers a county liaison (commissioner or county supervisor), member of the staff supervised, chair or member of the local advisory committee, etc. The list of clients and peers selected to provide input must include the name of an individual with whom the employee works on an officially recognized team.

While mutual agreement of each individual listed is preferred, it is not required. The supervisor may add, subtract, or replace names provided by the employee to get a balanced array of input from clientele/peers. In such situations, the supervisor is not required to provide the employee with rationale for changes made to the list. The supervisor will solicit input using the Extension Clientele and Peer Input Form. The form, along with a cover letter, will go to each individual describing the need for input and how it will be used. The supervisor will provide the employee with a compilation of the clientele and peer input at the performance meeting.

NOTE: This process will not preclude the supervisor's authority and responsibility to solicit input from clientele and peers at any time to determine ongoing performance progress.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS AREAS OF PERFORMANCE

The CSU Extension performance appraisal system is based, in part, around core skills central to the ability of Extension professionals to work effectively. Listed below are the skill areas in which professionals will be evaluated and a brief explanation of each:

1. **Individual Skills:** these skills are essential for all staff to achieve success in their positions and include the ability to identify, develop, and utilize resources, including human resources.
2. **Program Skills:** include the ability to accurately identify priority needs, plan and deliver effective programming, and evaluate and report the extent to which educational objectives were met. These skills are critical to all staff with an educational assignment.
3. **Administration Skills:** this section is to be completed by those with supervisory responsibilities. Administrative skills needed include supervision skills, leadership, and budgeting.

All Skills for Success are valued by Extension and are to be considered by supervisor in determining an overall performance rating. It is expected that each employee will at least attain a "Fully Achieves Expectations" rating. The supervisor will have the option of assigning more emphasis to selected skills in any given appraisal period to assist in an employee's professional growth. Employees are encouraged to provide their supervisor with input on the areas to be emphasized. The supervisor is to communicate which areas will be emphasized in the coming year at the annual appraisal. This emphasis on specific skills can also be discussed throughout the performance period.

Levels of Performance

Each Skills for Success has two levels of performance. Levels of performance descriptions are:

1. **Meets Expectations:** Performance consistently demonstrates the skill described/defined in the Skills for Success section of the performance appraisal document.
2. **Fails to Meet Expectations:** Performance does not consistently demonstrate the skill described in the Skills for Success section of the performance appraisal document. Improvement is needed.

The Skills for Success are essential elements of an Extension professional's success. If a supervisor believes an employee's skill level during the performance period was not sufficient to meet the "Meets Expectations" rating, the supervisor should mark the appropriate box. If the rating is less than "Meets Expectations," the supervisor and employee are to discuss (1) why the employee did not meet expectations for the skill, and (2) how the employee can improve the skill. The key points of this discussion are to be incorporated into Section VI: Upcoming Year: Plan for Improvement completed by the supervisor, and shared with the employee within two weeks of the meeting.

Additional Information

As part of the documentation for each skill, the employee may add additional information under the employee comment section. Section IV: Evidence of Excellence and Innovation provides an opportunity for additional information and/or achievements that are not covered by the descriptors in Section III: Skills for Success. The employee should provide information about specific challenges encountered, extenuating circumstances, directed projects, new understandings or approaches, lessons learned and/or additional accomplishments in Section II: Narrative. This additional information is available for consideration in a supervisor's composite (overall) rating for the overall performance rating.

GOALS

Because CSU Extension promotes focused programming, it is expected that personnel will focus on individual performance goals annually. These goals are identified at the time of performance appraisal, for the next performance period. The employee and supervisor should mutually agree to them.

Goals are expected of all employees and must contribute to the overall mission of Extension. Goals should be measurable and appropriately stretching, yet attainable. Challenges and resources needed, as well as strategies, should be discussed as these goals are set. It is also recognized that goals may change or evolve during the year. Changes should be discussed with the supervisor as they are made. Progress on goals should be addressed in the performance appraisal and included in determining the performance rating.

Effective goals generally include:

- **Intentions** to do something. Examples include, but are not limited to: develop, increase, decrease, inform, complete, evaluate, test, produce, prevent, etc.
- **Outcomes** of the intentions. Examples include, but are not limited to: a product, an approach, increased efficiency, higher performance, reduced cost, fewer mistakes, etc.
- **Methods/Resources** needed to achieve the outcomes. Examples include, but are not limited to: equipment, technology, staff, research, personal action, training, analysis, money, etc.

- **Time (deadlines)** by which the outcomes are to be achieved.

SUPERVISOR PREPARATION FOR PERFORMANCE REVIEW

All information and documentation should relate to the employee's performance during the prior calendar year. It is expected that the supervisor observes the employee annually in the performance of his/her job responsibilities.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to review the *performance review packet* (provided by the employee) prior to the performance review conference. The supervisor will reference the individual's relevant plan(s) to invest, annual contribution reports (both individual and team oriented), professional improvement plan, and Clientele and Peer Input Forms (if used). The supervisor may also reference the employee's position announcement, job description, and administrative input (from Director, other Extension Administrators, Department Chair/Head, etc.), personal observations, work samples and/or informal input (solicited or unsolicited) that are relevant to job performance. If the supervisor has questions, needs clarification, and/or requires additional documentation from the employee, these should be requested prior to the performance review conference.

While it is expected the supervisor will review the performance appraisal documentation the employee provides, it is also expected and appropriate that the supervisor prepare information or documentation to share with an employee regarding particular skills and levels of achievement. This documentation, particularly if describing performance as "Needs Improvement or Fails to Achieve Expectations," should be sufficiently descriptive in terms of behaviors, impacts, outcomes or events to show the employee performed at the level indicated. The same should be expected when a supervisor's information indicates a higher level of performance has been achieved. In both instances, this documentation provides a basis for discussion and planning for future direction between the employee and supervisor.

THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL CONFERENCE

The performance appraisal conference is intended to be a discussion (conversation) between the employee and supervisor. It should take place in a private, neutral, comfortable place where there will be no interruptions. Both the employee and the supervisor should work to set a tone of open, honest, interactive communication focused on employee development. The performance appraisal conference should NOT be considered by the employee and supervisor to be an interview, disciplinary hearing, nor any other forum that has a negative tone.

The conference should include:

- a review of accomplishments or progress since last appraisal period,
- a review of employee performance during appraisal period,
- development of plans to improve and/or enhance employee performance in order to meet both organizational and employee goals,
- recognition of employee's strengths and contributions to the organization (county, counties, area, region, and state),
- a review of programming, professional development and personal goals set for the appraisal period, and
- an understanding of what happens next in the performance appraisal system.

Review of Performance Appraisal Forms and Documentation

The supervisor and the employee should keep in mind that the appraisal covers performance during the prior calendar year. Both must be as objective as possible and make decisions based on information available. The supervisor should disregard past performance ratings and concentrate on the specific performance information at hand. Ratings should be based on facts and the documentation should support the rating decision. The supervisor should also be aware of situations the employee did/did not have control over.

Both the employee and supervisor should be prepared to discuss job performance, relevant documentation, and evidence supporting their work. Supervisor and employee should discuss any additional information to assure understanding of the level of performance, the documentation, and circumstances of the work environment.

Throughout the discussion, the supervisor should recognize employee strengths, growth opportunities, future goals and areas where improvement is needed, as well as listen to understand the work environment. It is also important that the supervisor and employee review and discuss any additional information received.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL CONFERENCE

Following the performance appraisal conference, the supervisor will need to review the *performance review packet*, reflect on the discussion during the performance appraisal conference, and consider all other pertinent information. The supervisor will then need to determine a ratings for individual Skills for Success and an overall performance rating for the employee within ten (10) working days.

Arriving at an Overall Performance Rating

The supervisor will assign an overall performance rating based on a composite of Sections II-IV. The supervisor shall use professional judgment in awarding the employee the rating most reflective of his/her work. The overall documentation of performance must support the rating. Additional information, if needed, to clarify the overall performance rating should be added to the documentation.

Extension expects its employees to perform at a “Fully Achieves Expectations” level or higher. When an employee is rated as “Needs Improvement or Fails to Achieve Expectations”, specific improvement plans must be developed by the supervisor and employee to address the need(s) identified. The supervisor shall give special consideration to new employees who have potential for growth with training and experience.

Supervisor Comments

This is an opportunity for the supervisor to summarize an employee’s overall performance for the appraisal period. The summary should note employee’s strengths, areas of growth, as well as areas needing improvement.

Employee Comments

As part of the performance appraisal, the employee is invited to comment in writing in Section V. These comments, suggestions, and/or issues are added at the discretion of the employee and become part of the performance appraisal. If provided, these comments should be incorporated in the area designated on the signature page. If space is insufficient, additional comments can be attached and noted as an attachment in the “employee comments” section of the form. Once an employee has received a copy of his/her review from his/her supervisor, s/he has ten (10) working days to provide comments to be included in the review.

Signatures

Both the employee and the supervisor shall sign the performance document where indicated in Section V. Signatures indicate both individuals participated in the review and are aware of and have discussed its contents. A signature does not necessarily indicate concurrence with any or all of the contents or ratings on the part of the employee.

FOLLOW - UP

The performance appraisal documents should then be assembled for submission and should consist of:

1. a current job description,

2. CPRS report, and
3. the performance documentation as described within these performance appraisal guidelines.

The original record should be forwarded to the appropriate Regional Director's office for review. The Regional Director will review performance appraisals to ensure fairness and consistency. In the case of an initial recommended rating that appears unfair or inconsistent, the Regional Director and appropriate supervisor will discuss relevant issues and recommend changes in the initial rating, as appropriate. The Regional Director may elect to request additional information as necessary.

The recommended ratings will then be forwarded to the Director of Extension for final review. If there are issues with any of the recommended ratings, the Director and appropriate Regional Director will review those issues and make rating changes as needed. Any change in a rating after the initial performance conference will be provided in writing to the employee, supervisor, and Regional Director (as appropriate), along with rationale as to the reason for the change.

Should an employee wish to appeal a final rating, s/he has access to the CSU system grievance process. Refer to the [Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual](#).

The original final employee performance documentation shall be filed in the employee's personnel file.