

Self-Appraisal Guide II

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V.2



This is a revised Self-Appraisal Guide in response to several inquiries from members of the NTEU family. As requested, new language from the National Agreement is included in addition to several more “Power Words.”

Marshall Goldsmith, founding director of the Alliance for Strategic Leadership, said that 85% of us think we are in the top 25% of our peer group. However, not that many of us can write a convincing essay-type Self-Appraisal capturing our applied knowledge as it pertains to our day-to-day duties. It is hard to write about yourself in a way that accurately depicts your problem-solving skills, initiative and a willingness to go the extra mile. Nevertheless, that is exactly what we need to do. I hope this revised Self-Appraisal Guide can assist members of NTEU in ensuring they receive a fair and objective evaluation.

I realize this Guide is used by many agencies represented by NTEU. Some of the contract provisions cited will not apply but the general content will be useful to a broad range of readers.

Thanks again to my NTEU colleagues for their ideas and support in connection with this Guide.

Please let me know about any corrections or suggestions.

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Introduction

You work hard; you work smart — all year. You receive your annual performance appraisal. Much of your best work is not mentioned. Why is that? How could you have prevented this?

If you have been unhappy with your prior performance appraisals, or might be unhappy with your next appraisal, then do it yourself the way it should be done.

For over 20 years a trend has been developing within the Service to provide less and less written information to employees in their annual performance appraisals.

Why minimize narratives?

Why does agency management resist detailed narratives in annual appraisals?

Often managers feel that:

- They have other more important priorities.
- They lack the skills to prepare a meaningful, constructive, insightful and defensible narrative.
- They prefer the less judgmental role of “coach.”
- Due to administrative duties they no longer have the technical expertise or time to fairly evaluate the performance of employees.
- They have too many employees to evaluate.
- Performance appraisals are not useful because the real problem is too few resources are available to do what needs to be done.
- Performance appraisals are not aligned with the mission of the agency. Also, the Critical Job Elements are not aligned with the true agency measures of success and with the actual duties being performed, including expertise in technology, Quantity Measurement goals and an ever-increasing administrative burden on employees.

If these were the only perspectives on the question, then the solution would be simple: eliminate narratives. However, the performance appraisal system is not intended to be a convenience for agency management anymore than enhancing customer satisfaction is intended to be a convenience for agency management. Providing quality performance appraisals and quality customer service are both leadership obligations requiring a view toward the impact on end-users.

History

Since the early 1970's, NTEU has been asserting itself at the bargaining table to block agency attempts to minimize narrative content in evaluations. For several years our National Agreements have included provisions for employees to prepare their own appraisals on official time. The National Agreement, Article 12, Section 4.B.5 gives employees 4 hours of official time to prepare a self-assessment during the final 30 days of an assessment period. Also, the self-assessment is limited to two pages and, in my opinion, is presumptively correct unless a supervisor rejects the self-assessment and furnishes an explanation at a meeting with the employee and his or her steward in accordance with Article 12, Section 4.B.6.

Additionally, Article 12, Section 4.B.5 requires management to provide a tutorial on self-assessments and provide official time to complete the tutorial. The web version can be found on the Intranet. All disagreements over the amount of time needed to complete the tutorial should be referred to your NTEU steward. If some of the examples seem to have in mind the perfect employee, you are not imagining things.

Self-Appraisal

Why prepare a Self-Appraisal?

- You know more about your contributions than anyone else.
- To show that you have completed many tasks that are difficult and worthwhile.
- To give specific, concrete examples of your contributions.
- To show that you did better than your competitors.
- To identify ways in which your supervisor can assist you in doing a better job.
- To identify aspects of your job where you would like more training.
- To gain self-awareness.
- Written records of your achievements are the heart of your performance history.
- If your manager does not attach a written narrative to your appraisal, you are allowed to prepare your own in accordance with the National Agreement, Article 12, Section 4.P.

Self-Appraisals can be done in 6 steps. Let's get started.

Step 1

So, what have you been doing lately? Maybe the most important step.

You know what you know.

This is not rocket science.

You should know more details about your job performance than anyone else. Starting today find a folder and start keeping notes and other written material about your accomplishments. If you made a suggestion, prepared a memo, or handled a problem that demonstrated the application of your skills in solving a problem — capture it in writing. If the application of your skills produced results — capture them in writing, even if they involved a collateral duty. Some jobs in the Internal Revenue Service involve a never ending series of problems that employees must solve including Revenue Agent, Revenue Officer and any job involving customer service, to name a few.

You don't know what you know.

This is not rocket science either.

It is only natural to think, “I didn't do anything special. I just did my job.” You did a lot more than just your job. You manage multiple demands on your time and energy and suffer countless interruptions. Frequently you are told to “Drop everything” to attend a meeting or a class. We are in an environment in which the Service is introducing new technology, new cultural values – especially quantitative production results – and an unmanageable organizational structure. On a regular basis we have additional duties tacked on to our normal duties. After a year or two, we can find our duties and responsibilities have doubled. Just “doing your job” in this environment is an accomplishment. Look for your accomplishments, talk to your fellow employees and talk to your boss.

Skills versus Accomplishments

Understand the difference. For example, some folks have excellent “Meet and Deal” abilities. That is a definite asset and skill. Using your “Meet and Deal” skills to enhance customer service, employee satisfaction or performing work more accurately or efficiently is an accomplishment. You might have the nicest smile in the IRS but normally that will not get you a top rating. Make sure you track specific examples of the application of your skills to produce outcomes. More on outcomes later.

Step 2

Get your stuff together.

Here are some ideas:

- Critical Elements, Standards, Aspects and whatever else forms the basis for the evaluation.
- Position Description
- Prior year's evaluation
- Individual Development Plan, if any.
- List of all job performance related training.
- Everything in your personnel file commenting on your performance, including managerial recordations, samples of work products and complementary letters.
- List of all cases, projects, team and committee assignments you worked on during the evaluation period.
- Your copy of the union contract, especially Article 12.
- Notes and documentation from progress reviews.
- Determine when your appraisal period ends. See the National Agreement, Exhibit 12-1.
- Your file from Step 1.
- The telephone number of your NTEU Steward.

Step 3

Showtime!

- Notify your immediate supervisor that you wish to use official time to prepare a self-assessment as provided in the National Agreement, Article 12, Section 4.B.5.
- You get up to 4 hours of official time. This means 240 minutes, not some system in which any part of an hour counts as a full hour. If you are in a job with frequent interruptions, keep track of the time you spend on the self-assessment. You do not have to use the 4 hours all at once as a block.
- Sort your documentation by critical element. If one document applies to more than 1 Critical Element either make a copy or make a brief note on a separate piece of paper. Using a 5 Critical Element approach you will have 5 stacks.

If you have good records, so far this was easy.

- Identify your target Element. Bargaining unit employees have 5 critical elements: 2 for Business Results, 2 for Customer Satisfaction and 1 for Employee Satisfaction.

For example: One of the Tax Advocate jobs has a critical element for Customer Satisfaction (Application), which has a component for Presentation Skills. To get a top rating you must demonstrate that you “Consistently present information to others in a clear and understandable manner. . . .”

You want to give a few examples of how you *consistently* present information to others in a *clear* and *understandable* manner.

Write a few sentences. It’s like telling a story. If you do not have any examples, move on. Do not just say “I consistently present information to others in a clear and understandable manner.” That is simply restating the standard. Use specifics. Proceed through each Critical Element in order. Don’t worry if you do not have examples for every single phrase in your elements. Sometimes aspects do not apply to your job.

- The first round is a draft so don’t worry if it isn’t pretty. Your draft may exceed the two-page limit. At this point the goal is to get your accomplishments reduced to writing. You can edit the draft later.

Writing style

Here are some ideas.

- Keep it simple, keep it clear and keep it brief. Some marketing consultants like to say that you should assume your reading audience has the brains of a 13-year old child with a sixth-grade education. While that may not be the case in our agency, it does make a point. The federal government spent considerable energy promoting a “Plain English” approach to government related writing.
- If you do not know how to start, just write “On or about” and fill in the dates and tell your story.
- If you want to be a Star then write in **STARs**. Tell the **S**ituation, the **T**asks to be performed, the **A**ctions you took and the **R**esults. For example: *[Situation]* On or about February 7, 2007, in response to several inquiries regarding the interpretation of recent legislation, *[Task]* I was asked to make a presentation to a small group of tax preparers regarding a new law covering Earned Income Tax Credit. *[Actions]* I telephoned Pat Hand, the contact point for the Local Preparers’ Association, determined the information needs of the preparers and designed several handouts in addition to my oral presentation. I allowed ½ hour of the 1 hour time slot for Questions and Answers. I frequently asked my audience if they understood my points before I moved on. *[Results]* Subsequently, Pat Hand called me and thanked me and asked if I could do something like this again in the future.
- **Outcomes.** Just because a case resulted in No Change in tax liability or was Uncollectible does not mean the results were negative. Properly applying the tax law may often produce outcomes that do not increase the amount of money collected in the short-term. Avoid mentioning measures that are prohibited by law or regulation, such as Dollars per Hour. Using such measures in your self-appraisal will only create controversy and will detract from your success stories. One outcome that is frequently overlooked is success in preventing undesirable events. For example, keeping someone cooperative or satisfied can be a major accomplishment.
- Should you mention the rating itself? “I deserve a rating of Exceeds Fully Successful.” This is a judgment call. My preference is not because employees often underrate themselves. However, some of our members have advised me they prefer to rate themselves in the Self-Appraisal. Your choice.

Writing style (*continued*)

- Verbs are the most powerful words in the English language, especially action verbs.
- Use verbs in the active voice. *I taught the class* on February 7. Not, *the class was taught* on February 7.
- See Attachment A for a list of Power Words. Use them as appropriate. The verbs should be used in the past tense since your accomplishments occurred in the past.

Step 4

Sanity Check

- Edit your work. List each critical element and component in numerical order and make sure it is easy to read. Review your work so you did not miss anything.
- Boil your accomplishments down to two pages. This takes self-discipline. You need to get to the meat in the Self-Appraisal as soon as possible. One of the most common mistakes employees make is restating CJE language without providing facts that permit a favorable conclusion about the level of performance.
- You can ask a friend or an NTEU person to take a look at the finished product. Ask for and pay attention to feedback from others. Make sure you sanitize any document you share, as appropriate. You do not need disclosure problems.
- If at all possible, your Self-Appraisal should be typed. The normal rule in business is “Do not submit any document that has a known typographical error.”

Step 5

Submit

- Make a copy for yourself.
- Timely submit it to your supervisor and note on your copy the time and date.
- If you prepared your Self-Appraisal on a computer, give your supervisor a copy in electronic format. This permits your supervisor to easily copy your accomplishments into your official appraisal.

Step 6

Déjà vu all over again

Start a file for next year. Don't put it off. Now you will have a better idea of the records you need.

Conclusion

This is not a perfect world. No kidding.

- On rare occasions your supervisor might not hold you in the same high esteem that you hold yourself. Favoritism is always a possibility and you might not be on the favored list. During the discussion of your annual appraisal you might not see eye-to-eye on your numerical ratings. Your interest should be in engaging in a fact based discussion. If areas are brought to your attention that need improvement, make sure you agree on a plan of action, including agency commitments of resources, training and developmental assignments. Ask for specific examples of what you need to do to get a higher rating. Make notes of the answers.
- If you suspect that numerical scores are being awarded based on a Bell Curve or Forced Distribution in which only a predetermined number of high ratings can be awarded, go back to Step 2, get your NTEU Steward's telephone number and drop a dime. Mention the National Agreement, Article 12, Section 3.G.

Acting Collectively

Because of the emphasis on quantitative results, Pay for Performance and stretch goals, we work in stressful conditions. However, employee knowledge and job-specific skills are not an all-you-can-eat buffet for management. We need resources applied to our needs as well. It is not unreasonable to expect technical support for computer technology, timely, relevant and sufficient training for new and expanded job duties and reasonable rewards and recognition for those of us at ground zero of tax administration. Going through the process of preparing a Self-Appraisal can help to identify and clarify employee needs. Share your experiences with your chapter officials.

Good Luck.

Mike Peacher

Attachment A: Power Words

Attachment B: National Agreement, Article 12, Section 4.

Attachment A — Power Words

Focused List — Part I

Independence	Investigative	Supportive	Creative	Admin
administered	clarified	adapted	acted	approved
analyzed	collected	advised	composed	arranged
appointed	critiqued	clarified	conceptualized	catalogued
assigned	diagnosed	coached	created	classified
attained	evaluated	communicated	customized	collected
authorized	examined	coordinated	designed	compiled
chaired	extracted	critiqued	developed	dispatched
consolidated	identified	developed	directed	executed
contracted	inspected	educated	edited	generated
coordinated	interpreted	enabled	envisioned	implemented
delegated	interviewed	encouraged	established	inspected
developed	investigated	evaluated	fashioned	monitored
directed	organized	explained	founded	operated
evaluated	recorded	facilitated	illustrated	organized
executed	reviewed	guided	initiated	prepared
improved	scrutinized	informed	inspired	processed
interviewed	studied	inspired	instituted	purchased
increased	summarized	instructed	integrated	recorded
organized	surveyed	persuaded	introduced	retrieved
planned	systematized	set goals	invented	scheduled
prioritized		stimulated	originated	screened
procured		suggested	performed	specified
produced		trained	planned	systematized
recommended			remodeled	tabulated
recruited			rejuvenated	validated
reviewed			revitalized	verified
scheduled			shaped	
strengthened			transformed	
			visualized	

Attachment A — Power Words

Focused List — Part II

Systems Work	Communications	Analytical	Assisted	Successes
assembled	addressed	Allocated	aided	accelerated
built	arbitrated	Analyzed	assessed	accommodated
calculated	arranged	appraised	assisted	accomplished
computed	authored	audited	clarified	achieved
converted	collaborated	balanced	coached	boosted
designed	communicated	budgeted	contributed	expanded
devised	convinced	calculated	counseled	expedited
engineered	corresponded	computed	demonstrated	founded
maintained	developed	consolidated	diagnosed	improved
operated	directed	developed	educated	innovated
overhauled	drafted	figured	expedited	launched
pioneered	edited	forecasted	facilitated	minimized
programmed	enlisted	managed	familiarized	moderated
refined	formulated	marketed	guided	pioneered
remodeled	influenced	measured	motivated	procured
repaired	interpreted	planned	rehabilitated	rectified
restored	lectured	projected	represented	reduced
revamped	mediated	queried	scheduled	remedied
solved	moderated	reconciled	suggested	resolved
streamlined	negotiated	recorded	supplemented	restored
upgraded	persuaded	researched	verified	spearheaded
	promoted	resolved		streamlined
	publicized	solved		strengthened
	reconciled	substantiated		transformed
	recruited	summarized		
	rectified	validated		
	remedied	valued		
	spoke			
	translated			
	wrote			

Attachment A — Power Words

Comprehensive List 350 Power Words — Part I

accelerated	audited	compared	cultivated	effected
accommodated	authored	compiled	customized	eliminated
accomplished	authorized	completed	cut	enabled
achieved	awarded	composed	dealt	encouraged
acquired	balanced	computed	decided	endorsed
acted	boosted	conceived	defined	engineered
adapted	bought	conceptualized	delegated	enlarged
addressed	briefed	concluded	delivered	enlisted
administered	broadened	condensed	demonstrated	ensured
advised	brought	conducted	described	entered
aided	budgeted	considered	designed	envisioned
allocated	built	consolidated	determined	established
analyzed	calculated	constructed	developed	estimated
answered	catalogued	consulted	devised	evaluated
anticipated	caused	continued	diagnosed	examined
applied	centralized	contracted	directed	executed
appointed	chaired	contributed	discovered	expanded
appraised	changed	controlled	discussed	expedited
approved	clarified	converted	dispatched	experienced
arranged	classified	convinced	distributed	experimented
assembled	closed	coordinated	documented	explained
assessed	coached	corrected	doubled	explored
assigned	collaborated	corresponded	drafted	expressed
assisted	collected	counseled	drove	extended
assumed	combined	counted	earned	extracted
assured	commented	created	edited	facilitated
attained	communicated	critiqued	educated	familiarized

Attachment A — Power Words

Comprehensive List 350 Power Words — Part II

fashioned	innovated	measured	prepared	redesigned
figured	inspected	mediated	presented	reduced
filed	inspired	met	prioritized	refined
filled	installed	minimized	processed	rehabilitated
focused	instituted	moderated	procured	reinforced
forecasted	instructed	modified	produced	rejuvenated
formulated	integrated	monitored	programmed	related
found	interpreted	motivated	projected	remedied
founded	interviewed	moved	promoted	reorganized
gathered	introduced	named	proposed	repaired
generated	invented	navigated	provided	replaced
graded	investigated	negotiated	publicized	replied
granted	involved	observed	published	reported
guided	issued	opened	purchased	represented
halved	joined	operated	pursued	researched
handled	kept	ordered	queried	resolved
helped	launched	organized	questioned	responded
identified	learned	originated	raised	restored
illustrated	lectured	overhauled	ranked	retrieved
implemented	led	oversaw	rated	revamped
improved	listed	participated	realized	reviewed
incorporated	listened	peachered	received	revised
increased	logged	perceived	recommended	revitalized
indexed	made	performed	reconciled	saved
influenced	maintained	persuaded	recorded	scheduled
informed	managed	pioneered	recruited	screened
initiated	matched	planned	rectified	scrutinized

Attachment A — Power Words

Comprehensive List 350 Power Words — Part III

selected	summarized	treated
served	summonsed	trimmed
serviced	superseded	tripled
set (goals)	supervised	turned
set up	supplemented	tutored
shaped	supported	uncovered
shared	surpassed	understood
showed	surveyed	unified
simplified	sympathized	unraveled
sorted	systematized	updated
sought	tabulated	upgraded
sparked	tackled	used
spearheaded	targeted	utilized
specified	taught	validated
spoke	terminated	valued
started	tested	verbalized
stimulated	took	verified
streamlined	toured	visited
strengthened	traced	visualized
stressed	tracked	weighed
stretched	traded	widened
structured	trained	won
studied	transcribed	worked
submitted	transferred	wrote
substantiated	transformed	
substituted	translated	
succeeded	transported	
suggested	traveled	

referenced above, that difference will be communicated in writing.

D.

Each critical job element and each aspect of the element will be numbered and/or lettered for identification purposes. The Employer will inform the employee, at the time the critical job elements and standards are communicated, whether aspects of any critical job elements are to be accorded different weights.

E.

The Employer has determined that first line supervisors will meet with their employees once every twelve (12) months to discuss new or revised critical job elements and standards; however, if the critical job elements have not changed, the supervisor need not meet with journey level and above employees but will communicate that the critical job elements will remain the same for that rating period. These meetings can occur as a group meeting (that is, more than one, or all of the employees, and the supervisor), or as a one-on-one session between an employee and the supervisor. The type of meeting will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the supervisor. Each Union chapter whose bargaining unit members are attending the meeting will be provided reasonable notification and an opportunity to attend the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Article 9. The purpose of these meetings or sessions will be to clarify any questions that the employees have concerning their critical job elements and standards (for example, explanations or examples of what employees must do to perform at the levels above fully successful).

F.

The Employer has determined that, to the maximum extent feasible, performance standards must be specific, observable and measurable. The performance standard, through its description of the goal in terms of quality, efficiency or timeliness, must provide a clear means of assessing whether objectives have been met.

G.

Forced Distribution: the Employer will not prescribe a distribution of levels of ratings for employees covered by this Agreement, unless otherwise mutually agreed; however, the Parties acknowledge that, absent their voluntary agreement, such negotiations are not subject to impasse procedures.

Section 4

Performance Appraisals

A.

1. Employees will receive performance appraisals annually. Starting October 2005, annual

ratings will be issued on a monthly basis between October and June. The ending date for an employee's annual rating period shall be based on a month determined by the last digit of the employee's Social Security Number (SSN) (Exhibit 12-1).

2. For employees assigned to measured rating plans, annual ratings will be issued on a quarterly basis by January 31, April 30, and October 31 based on Social Security Number (e.g., appraisals through December 31 are due January 31). The ending date for an employee's annual rating period shall be based on the last digit of the employee's Social Security Number (SSN) (Exhibit 12-2).
3. If there is a change from one (1) permanent position to another during the last sixty (60) days of the appraisal year, the departure rating(s) becomes the rating(s) of record for the appraisal period. A departure appraisal that does not become a rating of record constitutes a recordation and cannot be grieved until used in an annual rating unless the departure appraisal is used to disadvantage the employee (e.g., deny an overtime opportunity or suspend Flexiplace or AWS).
4. Additionally, the Employer has determined that when the supervisor cannot prepare a rating of record at the time specified in the plan, the appraisal period shall be extended for the amount of time necessary to meet a reasonable minimum appraisal period at which time a rating of record shall be prepared. The employee's existing rating will be used as the next annual rating until the new appraisal is prepared. The annual rating period date will remain as established regardless of within-grade increases, promotions, and any other actions whether temporary or permanent.
5. The Employer has determined that the employee will use his or her annual rating of record prepared in accordance with this Article for merit promotion as described in Article 13. If the employee does not have an annual rating of record for the current appraisal period, the employee will use his or her most recently completed annual rating of record prepared within the last four (4) years.
6. In the event that the employee has no previous annual rating of record, the supervisor will prepare a merit promotion appraisal on Form 6850-BU as long as the employee has served at least sixty (60) days on a signed performance plan. This merit promotion appraisal is to be used for merit promotion purposes until the employee receives a rating of record.

ARTICLE 12

B.

1. The Employer has determined that annual ratings/annual ratings of record and merit promotion appraisals will be prepared and recommended by employees' immediate supervisors of record (those who are immediately responsible for the employees' work and who assign, review and evaluate the employees' work). The Employer has determined that bargaining unit employees (e.g., Leads) may report to a supervisor what they have observed involving the performance of workload assigned to the employees of their work group. However, since bargaining unit employees do not have access to performance data (e.g., EPFs), such employees will not prepare or recommend any part of an appraisal unless the conditions in subsection 4B3 are met regarding acting supervisors.
2. Ratings of record will be prepared within thirty (30) days of the end of the month in which the appraisal is due. Upon request, the Employer will provide the local affected chapter a list showing the names and locations of the employees whose annual ratings are overdue by more than sixty (60) days.
3. The Employer has determined that in a competitive action, if the immediate supervisor of record preparing the appraisal to be used in ranking the applicants is to be considered for a vacant position for which the employee is also being considered, the appraisal will be made by the next higher level supervisor. In the event that the immediate supervisor is an acting supervisor, that is, a bargaining unit employee who has been designated to act as a supervisor, but who has not been in a managerial capacity sixty (60) days or more, the appraisal will be made by the next higher level supervisor.
4. Annual ratings/annual ratings of record when used will reflect the employee's performance for the full annual appraisal period unless the information necessary to make such an appraisal is not available. The employee's annual appraisal will not reflect performance between the end of the month in which the employee's appraisal cycle ended and when the appraisal was given to the employee. Ratings for periods of time which are less than the full annual appraisal period will be so noted. However, annual ratings/annual ratings of record must be postponed or delayed as required in 5 CFR 430 and 531.
5. During the final thirty (30) days of an employee's annual appraisal period (or as otherwise agreed upon), the employee may prepare a written self-assessment on a form to be

provided by the employer to submit for their manager's consideration.

Subject to Management's right to assign work, any employee who chooses to prepare such assessment shall be granted a reasonable amount of administrative time, not to exceed four (4) hours to do so, and shall submit that self-assessment to his or her immediate supervisor by no later than the last workday of his or her annual appraisal cycle. The self-assessment will be limited to two (2) pages in length. Employees who wish to do self-assessments will be given appropriate guidance on how to write self-assessments.

- a. The Employer will maintain a Web-based tutorial (as well as a comparable paper-based version for employees who do not have access to the Employer's Intranet) to help employees prepare self-assessment of their performance.
 - b. Employees will be afforded a one-time opportunity to complete the tutorial on administrative time, at an appropriate time to be determined by their immediate supervisor. However, employees may take the tutorial any number of times on their own time.
6. If the supervisor rejects an employee's self-assessment, the supervisor will meet with the employee and explain his or her reason.
 7.
 - a. In addition to the appraisals that are due based on the above requirements, an employee may request that another appraisal for merit promotion purposes be prepared if it has been more than 180 days since his or her last annual appraisal, he or she is applying for a position, and he or she has received a mid-year progress review that indicates that the employee is performing at an overall rating level one level higher (e.g., Exceeds Fully Successful versus Fully Successful).
 - b. If the above conditions are met, an appraisal for merit promotion purposes will be prepared if the current appraisal is to be used in a competitive action and is not valid and indicative of performance. This appraisal does not become the rating of record for the employee and will be used for merit promotion until the next rating of record is issued.

C.

Performance appraisals will be made in a fair and objective manner. They will measure actual work performance in relation to the performance require-

ments of the positions to which employees are assigned and will be based on a reasonable and representative sample of the employee's work.

D.

An employee will be advised each time an appraisal is used in a personnel action, and the employee will be provided a copy upon request.

E.

Performance appraisals will provide for the uniform treatment of all employees in a Division with identical elements and standards and with similar working conditions, with particular attention to employees performing the same job in the same work unit. Emphasis on the work unit does not lessen the Employer's obligation to provide uniformity at the Divisional level.

F.

Supervisors will discuss employees' annual or revalidated appraisals at the time such appraisals are issued to employees.

G.

Employees may make written comments concerning any disagreement with an annual or revalidated appraisal within fifteen (15) workdays of issuance. In the case of any appraisal which will be used in a pending competitive action, written comments concerning disagreements must be submitted within three (3) workdays of issuance. Such comments will be attached to and become part of the appraisal.

H.

Employees will be provided with a reasonable amount of administrative time, not to exceed four (4) hours, to prepare written comments concerning any performance appraisal that becomes the employee's annual rating of record. Such comments will be attached to and become part of the appraisal. Failure to rebut does not indicate employee agreement with the appraisal. Similarly, failure by the supervisor to comment on the employee's rebuttal does not indicate agreement with the employee's comments. It is not necessary or appropriate for a supervisor to prepare additional remarks regarding the employee's comments in that the appraisal constitutes management's stated position.

I.

An employee's initials on a performance appraisal, where the signature is provided for, indicates only that the performance appraisal has been received, not an employee's agreement with the performance appraisal.

J.

1. The Employer has determined that only time spent performing work related to an employ-

ee's critical job elements and standards will be considered in performance appraisals. Authorized time spent performing collateral duties and Union representational functions will not be considered as a negative factor when evaluating any critical job elements. For example, if a Union representative has spent 30% of a work period on official time, annual leave, LWOP or performing Union duties, this fact will be considered in the application of expected performance standards. Additionally, if an employee is performing collateral duties or Union representational functions that result in frequent interruptions of normal work, such factors will be taken into account when evaluating the employee.

2. The Employer has determined that a Union representative working full-time on Union duties, will receive an annual, revalidated or merit promotion appraisal, provided the Union representative has worked enough time to be rated, i.e., performed at least 120 hours of work in an evaluation year. If the minimum period cannot be met, the Union representative will receive a "Not Ratable" (NR) rating. While the Parties anticipate that some Union representatives may perform representational duties on a full time basis, they also want to maximize the opportunity for those representatives to perform IRS work. Consequently, each year, these representatives and their supervisors will meet to attempt to identify ways to assign them at least 120 hours of work, which can be performed in a manner consistent with their representational duties. For example, the appraisal could be based upon:
 - a. working an amount of time equal to that which would meet the center learning curve for the position held by the Union representative;
 - b. agreements which were in existence at the time NORD V / NC V were signed and which are in accord with existing regulations; or
 - c. the performance of tasks, projects, cases, or other work products/activities which are included in the employee's position description and ratable under one (1) or more critical job elements.

K.

In the application of standards to individual employees, the Employer will take into account mitigating factors such as availability of resources, lack of training, or frequent authorized interruptions of normal work duties.

ARTICLE 12

L.

All changes in working procedures must be communicated to employees before they can be charged with errors. If instructions were previously in writing, the Employer will issue new written instructions as soon as possible.

M.

The process of monitoring performance is ongoing. Therefore, the Employer will counsel employees in relation to their overall performance rating on an as needed basis. Such counseling will normally take place when a supervisor notices a decrease in performance and include advice or recommendations on better communicating job requirements, identifying and providing supplemental training (classroom and on-the-job), and providing additional coaching, monitoring, mentoring, and other developmental activities, as appropriate, to help improve employee performance until the employee shows improvement. Special emphasis should be given to those cases when an employee's performance indicates a decrease in the overall rating. Employees at the journey level and above who receive a three (3) in a critical job element for more than three (3) years in a row will be entitled to receive, upon request, a development plan. This plan will be jointly established and will identify work assignments and developmental activities which are designed to improve the employee's performance.

N.

An employee may request reconsideration of an appraisal in accordance with the Performance Appraisal dispute resolution procedure outlined in Article 41, subsection 7L. Employees may request reconsideration (that is, grieve) their appraisal only upon the issuance of that appraisal; however, if the matter remains unresolved at the conclusion of that process, the Union may invoke arbitration at that time, or alternatively, within thirty (30) calendar days after the employee's appraisal is used in an action, but in no case may an employee's appraisal be grieved or arbitrated more than once after its issuance.

O.

In disciplinary actions, performance appraisals, if used to support the actions, may be challenged only in the grievance procedure provided for by this Agreement. In adverse actions or actions taken for unacceptable performance, performance appraisals, if used to support the actions, may be challenged in the grievance procedure or statutory appeals procedure.

P.

All scored performance appraisals must contain a written narrative justification for each score given beyond simply stating that the standards have been

met. Normally, this narrative need not exceed two single-spaced typed pages. If no justification is available due to a lack of opportunity to perform in that element or to be observed performing in that element, a "Not Applicable" (NA) will be awarded in lieu of any score. However, if the supervisor decides to award a "4" or "5" in an element and that same score or a lower score was awarded the prior year, no narrative will be required. In these instances the employee may prepare a narrative summary for that element in the same manner as provided in subsection 4B5 above.

1. If the Employer determines that a journey level or above employee in at least the second year of his or her position would receive a Rating of Record for the current appraisal period identical to the Rating of Record received for the previous period, he/she may revalidate that the most recent Rating of Record is valid for performance in the current appraisal period. At least five (5) workdays prior to this revalidation, the employee will be advised by the Employer of the decision. While there is no narrative summary required for revalidation, the supervisor will still conduct a performance discussion with the employee.
 - a. In these instances, the employee may prepare a narrative summary or self-assessment as provided in subsection 4B5 above, and it will be attached to the revalidated evaluation for all purposes. If the supervisor objects to its accuracy, the supervisor may prepare his or her own full evaluation with narrative. The lack of a full evaluation in response does not indicate the supervisor agrees with the employee's self-assessment.
 - b. If the revalidated appraisal is to be used for merit promotion, the supervisor must prepare a narrative for each critical job element that does not have a narrative describing the performance in the appraisal period covered by the rating.
2. The Employer has determined that an employee's annual appraisal can be revalidated as many times as the supervisor determines that the appraisal is still accurate and reflects the employee's current performance.

Q.

The Employer has determined that when the monitoring of an employee's performance while communicating with a taxpayer (e.g., by telephone or in person) takes place without written notice to the employee at least eight (8) work hours in advance, the results will be made known to the employee within two (2) workdays. For the purposes of this provision, written notice may constitute the place-

ment of a sticker on a telephone or other posted notice in the work area. However, if the employee has provided incorrect information to a taxpayer, the supervisor will inform the employee as soon as possible but no later than eight (8) work hours. Upon request, an employee will be allowed to listen to any tape recording. Ratings of exceeds, meets or fails will not be used when an employee is issued feedback from monitoring. Such feedback may be either in narrative or check sheet format.

R.

The fact that an employee assumes new tasks, receives new critical job elements, changes positions, is a trainee, and/or gets promoted to a new position does not create a presumption that his or her performance is only "fully successful." Rather, an employee's performance rating will be based strictly on his or her performance against those critical job elements that apply during the appropriate performance rating cycle.

S.

The annual performance appraisal provides invaluable information to supervisors regarding an employee's need for additional training or coaching, and provides the employee with realistic feedback on how well he or she has performed during the rating cycle, as compared to the critical job elements for his or her position. Because of the importance of the annual appraisal, any disagreement between the supervisor and the employee over its content should be resolved in an expedited manner that encourages open and constructive dialogue regarding the supervisor's performance expectations, the employee's performance, and the appraisal itself. If the dialogue between the employee and the supervisor does not resolve the matter, the employee may file a grievance under the procedures in Article 41, Subsection 7L.

Section 5

Rating Scale

A.

Annual appraisals will be made on Form 6850-BU and will consist of ratings of "5", "4", "3", "2" or "1", on each critical job element. The ratings and definitions, which were established and determined by the Employer, are defined as follows:

1. Outstanding: "5" exceeds all performance aspects of the critical job element;
2. Exceeds Fully Successful: "4" exceeds more than half (1/2) of the performance aspects of the critical job element and meets the other performance aspects;
3. Fully Successful: "3" meets all of the performance aspects;

4. Minimally Successful: "2" fails one (1) performance aspect;
5. Unacceptable: "1" fails two (2) or more performance aspects; and
6. NA (Not Applicable): performance of the duties/responsibilities reflected by the critical job elements and standards has not been observed.

B.

Each performance appraisal will include an overall rating, established and determined by the Employer, as follows:

1. Outstanding: employee is rated Outstanding in more than half (1/2) of the critical job elements and Exceeds Fully Successful in the other critical job elements;
2. Exceeds Fully Successful: employee is rated Exceeds Fully Successful or above in more than half (1/2) of the critical job elements and Fully Successful in the other critical job elements;
3. Fully Successful: employee is rated Fully Successful or above in all of the critical job elements;
4. Minimally Successful: employee is rated Minimally Successful in one (1) or more critical job elements but not Unacceptable in any critical job elements; and
5. Unacceptable: employee is rated Unacceptable in one (1) or more critical job elements.
6. Not Ratable (NR): Employee's performance has not been observed for a minimum of sixty (60) days during the appraisal period or the employee has not received a performance plan for a minimum of sixty (60) days. The NR designation only indicates that the employee was not ratable for the current appraisal period and it is not a rating of record.

C.

In accordance with law, rule and regulation, the Employer will provide the following reports to the Union at the national level by October 1 each year:

1. a report comparing the average CJE scores for the twenty (20) largest occupations during the last appraisal year to the average CJE scores for the previous appraisal year;
2. a report indicating the average CJE score by group for the appraisal year just completed; and
3. a report by Division for the twenty (20) largest occupations showing the distribution of appraisal rating levels by RNOGAD category and number of employees in that category.