



U.S. Department of State

FOREIGN SERVICE EMPLOYEE EVALUATION REPORT DS-5055 INSTRUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Report (EER) is an assessment of an employee's performance and potential to serve effectively in positions of greater responsibility. Foreign Service (FS) Boards use EERs to make decisions on tenure, promotion, Senior Foreign Service (SFS) performance pay, SFS base pay adjustments, limited career extensions, low ranking, and selection-out. Assignment Panels may also use EERs to make decisions on assignments.

REPORT FORM

Form DS-5055 must be used for all required evaluations - for tenured and untenured FS employees, except for those of personnel assigned to training (who use DS-7772 (outside academic institution) or DS-651 (language training)). Career Civil Service employees serving on excursion limited non-career appointments also must use this form. Untenured Entry Level Officers whose rating period started before July 1, 2015, have the option to use either Form DS-1829 or Form DS-5055. No narrative may exceed the space provided for it, except in Section X where the employee may use continuation sheets, and Section IV where the review panel may also use continuation sheets. EERs may not be classified or contain classified information.

REPORT SUBMISSION

The post or bureau human resources office will submit the completed EER to the eOPF in ePerformance. EERs must be submitted to HR/PE within 30 days of the end of the rating period. Note: Exceptions to the use of ePerformance are limited, and the bureau/post HRO must

request the exception in advance by contacting HR-PEQuestions@state.gov.

RATING PERIOD AND REPORT TYPES

There are three types of rating periods and reports types .

A. Regular: The annual rating cycle is from April 16 of one year to April 15 of the next year for all tenured Foreign Service employees and untenured specialists. For untenured generalists, the annual rating cycle begins on the date of arrival in the assignment.

B. Interim: If a change of rater, assignment, or major duties occurs during the regular rating period, an interim report must be prepared for periods of 120 days or more, including for untenured generalists.

C. Voluntary: Raters should prepare voluntary reports for periods of fewer than 120 days only when required to document significant developments pertaining to the employee's performance that cannot be adequately documented in the next regular evaluation. Voluntary reports are not to be used to document performance during a detail or temporary duty assignment when the employee will return to his or her regular position and be evaluated for the full period.

DEFINITION OF RATER AND REVIEWER

The employee must be advised in writing at the beginning of the rating period who the rater will be. The rater is usually the employee's official supervisor. (See 3 FAH-1 2813.3 regarding regional personnel.)

The reviewer is usually the rater's supervisor or the next highest-ranking official. Every effort should be made to ensure that employees have a reviewer. If this is not possible, the employee should be informed in writing at the beginning of the rating period that there will be no reviewer.

ENSURING FAIRNESS

Rated employees must be given the opportunity to perform their assigned duties and must be evaluated on their performance of the established work responsibilities. A rater must discuss the work responsibilities and what constitutes acceptable performance with the rated employee at the beginning of the rating period and provide feedback on the employee's performance during this period. In situations where employees are not performing at an acceptable

level, they must be counseled and afforded a reasonable period of time to improve.

PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

SECTION I. SUBMISSION CONTROL

This section contains general employee information (name, position title, grade, series, and post or organization) populated from the employee's record in the Global Employment Management System (GEMS). Type of Report and Period Covered are completed by the rater. The rater and reviewer signatures will automatically populate when each certify the report is complete, in conformance with the instructions, and adequately documents performance. Date received in Post/Bureau and Date Received in HR/PE will populate when the employee acknowledges receipt of the EER and when the review panel chairperson certifies the EER is complete, respectively.

SECTION II. CERTIFICATION OF WORK RESPONSIBILITIES AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW DISCUSSIONS

The rater, reviewer, and rated employee must formalize the employee's work responsibilities within 45 days of the beginning of the rating period. Completion of Section V in ePerformance will automatically populate the respective date block in Section II. The core work responsibilities and goals and objectives requirements may be revised during the rating period to reflect a major change in the employee's responsibilities as documented in the separate Work Requirements Statement (which is no longer part of the EER).

This section also certifies that the rater reviewed the performance with the rated employee at least twice, at regular intervals, during a rating period, with at least one discussion recorded on Form DS-1974. Raters should use these sessions to ensure that the employee is apprised of how well he or she is progressing in achieving the work responsibilities. Discussions between the rater and the rated employee should address specific areas of accomplishment and areas in which the rated employee should improve. Assessments included in the final EER should not surprise the rated employee. If the rated employee attests that the dates of performance review discussions or counseling sessions are inaccurate, the rated employee should note that in Section VI and/or in Section X. Such disagreements should not prevent an employee from acknowledging receipt of the EER in

Section III. By signing Section III, the employee merely acknowledges receipt of the EER, not agreement with its contents.

SECTION III. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

The rated employee should electronically sign and date the cover page to acknowledge receipt of a copy of the EER. The signature does not indicate agreement with the contents of the EER or limit in any way the right of the employee to object to it. If the EER is not completed, signed, and returned after five calendar days by the rated employee, a copy of the unsigned rating is to be submitted by post/bureau to HR/PE for the employee's Official Performance Folder (eOPF) with a covering memorandum to explain the absence of signature. In cases where the employee has not signed acknowledging receipt of the EER, the review panel should comment on the circumstances in a review panel statement attached to the EER.

SECTION IV. REVIEW PANEL STATEMENT

Bureau and post review panels review EERs before the reports are submitted to HR/PE. They ensure that reports are completed in accordance with regulations and these instructions. Review panel functions are:

(1) Technical - reviewing EERs for inadmissible comments and changing or deleting inadmissible material; confirming that regulations and instructions are correctly applied and, if not, returning them for correction; and

(2) Advisory – returning reports that lack sufficient examples of performance to substantiate comments or that appear to lack internal consistency. The panel must try to have deficiencies corrected. If the effort is unsuccessful, the panel should note the suggested revisions in Section IV of the EER and any reasons for their rejection. A continuation sheet may be used.

Any revision by the rater should be shown to the reviewer and must be shown to the rated employee. A revision of the reviewer's statement must be shown to the rated employee. The employee may then revise Section VI or supplement the narrative in Section X.

If the rated employee's description of accomplishments or optional statement contains negative or pejorative comments concerning the

rater or reviewer, or raises significant questions of fact, the panel must provide the employee the opportunity to revise these comments. If the employee declines to do so, the review panel may invite the rater or reviewer, as appropriate, to comment. Any such comments will be shown to the employee, who will have the opportunity to make a final statement. These supplemental statements will be attached to the evaluation report. Although the review panel has the primary responsibility to check for negative and pejorative comments, if HR/PE identifies such comments it will follow the procedure outlined above.

If an evaluation is submitted to HR/PE after the due date, the panel should indicate in Section IV C who was responsible for the delay. Assistant secretaries, chiefs of mission, and their equivalents may opt not to submit to review panels the evaluations they prepare on their deputies. If this provision is invoked, the appropriate Bureau or Post official submitting the EER should so annotate in the review panel statement section.

SECTION V. POSITION DESCRIPTION, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

(Completed by rater, reviewer, and rated employee)

Department of State guidance requires that all employees and their raters/reviewers must have a separate detailed Work Requirements Statement discussed and signed by the rated employee, rater and reviewer within the first 45 days of the EER cycle or arrival at new position. This document is not part of the formal EER but should form the basis for Section V.

The rater should complete Section V within 45 days of the beginning of the rating period, in collaboration with the rated employee and with the concurrence of the reviewing officer.

Position Description: The rater should briefly explain the rated employee's position and where it fits in the formal staffing pattern. The rater should explain the employee's rating and reviewing responsibilities for other employees and the level of financial or other Department resources for which the rated employee exercises operational responsibility.

Core Work Responsibilities: There are two sections within this box.

Part 1: The first sentence is pre-determined and must be included in all EERs. The security section is a drop box dependent on the employee's personal grade. There is space for 1-3 lines for the employees' broad core work responsibilities.

Part 2: Goals/Specific Objectives - This section sets out the broad goals and specific objectives which guide the employee's performance for the rating period. They should be listed in priority order, and reflect a clear appreciation for Mission, Bureau or Department goals. They should be realistic and realizable.

Special Circumstances: Here the rater should describe any unusual, unexpected, or unpredictable circumstances that developed during the rating period and that significantly altered operational conditions which affected the ability of the employee to perform his/her job responsibilities and accomplish his/her goals and objectives. This does not include situations that existed at the start of the rating cycle or could reasonably be expected to occur during the rating cycle.

SECTION VI. DESCRIPTION OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Rated employees must describe their most significant individual and collaborative accomplishments during the rating period. Employees should provide a factual description of outcomes achieved and how these outcomes advanced Mission or Department goals. Employees do not self-appraise their own performance.

The rater and reviewer may suggest changes in this section. The rated employee may accept or decline such suggestions.

SECTION VII. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL

Section A. Appraisal

The rater has primary responsibility for assessing the rated employee's accomplishments in the areas of policy leadership, program and project management, and interpersonal relations (Informational, Operational, and Relational Effectiveness.) The rater should document all performance. If the employee did not fulfill

his/her work responsibilities or did so in a manner that did not meet expectations, the rater should cite specific examples. If the employee was fully successful, the rater should document whether the rated employee has demonstrated the potential to succeed if assigned higher level responsibilities, and what additional skills the employee should work on to perform most effectively in future assignments.

The rater must use specific examples to address the employee's performance and potential in the areas of informational effectiveness, operational effectiveness, and relational effectiveness (see Core Precepts for further guidance on these three effectiveness elements, and their relationship to the six core competency groups). The rater should focus on accomplishments and results and comment on how well the employee has integrated the six competencies into areas of effectiveness to accomplish his/her goals.

All jobs require equal employment opportunity (EEO) leadership. Raters should discuss an employee's EEO leadership if he or she has demonstrated it, or document performance that suggests less than full support for EEO objectives, providing at least one example to support either kind of statement.

All jobs require sound security awareness. Raters must comment on any pattern of failure to meet the Department's core security awareness requirements.

If the rated employee is a supervisor, including supervision of locally employed staff, the rater's comments should describe the employee's effectiveness as a supervisor, including developing subordinates and concern for morale (including issues of work/life balance). Any deficit in performance of required supervisory responsibilities should also be documented, such as: failure to comply with performance appraisal requirements; lack of equity in the delegation of assignments, counseling, recommendations for training and placement, and recognition of achievements of subordinates; and failure to establish or maintain effective and appropriate management control systems. In particular, supervisors have a responsibility to address any misconduct of subordinates and failure to do so should be documented in the EER. In discussing performance, work done for other agencies or outside the rater's personal supervision may be cited, drawing as appropriate on any evaluations submitted by the beneficiaries of the rated employee's work.

Section B. Developmental Area

During the rating period, the rater must periodically provide guidance to the employee on any area that requires focused professional attention, including any areas where the employee is not performing to the expected level.

In the EER, the rater must document the area where the employee should focus most attention to be fully successful at his/her current level or to succeed in higher level assignments. The area must be linked to one of the six core competency groups. The rater must justify the area with one or more examples. The rater cannot use this section to cite a need for formal or informal training (as opposed to substantive knowledge or technical expertise). This section is explicitly designed to identify a competency that requires further employee growth in order to be more successful in the future.

Section C. Summary Appraisal

For all employees, the rater must say whether the employee's performance was satisfactory or better. In the case of tenured employees, if the performance was unsatisfactory, the rater must comply with 3 FAH-1 H-2814.3 and all other provisions to which the section refers. For untenured employees, if the performance was unsatisfactory the rater must comply with 3 FAM 2246 and all other provisions to which the section refers. A rater may not assign an overall unsatisfactory rating unless the employee has previously been advised of the areas of performance which are inadequate and has been given a reasonable opportunity (normally 30 to 60 days) and adequate guidance to remedy these deficiencies.

For untenured employees, the rater must also indicate whether the employee is recommended for tenure.

SECTION VIII. REVIEW STATEMENT

The reviewer must independently assess the rated employee's preparedness for assuming positions of greater responsibility, citing examples of performance, and must not rely solely on the views of the rater. The reviewer must describe the employee's relations with his/her rater, and document the employee's record of working collaboratively with peers and of supporting the professional development of subordinates. If the reviewer disagrees with the evaluation of the employee by the rater, or if relations between the rater and employee are strained, the reviewer must make this clear.

The reviewer shares responsibility for ensuring that the employee is fairly rated. The reviewer may comment on the adequacy and candor the rater showed in preparing the report.

SECTION IX. PERFORMANCE PAY

SFS Members – Performance Pay: Raters should evaluate SFS employees for performance pay. Such pay is based solely on performance during the most recent rating period and specifically on established performance pay criteria as specified in the Procedural Precepts for Performance Pay Boards. Those criteria are:

- (1) The relative value of the member's achievement to the accomplishment of the Department's mission;
- (2) The degree of difficulty inherent in successful achievement by the member;
- (3) The extent to which achievement was characterized by strong executive leadership and significant contributions in the formulation of agency policies and programming; and
- (4) Effective supervision and development of subordinates.

SECTION X. OPTIONAL STATEMENT BY THE RATED EMPLOYEE

Rated employees may address any activities or problems that they believe have not been covered adequately. The rated employee should use this section to identify a disagreement with the rater in Section II regarding the dates of establishment of work responsibilities or performance review discussions. If additional space is required, continuation sheets may be attached.

The employee must be provided five calendar days from the date of receipt of the final EER to review it and prepare a statement. The employee does not have the right to amend this statement at a later date except in response to changes made in the rater's or reviewer's sections. If the rated employee disagreed that counseling sessions have been held, he or she may use this section to explain the action. Neither the rater nor reviewer has a right to see the employee's statement. See section on review panel responsibilities above for exceptions to this rule.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REFERENCES

REGULATIONS

3 FAM 2810 and 3 FAH-1 H-2810 - See below for instructions on inadmissible comments.

DECISION CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION

See Core Precepts (3 FAH-1 H-2321 EXHIBIT H-2321 B and DS-5055-CP).

EEO

Department of State policy is to provide equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, reasonable accommodation for disability, political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, or means of entry into the Foreign Service. Additional information can be obtained from 3 FAM 1500 or by contacting S/OCR.

INADMISSIBLE COMMENTS

Inadmissible comments may not be included in any section of the evaluation report, or in other forms of evaluative material. Raters and reviewers, as well as review panels, must ensure that employees are not disadvantaged, directly or indirectly, for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, disability, reasonable accommodation for disability, sexual orientation, or means of entry into the Foreign Service. Stereotypes, group assumptions, and sexist or ethnic comments are inadmissible.

The following subjects are inadmissible in any part:

- (1) Reference to race, color, religion, sex (does not extend to the use of Mr., Mrs., Ms., or first names or personal pronouns), national origin, age, disability, reasonable accommodation for disability, and sexual orientation;
- (2) Ranking by former Selection Boards or impending selection out;
- (3) Physical characteristics and personal qualities that do not affect performance or potential;
- (4) Marital status or plans, or references to spouse or family;

- (5) Retirement, resignation, or other separation plans;
- (6) Reference to job sharing and telecommuting;
- (7) Grievance, equal employment opportunity, or Merit Systems Protection Board proceedings;
- (8) Method of entry into the Service;
- (9) Reference to private U.S. citizens by name;
- (10) Participation or nonparticipation of Foreign Service personnel, in any organization which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with foreign affairs agencies concerning grievances, human resources policies, and practices;
- (11) Ratings for earlier periods prepared by other supervisors;
- (12) Reluctance to work voluntary overtime;
- (13) Leave record, except in the case of unauthorized absences;
- (14) Letters of reprimand;
- (15) Negative reference to use of the Dissent Channel or direct or indirect reference to, or consideration of, judgments in dissent channel messages as a basis for an adverse evaluation of performance or potential.
When the rated employee's expression of dissenting views on policy, outside of the dissent channel, raises substantial questions of judgment or obstructionism relevant to the employee's performance, it may be the subject of comment. However, general comment may not be used to get around the proscription of this section. Specific instances must be cited.
- (16) Negative or pejorative discussion of the performance of another identifiable employee;
- (17) Specific identification by rating or reviewing officers of physical disability or medical problem (including alcoholism, drug abuse, or rehabilitation efforts);

Although the details or specific identification of a medical problem are inadmissible in the evaluation report, general reference may be made to confirmed knowledge of a medical problem to the extent it affects job performance.

Rated employees may discuss their own health problems in specific terms if rating or reviewing officers have made references to such problems, or to explain or clarify adverse comments in a report.

(18) Reference to academic degrees, titles, or specific institutions of higher learning (except that physicians may be referred to as "Dr."); or

(19) Outside activities that are not relevant to performance or post effectiveness.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

Employee Evaluation Reports are subject to strict confidentiality under section 604 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 and the provisions of the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a.