



U.S. Office of Personnel Management

An Employee's Quick Guide to Writing a Strong Self-Assessment

Your self-assessment is your opportunity to tell the story of your performance during the appraisal period. It helps your supervisor understand the full scope of your accomplishments, contributions, challenges, and impact. A strong self-assessment is not a list of activities. It explains what you accomplished, how you accomplished it, and why it mattered to your organization, customers, and mission.

Before You Start

Gather the following information covering the entire appraisal period:

- Performance plan
- Work products, reports, and project deliverables
- Organizational performance results
- Performance metrics and outcomes
- Customer and/or stakeholder feedback
- Awards, recognition, and special achievements
- Training and professional development activities

Organize by critical element first

Group your accomplishments under each critical element in your performance plan — not as a chronological list. This is the most important structural step: it makes it easier for your supervisor to evaluate performance against each established standard.

Drafting Your Accomplishments

Focus on Results, Not Activities

Ask yourself:

- What was the outcome?
- Who benefited?
- What problem was solved?
- How did my work support organizational goals?

Use the STAR Method to Structure Accomplishments

Situation – What was the challenge, requirement, or need?

Task – What were you responsible for?

Action – What specific actions did you take?

Result – What was the outcome or impact?

Whenever possible, include measurable results that quantify and qualify your achievements

Examples:

- Processed 15 percent more cases than the previous year while maintaining established accuracy standards.
- Reduced response times from five days to two days without sacrificing response quality.
- Delivered 12 training sessions reaching over 2,000 employees; received 91% positive feedback from participants.

Demonstrate How You Achieved Results

Describe not only what you accomplished, but also the skills and behaviors that contributed to success. Consider highlighting how you:

- Collaborated across teams
- Solved complex problems
- Improved processes
- Demonstrated leadership
- Served customers effectively
- Mentored or developed others
- Adapted to changing priorities

Align Accomplishments to Organizational Goals

Reference specific goals within your agency or organization's strategic plan. Consider explaining how your work:

- Supported strategic priorities
- Improved customer service
- Increased efficiency
- Reduced risk
- Enhanced compliance
- Strengthened organizational performance

Avoiding Common Mistakes

Don't:

- Simply repeat your position description.
- List duties without describing results.
- Exaggerate accomplishments.
- Use vague statements such as "worked hard" or "did a great job."
- Submit a self-assessment without examples or evidence.

Do:

- Be specific and factual.
- Use measurable results when possible.
- Organize accomplishments by performance element.
- Highlight impact and outcomes.
- Proofread before submitting.

Self-Assessment Checklist

Before submitting your self-assessment, ask yourself:

- Have I addressed each critical element?
- Did I focus on accomplishments rather than activities?
- Did I include measurable results where possible?
- Did I explain the impact of my work?
- Did I provide specific examples?
- Did I describe how I supported organizational goals?
- Is my assessment clear, concise, and professional?
- Have I proofread for accuracy and completeness?

Final Thought

Think of your self-assessment as evidence, not advocacy. The strongest self-assessments provide clear examples, measurable results, and demonstrated impact. By documenting your contributions throughout the year and connecting them to organizational outcomes, you help ensure your performance is fully understood and accurately evaluated.