



Guidelines

Employee Appraisal – Guidelines – Line Manager

This English translation is provided for convenience purposes only. The original German text fully prevails.

1. Purpose of the Employee Appraisal and These Guidelines

The annual employee appraisal (EA) is an important tool with which you as a line manager can evaluate your employees' performance and conduct and guide them in such a way that they achieve both the organization's goals and their own professional goals in the future. In principle, your employees are entitled to one EA per year.

This employee appraisal is an opportunity to have a thorough discussion with your team members and review their current situation. You can use the result of the appraisal as a basis for deciding on development measures, how to deploy people correctly, and salary increases. A well-documented EA form is also an essential document in the event of a legal dispute, for example in dismissal proceedings, for ordering measures under employment law, or for giving an unsatisfactory assessment in an employment reference letter.

In such an employee appraisal, you acknowledge your team members' work and conduct, give them positive feedback, highlight opportunities for improvement, and define goals and development measures. Your team members can also use the same meeting to give you feedback, for instance on working with you and your leadership. These discussions promote good cooperation and have a lasting effect. For that reason, the focus should be on engaging in genuine dialogue with your team members. It is also important that this dialogue does not contain any "surprises" and is mutually understandable on the basis of the feedback discussions that you have held with your employees throughout the appraisal period.

The following section contains instructions for using the EA form and provides an overview ("checklist") of the key points to consider in preparing for, implementing and doing follow-up work for the EA.

If you have any questions about the form, the specific procedure or employment-law aspects of the EA, the responsible HR Business Partners from the Human Resources Department will be happy to help.

If you have little or no experience of holding EAs, we recommend that you take the UZH course "Grundlagen der Mitarbeitendenbeurteilung" (Introduction to performance appraisals – held in German) before your first EA cycle. If you would like to refresh your knowledge on certain topics, please have a look at the HR training courses that we offer.

2. Content of the Form

a. Personal Details

The form can be used for the following appraisal types:

- Periodic EA
- Accompanying document, performance improvement period
- Accompanying document for issue of reprimand

b. Basis for Appraisal

Please use the upcoming EA as an opportunity to check whether the employee’s job description is still up to date and is saved in the employee’s personnel file. Record the date of the job description and check the relevant box to indicate whether the job description remains up to date or needs updating. Please note that it is the employee’s current duties in the appraisal period that are relevant for the EA.

If you discover that the job description needs to be updated, talk about this in the EA and agree the next steps to be taken in this regard with the employee.

If you have agreed additional assigned and expected duties for the appraisal period with the employee that go beyond the job description on the date indicated above, please document these in the box provided.

c. Rating Scale

The rating scale is the cantonal scale in accordance with paras. 16–19 of the employment ordinance (PVO). It is applied consistently to both the individual criteria and the overall appraisal. However, the scores for individual criteria and the overall appraisal do not have to match precisely in mathematical terms; you can give your own weighting to individual criteria.

Each criterion is appraised using a single rating level. Only the five rating levels below may be used; half-levels or multiple ratings are not permitted. You appraise your team members individually. However, it is important to apply a consistent rating scale for all your team members.

You can also use the following diagram as a guide to help you find the right score:

+++	++	+	-	--
Excellent	Very good	Good	Sufficient	Insufficient

d. Goal Attainment in Past Appraisal Period

Start the discussion by evaluating the employee’s goal attainment in the past appraisal period. At the beginning, you should also talk about which successes the employee enjoyed in the appraisal period and what, if anything, did not go well. Then move onto the differentiated evaluation of the employee’s performance and behavior.

e. Criteria for Appraisal

You can use the following sub-skills/qualities when evaluating individual criteria (list not exhaustive):

Category	Criteria	Skills/qualities appraised	Sub-skills/qualities (optional)
Performance	Fulfillment of work duties	Specialist knowledge and methodology	In relation to current duties; newly acquired knowledge
		Practical implementation and problem solving	Focus on application; capacity for innovation
		Organization of (own) work and efficiency	Self-management, working techniques, effort/return on work performance
		Ability to work independently	Compliance with requirements; compliance with line manager’s instructions

Category	Criteria	Skills/qualities appraised	Sub-skills/qualities (optional)	
		Ability to work independently	Independent work; use of own scope for action; formation and advocacy of own opinion	
		Leadership	Compliance with UZH leadership and management principles (https://www.staff.uzh.ch/en/personal/uzh-leadership-and-management-principles.html); appraisal in all applicable contexts (leading yourself, leading others, leading and managing organizational units); emphasize individual leadership and management principles in the detailed appraisal if required; if applicable, also assess lateral leadership	
		Digital skills	Efficient and security-conscious use of digital instruments/tools in different work environments	
	Accomplishments	Quality	Individual results and consistent work quality; in terms of teaching: research-based teaching, etc.; didactic quality; long-term efficacy of results	
		Quantity	Quantity of work, duties/projects completed; in terms of teaching: fulfillment of teaching obligations, etc.; additional efforts in relation to teaching performance	
		Sustainability	The person contributes to sustainable development goals as part of their position (www.sustainability.uzh.ch/en/policy-reporting/sustainability-policy). They contribute new ideas and suggestions in this regard.	
	Behavior		Taking responsibility	In own field of duties; and beyond if applicable
			Communication	Expression, appearance, information management
			Integrity	E.g. reliability, loyalty, function as a role model
Initiative and commitment			Contribution of new, thought-provoking input, identification of potential improvements, personal commitment to work, willingness to be involved in university committees or working groups, resilience	
Approach to new ways of working			Adaptability, ability to collaborate, thinking and acting systemically	
Cooperation/working together			Internally and externally	

Category	Criteria	Skills/qualities appraised	Sub-skills/qualities (optional)
		Desire to learn	Openness towards new things, own continuing education, ability to accept criticism
		Diversity skills	Their personal behavior helps to ensure that the working atmosphere is characterized by appreciation and respect towards everyone

The [Career Discussion Guidelines for Researchers](#) provide information on specific individual aspects of the appraisal for **research activities**.

f. Goals for Next Appraisal Period

Please follow the SMART principle when setting goals. Under this principle, good goals should be:

- **S**pecific and challenging
- **M**easurable
- **A**tttractive and accepted
- **R**elevant and realistic
- **T**ime-related

Please make sure that the employee understands each individual goal.

g. Overall Appraisal

Please briefly summarize your overall impression of the employee’s performance and behavior (in particular their strengths and areas with potential for improvement) in the comments section for the overall appraisal. Please note that for employees given an overall rating of “very good” or “excellent,” the financial consequences of any salary increase must be borne by the responsible organizational unit.

h. Development Plan

Targeted reflections on the employee’s further development should be one of the results of the employee appraisal. This further development can take place “on the job” (in their daily working life) or “off the job” (in continuing education courses, etc.).

When describing the development measure in question, please explain how it relates to your appraisal in terms of content: which specific areas with potential for improvement are to be rectified with which development measure? Please also outline strengths and potential you have identified that can be enhanced and expanded.

Make sure before the appraisal that you are able to implement a development measure discussed for the employee organizationally and financially.

i. Employee Feedback

The employee should always be given an opportunity to give feedback on the points listed. You can either accept and write down this feedback during the appraisal, or you can give the employee the form to complete afterwards.

Please discuss the feedback with the employee. You do not have to fulfill the employee’s wishes and expectations in terms of content, but you should be aware of them.

j. Signatures

With their signatures, the line manager and the employee confirm that they have discussed the appraisal and defined the goals. The employee’s signature does not necessarily indicate their agreement with the line manager’s appraisal and the goals.

If the employee wishes to have a meeting with the next higher line manager, it is your responsibility to inform the next higher line manager of this and provide them with the appraisal form and any additional documentation. The next higher line manager will then organize the meeting, fill out the comments section of the appraisal form after the meeting and sign the form.

k. Third-Party Input

At the employee’s or your suggestion, this section can be used to document feedback from third parties who have worked closely with the employee during the appraisal period, e.g. on a project. Please obtain this feedback at an early stage and in writing if possible. Be transparent towards the third parties and the employee that you are asking for feedback for the purpose of the employee appraisal and that you will use it in the appraisal, along with the names of the third parties in question.

3. Checklist for Preparing and Holding the Appraisal

Here is a list of the key points that you should consider for the employee appraisal:

Annual EA cycle / activity	Details
<p>Throughout Note down or “collect” positive and negative relevant examples with regard to employees’ performance and conduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Your appraisal should be understandable, even weeks or months later. Note down some examples for the individual assessments. – These examples should also be raised and discussed in the EA. – Serious incidents should be discussed with employees promptly. Do not wait until the EA to raise them.
<p>To bear in mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An EA relates to a whole appraisal period (generally one year), and not just to the last few weeks before the appraisal – Data protection – Proportionality 	
<p>Ten months after the last EA Arrange an appointment for an EA</p>	<p>Refer employee to current EA form and the checklist which employees should use to prepare for the EA on the HR Department’s website (Performance Appraisal UZH for Staff UZH).</p>

<p>1. One month before the EA Gesprächsvorbereitung</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Room reservation (for approx. 1.5 hours) — Make notes on the following key questions in relation to the employee’s performance and behavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is going well and can stay as it is? What can we be pleased about? b. What is no longer or not yet going so well and should be improved? Who or what could contribute to an improvement? — Complete the entire EA form before the meeting — Compile examples or documents to justify evaluations — Formulate core messages that you would like to get across — Anticipate possible reactions from the employee — If necessary, obtain input/advice from HR (you could also invite somebody from Human Resources to attend if you expect the EA to be difficult, for instance because you will inform the employee that they are being given a warning with a performance improvement period) — Planning and if applicable provisional budgeting of development measures
<p>To bear in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Room selection: quiet meeting room so that the meeting can be held with as few disturbances as possible. The room should be suitable for a one-on-one discussion and should not be your own office or the employee’s office — Calendar entry and room reservation with “Reserve” if the meeting will take a long time — Fill out evaluations with clear, easy-to-understand key words (collected examples) — Perform an informal team comparison to calibrate your own evaluations — Do not give evaluations out of kindness or as a favor; try to ensure that they are objective and verifiable and provide examples to illustrate them — Warning with performance improvement period, if applicable: if you are going to issue a warning due to inadequate performance or conduct and set a performance improvement period during an EA, it is essential that you contact the HR Business Partner in the HR Department responsible for you beforehand. 	

<p>2. At the employee appraisal Conducting the employee appraisal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Present the completed form – Go through the form together at the meeting. Explain your individual evaluations and the overall evaluation – Define new goals and development measures – Sign the EA form together (= confirm that the appraisal has been discussed and the goals defined) – Clarify and note down on the form whether the employee wishes to have a meeting with the next higher line manager – Thank the employee for the meeting (regardless of how it went!) and say goodbye.
<p>To bear in mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No (external) disturbances during the meeting – Offer a drink – Focus on dialogue: encourage the employee to give their opinion – Clear feedback (praise and criticism); speak about possibilities for improvement in a clear way – Answer the employee's questions – Accept the employee's concerns – Be tolerant of different perspectives. Your employee may well view themselves differently than you do. – Control your feelings – Complete the meeting if at all possible; do not interrupt or postpone it 	
<p>3. Afterwards Follow-up to the EA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – EA form (original for the personnel file, copies for the employee and you) – If necessary, copy/report on the EAs conducted to your own line managers
<p>To bear in mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reflect on the meeting: did I address the core messages, clearly formulate the goals, express respect, motivate the employee, and maintain control over the discussion? Possible improvements for next time? 	
<p>4. By 31 March at the least Input for salary reviews with effect from 1 April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In formal terms, employees must receive an evaluation of “good” (overall classification) / “very good/excellent” (performance) or better for a salary increase to be possible – Other options according to the annual information letter from the HR Department
<p>To bear in mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No individual salary increase without a valid EA; EA cannot be more than one year old, i.e. it must have taken place between January of the previous year and March of the current year – The deadline for submitting the decision for the salary review is 31 March 	

<p>5. Half a year after the EA (informal) interim meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Review of the employee’s current situation — How far have they got in terms of achieving their goals? — Have the development measures been implemented? — Anything else?
<p>To bear in mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Document in writing if possible (for yourself and the employee), particularly if the outcome of the review is not positive and improvements are required over the remainder of the evaluation period. 	