

COMMON APPRAISAL STANDARDS

Introduction

The appraisal standards are a compulsory tool for assessing the efficiency, abilities and conduct of an official. They are intended to harmonise appraisals within a DG and across the Commission and to make it easier to compare individual appraisals within a grade. They also give officials guidance as to what is expected of them. DG ADMIN, with the help of the services and the Joint Appraisal and Promotion Monitoring Committee, has established these common appraisal standards. They may be supplemented by standards specific to each DG provided that they are approved by DG ADMIN.

The new common appraisal standards are based on the description of a performance level that can be expected of any jobholder.¹ They are classified under three headings: efficiency, ability, and aspects of conduct, as set out in Article 43 of the Staff Regulations. These broad groups of appraisal standards are split into sub-headings, intended to help lead the reporting officer through the assessment process. Where necessary, distinctions are made between the tasks of administrators (AD), assistants (AST) and jobholders with management functions (MANAGEMENT). However, most of the standards are generally applicable, even though their relative importance might differ depending on a jobholder's job description. The description provided in the common appraisal standards gives an indication of what is expected from a jobholder with regard to efficiency, ability and conduct in the service.

For the heading "efficiency", the annual appraisal continues to rely on setting objectives, against which a jobholder's efficiency can be measured. In addition to the objectives, a number of efficiency standards have been included in the common appraisal standards, so that this element of performance can be assessed more comprehensively. The efficiency standards are concerned with the jobholder not only having the ability to perform a certain task, but actually doing so efficiently. Efficiency is, of course, not a stand-alone aspect of performance, but is closely linked to the jobholder's abilities and conduct.

¹ Within the meaning of Article 2 of the general provisions for implementing Article 43 of the Staff Regulations of 23.12.2004.

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The standards, as described in the table, set the general benchmarks for the expected level of performance. If most of the levels described in the relevant standards are partly or considerably exceeded, this indicates superior annual performance, while not meeting the level described on the standard or only partially fulfilling the requirements indicates a lower or substandard performance.

Let us look at a few examples by way of illustration. In the efficiency category, *a jobholder is expected to carry out tasks without unnecessary or unjustified delays under regular working conditions*. An example of not meeting this standard would be where the jobholder misses deadlines in the absence of any irregularities or changes in workload that might justify this. Depending on how often such difficulties arise, the jobholder would be considered as only partially meeting expectations with regard to this standard, or even as consistently falling short of the requirement. On the other hand, an example of surpassing this standard would be where the jobholder frequently or consistently meets tight deadlines despite circumstances that would have justified a delay.

The section on abilities helps to assess the jobholder's general skills. For instance, one standard in the area of problem solving stipulates that *the jobholder weighs up the various possible solutions and shows sound reasoning in identifying the most suitable one*. Here we have two distinct steps in the problem-solving process: missing out on either step would result in only partially meeting the standard. An assessment of whether the expectations described in the standard are exceeded would take into account the quality of the selected solution.

Finally, the section on conduct describes the jobholder's behaviour at the workplace, towards both colleagues and external partners or clients. One of the standards related to teamwork expects *the jobholder to keep her/his superiors and colleagues informed about her/his tasks and share information which might be of general interest to the team/unit/DG*. An example of a performance exceeding this standard could be the jobholder's efforts to forward relevant information without delay, including a qualitative assessment and in an appropriate form despite quickly changing circumstances.

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EFFICIENCY

Organising / Planning work

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| GENERAL | Jobholder draws up a work plan taking into account elements like the order of priority of assigned tasks, and the workload imposed by the tasks. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder effectively splits her/his time between the various tasks to be performed, in line with their order of priority. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder reacts quickly to unexpected or new tasks. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder distributes tasks in a balanced and transparent manner and gives clear instructions on the way they are to be handled and the success criteria (oral and written). |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder gives a strategic vision of the objectives and priorities of the unit and translates it into measurable and attainable objectives for the team members. |

Performing work / Ensuring quality

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| GENERAL | Jobholder ensures that she/he understands the tasks she/he is asked to perform by listening and by asking questions. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder effectively manages a range of projects / dossiers simultaneously. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder carries out tasks without unnecessary or unjustified delays. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder ensures that the DG's/Directorate's/Unit's quality standards are met and policies and procedures followed in the performance of her/his tasks. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder sets up and runs a supervision system to support her/his team in fulfilling its tasks effectively and achieving objectives. |

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ABILITIES

Technical skills

GENERAL

Jobholder has the requisite basic technical skills to fulfil her/his tasks (e.g. knowledge of computer tools, specific Commission tools, specific financial tools or procedures).

Oral & Written Communication

GENERAL

Jobholder expresses her/himself clearly, accurately and concisely, showing sensitivity to the multicultural working environment, in a Community language other than her/his native language, depending on the needs of the service.

GENERAL

The documents the jobholder writes are clear, concise and structured, requiring only minor corrections.

AD

Jobholder uses the appropriate communication style for different target audiences.

Communication in meetings

GENERAL

Jobholder generally makes valuable contributions in meetings, pinpointing key issues and proposing constructive solutions.

AD

Jobholder ensures sound organisation and efficient time management of meetings under her/his responsibility.

Negotiation skills

AD

Jobholder shows good diplomacy skills in negotiations and strives to maintain good relations with the other side.

AD

Jobholder generally knows how to deploy an appropriate line of argument to ensure a positive outcome. She/he is aware of negotiating strategies and techniques and has the requisite skills.

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| ABILITIES (cont.) | |
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| Analysing problems and applying solutions | |
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| GENERAL | Jobholder analyses problems accurately, trying to find the source of the problem, taking a methodical and logical approach to her/his work. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder is able to identify viable solutions. |
| AD | Jobholder weighs up the various possible solutions and shows sound reasoning in identifying the most suitable one. Consults management where appropriate. |
| AD | Jobholder ensures that the solution is correctly implemented. |
| AST | Where requested to do so by management, jobholder weighs up the various possible solutions she/he has identified, using sound and appropriate reasoning. |
| AST | Jobholder follows instructions from management and implements solutions, having due regard to the rules and procedures. |

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| Awareness of the working environment | |
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| GENERAL | Jobholder is aware of the internal control standards and systematically applies relevant ones when performing her/his tasks. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder is aware of the rules and practices with regard to ethics and integrity and observes them. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder takes into account the multicultural environment and is tolerant of different cultures and opinions. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder defends the interests of the institution by observing the rules and procedures in force and acts with particular caution when dealing with financial issues. |

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| ABILITIES (cont.) | |
| People management | |
| GENERAL | Jobholder is able to delegate tasks where appropriate and/or requested. In such cases, she/he ensures that the nature, scope and timeframe of delegated functions/powers/tasks are clear to all concerned. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder delegates tasks by adapting the style and scope of delegation to the team member's specific background (e.g. education, experience, personality). She/he assesses skills correctly and makes effective use of staff. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder gives and encourages regular feedback to/from her/his team and reacts positively to constructive criticism. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder is able to motivate and inspire team members and fosters their professional and personal development (including training and mobility prospects). |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder is able to identify and willingly addresses problems of low or underperformance in her/his team by taking the necessary action. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder is able to handle conflicts effectively and in an even-handed way. |

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ASPECTS OF CONDUCT

Teamwork

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| GENERAL | Jobholder contributes to the achievement of shared goals. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder is willing to accept feedback and learn from mistakes she/he has made. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder spontaneously recognises the achievements of other team members. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder maintains constructive relations with colleagues, to help them complete their tasks, trying to be sensitive to their needs and giving advice where needed. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder keeps her/his superiors and colleagues informed about her/his tasks and shares information which might be of general interest to the team/unit/DG. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder stimulates teamwork, in particular, by clearly defining roles and tasks, rewarding joint efforts and creating team spirit. |

Service culture

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| GENERAL | Jobholder ensures that she/he knows the needs of stakeholders and seeks the best solution for their needs. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder checks whether stakeholders are satisfied with the service provided. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder conducts her/himself properly, adapting her/his conduct to suit different persons or situations. She/he is patient, showing due courtesy and respect. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder ensures that whatever she/he does gives a positive and professional image of her/his institution. |

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ASPECTS OF CONDUCT (cont.)

Commitment to the job

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| GENERAL | Jobholder takes responsibility for her/his tasks and approaches them pro-actively. She/he works independently, but, where necessary, does not hesitate to seek advice from colleagues and/or superiors. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder is happy to accept changes in her/his responsibilities and tasks. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder is committed to meeting her/his targets and those of the unit. |

Personal development in the context of work

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| GENERAL | Jobholder agrees to develop — through training or coaching — new knowledge and skills needed to take on new responsibilities or to adapt to changes in working methods. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder takes into account existing best practices and makes use of expertise within her/his DG/Directorate/Unit. Seeks to improve procedures by making constructive suggestions. |
| GENERAL | Jobholder seeks to change and/or improve her/his tasks by making constructive suggestions. |

Leadership

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| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder acts with integrity and respect in her/his dealings with all team members and is sensitive to their cultural and social background. |
| MANAGEMENT | Jobholder is mindful of the need for confidentiality when dealing with sensitive tasks or with personnel matters. |