



*National Guard Bureau  
Office of Technician Personnel*

**Technician Personnel Regulation 430  
Performance Appraisal Program  
“Five Rating Level Evaluation Method”**

**Writing Effective Self Assessments**

**Participant’s Guide**

# Writing Effective Self Assessments

## Overview

- **What is a Self Assessment?**
- **Getting Started**
- **Writing the Self Assessment**
- **Characteristics of Significant Accomplishments**
- **Helpful Hints - Things Not to Do**
- **Helpful Hints - Things to Do**
- **Performance Appraisal Application (PAA) Tool**

## What is a Self Assessment?

- A self assessment is your description of accomplishments related to the critical elements and performance standards identified in your performance plan.
- The self assessment should provide the supervisor with a clear picture of your performance and accomplishments.

## Getting Started

- Review your organizational goals and critical elements
- Review records of your work (emails, memos, project files, productivity records)

## **Establishing a Recording System**

- Create a system for recording accomplishments. This can be hard copy or electronic, depending on what works best for you. Some suggestions include:
  - Files of Work Products
  - Statistical data or other metrics
  - E-mail Folder (Create separate folder for performance related items)
  - Letters, memos, or email correspondence. \*Word Document, updated as needed
  - Notes on Planner or Calendar
  - File Folder(s) to maintain copies of documents
  - Establish a process for reviewing and recording your accomplishments on a regular basis, e.g., once a week. Make a note of significant items, or put a copy into your file. Identify the critical element which is linked to the accomplishment.

## Characteristics of Significant Accomplishments

### **Competing priorities**

- High visibility
- High level of difficulty
- Represent the Org/Unit in inter/intra agency forum(s)
- Require innovation
- Require problem solving skills

### **Org/Unit-wide impact**

- Lead special group/project
- Short deadlines
- Wide scope of coordination
- First time

## Self Assessments Using the STAR Format

The **S.T.A.R.** format is an easy and short way to capture performance activities and accomplishments.



## The STAR Format

- **S**ituation: Describe the conditions under which you achieved your critical elements
- **T**ask: Describe what you did during the year to create the results you achieved.
- **A**ctivity/**A**ction: Include additional activities you completed, or actions you took that contributed to your results
- **R**esult: Describe what you accomplished.

## STAR Examples

For each Critical Element...  
answer the following questions

- **Situation:** What was the situation I faced?
- **Task:** What was my task in that situation?
- **Activity:** What activity/action did I take?
- **Result:** What result(s) did my action(s) produce?

## The Self Assessment Is Optional

### **However, you are your First and Best Advocate!**

- Enter your self assessment for both your interim and annual appraisal into the automated Performance Appraisal Tool.
  - Begin by reviewing your critical elements.
  - Review your record of accomplishments
  - Determine which accomplishments are the most significant in terms of contribution to mission and organizational goals.
  - Be sure that you have at least one accomplishment for each critical element.

**Key Point:** You must have at least one accomplishment for each critical element otherwise it would be difficult to assign any other rating level besides Level 1 (Unacceptable). A Level 1 rating in any critical element will result an overall failure for the entire rating period.

## Writing the Self Assessment

- Draft and save as a “Word” document
- Address each critical element
- Focus on the results; your contributions to the mission and accomplishments
- Be specific, factual, clear, and concise
- Check grammar and spelling
- Use action verbs, active voice

## Helpful Hints - Things Not to Do

- Do not use the task oriented language from your position description
- Do not list accomplishments without referencing the critical element
- Do not use terms or acronyms that others may not know
- Do not assume that your supervisor or reviewing official is familiar with every detail of your job

## **Helpful Hints - Things to Do**

- Be Aware of Limited Space in the Automated Tool
  - Interim Review Self Assessment, limited to 2000 characters
  - Annual Appraisal Self Assessment, limited to 2000 characters

## Performance Appraisal Application Tool

- Electronic support tool accessed by ***My Biz*** and ***My Workplace*** via DCPDS
- Helps employees and managers/supervisors manage performance
- Streamlines processes
- Automates documentation requirements
- DCPDS requires CAC Card to access
- User guide available with sections for the employee and the rating official

## Performance Appraisal Application Tool

### **MyBiz** (Employee's Access):

- Initiate or participate in developing your performance plan.
- View and edit information related to your plan.
- Enter critical elements, self-assessments, and other information related to your performance plan and annual appraisal.
- Route information to your rating official.
- Acknowledge that performance-related results have been communicated to you.

### **Note:**

1. Critical elements and performance standards are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, in the Job Objectives block. Limited to 1000 characters.
2. Employee's Self Assessments are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, Employee Self Assessment block. Limited to 2000 characters.



## Performance Appraisal Application Tool

### ***MyWorkplace*** (Rating Official's access):

- Initiate and edit information related to your employee's performance plans.
- Enter critical elements, assessments, and other information related your employee's performance plan and appraisal.
- Route plan and appraisal information to your employees.
- Submit final ratings.
- Edit ratings.
- Change rating official assignments.

#### **Note:**

1. Critical elements and performance standards are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, in the Job Objectives block. Limited to 1000 characters.
2. Rater's Official Assessments are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, Rating Official's block. Limited to 2000 characters.

**Questions**



**Go to Page 28  
Participant's Guide  
for Table Top Exercise**

At this point the slide presentation ends.

## Table of Contents

### Writing Effective Self Assessments Table Top Exercise Guide

Introduction .....	19
Purpose of the Self Assessment .....	19
Getting Started .....	20
Establishing a Recording System.....	21
What to Keep? .....	21
What are Significant Accomplishments? .....	22
Writing Your Self Assessment.....	23
Sample Self Assessment .....	24
Summary .....	25
Attachment – Sample Action Verbs.....	26
Table Top Exercise - Writing Effective Self Assessments Using STAR Format.....	28

## Writing Effective Self Assessments

**Introduction** The Performance Management program establishes a link between the organization's mission and goals and the individual employee's contribution to mission and goal accomplishment.

As part of the performance appraisal process, you have an opportunity to prepare self assessments of your performance and achievements during the rating period. Your self assessment is considered by your rating official in evaluating your performance and is taken into consideration for other personnel actions.

Every employee has the opportunity to describe how his or her performance met their critical elements and performance standards, and what results or accomplishments contributed to the achievement of the organization's mission and goals.

Many employees have expressed concern about how to identify significant accomplishments and write self assessments which accurately reflect the employee's contribution. The purpose of this guide is to provide suggestions for identifying significant accomplishments, recording those accomplishments and writing self assessments which accurately reflect your performance and achievements and their impact on organizational mission and goals.

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**Purpose** The Employee Self Assessment is part of the Performance Appraisal process. The self assessment is your opportunity to emphasize your performance and accomplishments which contributed to the overall success of your organization's mission and goals.

Though self assessments are optional or voluntary, you are encouraged to submit a self assessment at the interim performance review (usually at the midpoint of the rating cycle) and at the end of the rating cycle as part of your annual performance appraisal. You are your best and first advocate!

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**Purpose  
Continued**

Your self assessment does not relieve your supervisor of the responsibility for writing an assessment of your contributions during the interim review and end of the annual appraisal cycle. Your self assessment serves to remind your supervisor of your significant accomplishments, and can provide an opportunity for further discussion between you and your supervisor about your performance.

You will not be rated based on your writing skills. However, it is important that your self assessment reflect the substance of what you accomplished during the rating period. This guide will help you:

1. Identify accomplishments which contributed to the achievement of your organization's mission and goals;
2. Record those accomplishments in a systematic manner; and
3. Write an assessment of your performance accomplishments which accurately reflects your contribution to the organization during the rating period.

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**Getting  
Started**

Before you begin to record your performance accomplishments, you must have a clear understanding of what your supervisor expects of you. The performance plan includes not only your written critical elements and performance standards, but also other regulations, policies, procedures, guidelines, processes that you are expected to follow in performing your assignments. Be sure that you understand your critical elements and performance standards. Ask questions if you do not.

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### **Establishing a Recording System**

Create a system for recording accomplishments. This can be hard copy or electronic, depending on what works best for you. Some suggestions include:

- E-mail Folder (create a separate folder for performance related items)
- Word Document, updated as needed
- Notes on Planner or Calendar
- File Folder(s) to maintain copies of documents

Establish a process for reviewing and recording your accomplishments on a regular basis, e.g., once a week. Make a note of significant items or put a copy into your file. Identify the critical element which is linked to the accomplishment.

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### **What to Keep**

It is not necessary to keep a running log of day to day work. When you do something that is different, difficult or demanding in some way, that type of accomplishment should be recorded. Make a note of any special challenges or difficulties you encountered and how you handled them.

Maintain a **file of work products** which meet the characteristics described above. These could be copies of reports, studies, advisories, operating procedures, training materials or other documents you developed.

Maintain a log of **statistical data or other metrics** which apply to your work. There may be an automated system for tracking productivity data for your organization, but you should also be aware of your personal productivity level and how you work compares with the standard.

Maintain copies of **letters, memos or email correspondence** which express thanks or praise for a service or product you provided. Correspondence which documents your role in resolving a complex or controversial issue should be maintained. Keep copies of appointments to special projects or teams.

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**What are  
Significant  
Accomplish-  
ments?**

The following are characteristics of significant assignments:

- **Competing priorities**
- High visibility
- High level of difficulty
- Represent the Org/Unit in inter/intra agency forum(s)
- Require innovation
- Require problem solving skills
  
- **Org/Unit-wide impact**
- Lead special group/project
- Short deadlines
- Wide scope of coordination
- First time

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**Writing Your  
Self  
Assessment**

You will enter your self assessment for both your interim and annual appraisal into the automated Performance Appraisal Application Tool (PAA) via My Biz. You have a limited amount of space in which to enter your self assessment so it is important to focus on your most significant accomplishments for each of your critical elements.

- Begin by reviewing your critical elements and performance standards.
- Review your record of accomplishments and determine which are the most significant in terms of contribution to mission and organizational goals.
- Be sure that you have at least one accomplishment for each critical element. It is also possible that a single accomplishment may apply to more than one critical element.
- Use action verbs to describe what you did.
- Describe the results of your accomplishment.
- Describe the impact on mission or organizational goals.
- Note challenges you faced and how you met them.
- Be concise and specific—you are highlighting the significant contributions you made, not reporting on your daily work activities.

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**Example:**

- **Instead of stating:** I made six site visits during the rating period.
- **State:** I made six site visits which resulted in better communications between our office and the field on the Keystone Project.

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**Example:** I developed a new review procedure which was adopted by our division and has reduced the amount of time required to process contracts. **Key Point:** Describe what you did—not what was done by the entire team. Focus on results and impact on mission.

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**Sample Self  
Assessment**

**1. Begin by reviewing your SMART Critical Element.**

**Critical Element. #1 Special Projects**– Action Officer for the Annual Regional Director's Conference, scheduled 15 August 2009. Responsible for planning and organizing the annual Regional Director's conference for 100 executives. Responsible for independently researching and coordinating with internal and external agencies to procure lodging, conference facilities, IT audio/media support, an administrative team, and transportation; ensuring requirements do not exceed planned 15K budget. Develops a conference planner to bimonthly (Oct – Mar 09); biweekly (May – Jul 09); daily 1-14 Aug 09, update supervisor of progress. Report or refer complex situations or problems to supervisor within 2 days of incident, and daily email updates until resolved. Prepares and submits a written project after-action report within 5 workdays after the end of conference, and contract close-outs.

**2. Write your Self Assessment.**

**Critical Element. #1 Special Projects** – Action Officer for Annual Regional Director's Conference. I led the team which planned the annual regional directors' conference. I negotiated with the hotel for a reduced room rate and free meeting room. I drafted the meeting agenda which was approved by the Director. I arranged for guest speakers and assigned sponsors for each of them. I reviewed all materials prior to printing to ensure accuracy and proper format and arranged for reproduction despite reduced funding and a shortened deadline. I was publicly recognized during the conference and by a personal note from the Deputy Director for the outstanding administrative and logistical support provided by my team which contributed to the overall success of annual regional director's conference.

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## Summary

- The employee self assessment is a critical part of the Performance Appraisal System.
  - It provides an opportunity for you to highlight your significant accomplishments in terms of your critical elements and performance standards.
  - The self assessment should focus on results, i.e., impact on organizational mission and goals.
  - The substance of your self assessment is more important than your writing style.
  - Your self assessment is reviewed by your rating official and is considered by your supervisor in preparing your annual assessment.
  - The self assessment also provides an opportunity for communication between you and your rating official on your performance, on his or her performance expectations and on recommendations for improving your self assessment for the next rating period.
  - If you have questions about writing your self assessment, contact your supervisor.
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## Attachment - SAMPLE ACTION VERBS

Self Assessments should always begin with an action. Most of the time, this action takes the form of a strong action verb. Below you'll find a short list of action verbs that can be used when writing your self assessment.

Accomplished	Compared	Ensured	Produced
Achieved	Compelled	Escalated	Projected
Acquired	Competed	Established	Promoted
Acted	Compiled	Exceeded	Prompted
Activated	Completed	Excelled	Propagated
Actuated	Composed	Expanded	Propelled
Adapts	Comprehend	Expedited	Quantified
Adhered	Computed	Exploited	Rallied
Adjusted	Conceived	Explored	Recognized
Administered	Concentrated	Fabricated	Rectified
Advised	Conducted	Facilitated	Refined
Agitated	Conformed	Focused	Reformed
Analyzed	Confronted	Forced	Regenerated
Anticipated	Considered	Formulated	Rehabilitated
Applied	Consolidated	Generated	Rejuvenated
Appraised	Consulted	Grasped	Renewed
Approved	Contacted	Helped	Renovated
Aroused	Continued	Honed	Reorganized
Arranged	Contract	Identified	Required
Articulated	Contributed	Ignited	Resolved
Assembled	Controlled	Impassioned	Revived
Asserted	Cooperate	Implemented	Sacrificed
Assessed	Coordinated	Improved	Scrutinized
Assigned	Created	Initiated	Sought
Assisted	Cultivated	Inspired	Solved
Assured	Delegated	Insured	Sparked
Attained	Demonstrated	Incorporated	Spearheaded
Attend	Deterred	Kindled	Stimulated
Authorized	Developed	Launched	Strengthened
Averted	Devised	Maintained	Strove
Bolstered	Displayed	Manipulated	Supervised
Brought	Dominated	Motivated	Supported
Build	Drove	Organized	Surpassed
Calculated	Elicited	Originated	Sustained
Capitalized	Embodied	Overcame	Transformed
Catalyzed	Emerged	Oversaw	Utilize
Chaired	Emulated	Performed	
Challenged	Encouraged	Perpetuated	
Clarified	Endeavored	Persevered	
Collaborate	Energized	Persuaded	
Collected	Enforced	Planned	
Commanded	Enhanced	Practiced	
Communicated	Enriched	Prepared	

In some cases, action verbs alone just cannot fully stress the strength or depth of someone's accomplishments. If you need to give action verbs an added boost, use an adverb to modify the verb. Most adverbs are real easy to pick out ... they end with the last two letters "ly."

Actively	Creatively	Forcefully	Quickly
Aggressively	Decisively	Frantically	Relentlessly
Anxiously	Eagerly	Impulsively	Restlessly
Ardently	Energetically	Incisively	Spiritedly
Articulatey	Enterprisingly	Innovatively	Spontaneously
Assertively	Enthusiastically	Intensely	Swiftly
Avidly	Expeditiously	Powerfully	Tenaciously
Boldly	Exuberantly	Promptly	Vigorously
Competitively	Feverishly	Prosperously	Vigilant
Compulsively	Fiercely	Provocatively	

## Writing Self Assessment Worksheet

Based on one critical element, write a self assessment using the STAR format.

**SITUATION:** Describe the conditions under which you achieved your critical element.

**TASK:** Describe what you did during the year to create the results you achieved.

**ACTION/ACTIVITY:** Include actions/additional activities you completed that contributed to your results.

**RESULT:** Describe what you accomplished during this rating period to meet the stated goals and objectives of the critical element.

Record final self assessment narrative below: