



Vademecum

Assessment and promotion process

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The principles of this process are set out in the Staff Regulations. The annual assessment is both a right and an obligation.

Phase I: Self-assessment

At the beginning of January, each assessee receives an automatic SysPer2 notification of the start of the assessment procedure. From that time, you have a period of 8 working days to complete your self-assessment. This deadline may be extended to take account of justified absences (leave, sickness, missions) during this period.

You must have:

- a) Your job description; if this does not correspond to the duties you perform, you must describe the differences between the tasks carried out and the tasks set out in the Job Description.
- b) The personal objectives set for you the previous year, including any that may have been set for you during the course of the year, outside of the assessment procedure.

To prepare your self-assessment, you must be concise, precise and factual. Do not make your description too long. Half an A4 page for each heading to be completed in SYSPER will generally suffice. Avoid all controversy. Do not give an account of your life or your health situation. Do not make judgements about your colleagues or your superiors.

This file should ideally be brief, but must allow for an understanding of your role and performance. It must be complete; pay close attention when writing it, as this document will follow you throughout your career.

How to find help?

Do you have any problems or difficulties? U4U can help you with personalised advice.

On our website u4unity.eu, *Members/Personal support* page you will find our services and contact details.

Begin with a summary:

I have achieved all of my objectives.

I have exceeded some of my objectives (you must then provide details of this claim)

If you think it necessary, you can list the objectives that you may not have achieved, but you are strongly advised not to assess yourself in a negative way. If you have not achieved an objective, explain the reasons in a factual and convincing manner.

Next, take each objective and explain the situation:

- Objective achieved: describe the result achieved in one sentence;
- Objective yet to be achieved: describe the ongoing process and state the probable completion date; explain the delay if necessary and briefly set out the reasons for this situation;
- Objective exceeded: describe the result achieved;
- Objective not achieved: say why, describe the obstacles, the changes of priority and, if appropriate, the decision by management to abandon this objective.

Now complete the seven SYSPER II fields (which correspond to the regulatory criteria for your evaluation):

1. Performance; Describe your objectives and the results expected. Use precise words for verifiable facts. Please describe possible obstacles encountered (staff cuts, replacement of a colleague, addition of new tasks, reorganisation, etc.)
2. Competence. Be clear in the section concerning training;
3. Conduct. Refer to the way in which you work as part of a team, your proactiveness and what you bring to the working collective.
4. Languages. If you lack proficiency in a third language (level 6 or B2), mention the level reached and request language training to become eligible for promotion¹ ; You should also state the working languages and not only your competences in this area;
5. Responsibilities. Note the new responsibilities you have been given during the year. These responsibilities may be managerial, related to the management of a team or to the management of important files.
6. Training. Describe the training you have been given during the year, including by coaching, and state what further training you would like for the following year;

¹ Article 45.2 of the Staff Regulations: *'Officials shall be required to demonstrate the ability to work in a third language before their first promotion after recruitment ...'*

7. General Comments. If appropriate, state your mobility preferences. You can also state your desired career development in terms of the level of responsibility and for possible promotion.

If you would like to submit an application for the certification exercise from grade AST5 during the whole reference period or part of it, tick the appropriate box and describe the AD tasks that you already perform. Do not forget to state your responsibilities!

Do not forget to mention any "Work in the interests of the institution" (joint committees, juries, proofreading, etc.) that you may have done. This concerns colleagues appointed by the administration or the Staff Committee.

Phase II: The Dialogue

Your assessor, usually your Head of Unit, will invite you to a formal dialogue. Under no circumstances should you refuse to attend. If necessary, you can change the date of the dialogue in case of problems related to your work or health.

If you report to an intermediate supervisor (Head of Sector, etc.), the assessor may request his/her presence at the dialogue, with your agreement. On the other hand, you may not be accompanied during this dialogue unless you have the express agreement of your assessor.

For Units with more than 20 people, the Head of Unit may delegate the assessor role to an official of AD grade in the unit, with the agreement of the Director-General. In the case of large units, the Heads of Unit may also delegate the preparatory work for the assessment (organising the dialogue and the report) to an official from the same unit (irrespective of grade). The Head of Unit remains the official reporting officer and signs the assessment report. Generally the Director remains the appeal assessor.

The subject of the dialogue is an open assessment of the performance of the assessee over the previous year. Ideally, this dialogue is an opportunity to make a constructive point about the past and the future, referring to the performance, competence and conduct of the assessee's service.

SMART Criteria

Specific: action and expected results must be clearly described and defined.

Measurable: The results must be measurable, and the statistical indicators must be indisputable and recognised as such by the assessee.

Accessible: The objective must be reasonably achievable, it must be feasible and depend only on the motivation of the employee, or be adjusted if the context changes.

Realistic: It must be directly related to the activity of the official, who must be able to achieve it without having to rely on extraneous factors.

Time-bound: It must be time limited, with a finish date and possibly interim points

During this dialogue, pay careful attention to the following points:

- Your training needs. This is an opportunity to state your needs, plan them and ask your assessor for possible guidance;

- Objectives for the following year. Ideally, these objectives must be SMART. This is not always possible. You must then ensure that this fact is acknowledged. Feel free to challenge unrealistic objectives, or those that depend on external conditions (for example, the position of Member States) over which you have no control.
- Your career prospects (promotion, mobility). Try to find out if your career will proceed normally or rapidly in line with your performance; discuss your promotion prospects while keeping in mind that this will not be decided during this interview.

The dialogue must take place in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. If you find your assessor “difficult”, you must under all circumstances remain calm, polite and well-mannered.

- If your assessor informs you that your performance is not satisfactory, discuss the problems encountered and the possible solutions. Take this discussion very seriously, and be constructive, i.e. by genuinely trying to identify how you can improve the situation. If necessary, take this opportunity to set a date for an interim appraisal meeting during the coming year to discuss the progress made.
- If your assessor informs you that your performance will be marked "unsatisfactory", this must trigger a red alert ! Take this warning very seriously, discuss the problems encountered and possible solutions, including an early transfer. In this case, you must immediately contact us to report the situation and see what can be done. An unsatisfactory performance must be based on factual elements and confirmed by a countersigning officer. The countersigning officer is usually the Director. The applicable measures in case of underperformance² are explained in article 51.2 of the Staff Regulations (the new General Implementation Provisions are still being negotiated with the administration).

The assessment report will be drawn up by the assessor within ten working days of the dialogue. It must reflect a genuinely personalised assessment of the performance, competence and conduct of the assessee. The level of responsibilities must also be evaluated and confirmed.

Your assessment report will be sent to you in Sysper2, at which point you have five working days to do one of the following:

- 1) Accept the report;
- 2) Add your comments in the appropriate part of the report (stick to the facts and avoid any emotional reaction);
- 3) Reject the report and submit an appeal to the appeal assessor, explaining the reasons for your disagreement. Please note: it will not be possible to introduce new factors that were not included during the self-assessment or dialogue phases.

This deadline may be extended to take account of justified absences (leave, sickness, missions) during this period.

Don't face a problem alone! Contact U4U for help and advice: REP-PERS-OSP-U4U@ec.europa.eu

Or get in touch with one of the [Contact persons](#) (the Contact page of our website)

²See a tutorial on this procedure: http://u4unity.eu/document3/U4U_FORM_insuffisance.pdf

Special measures for the performance of Managers

For post holders occupying a function with the job category of "head of unit or equivalent", the annual report must include a conclusion stating whether or not the managerial performance of the post holder has been satisfactory. This reference appears in SYSPER in the 'General comments / Dialogue' section. The conclusion will also be shown for heads of unit on detachment. If no managerial function has been exercised during the reference period, the assessors must select the "N/A" option with regard to managerial performance.

Managerial performance should be assessed in relation to the objectives/tasks of the post holder and the competences mentioned in the annex of the decision on middle management. An unsatisfactory conclusion on the managerial performance of a post holder should also be based on factual elements that must be reflected in other sections of the assessment report.

An unsatisfactory managerial performance assessment is mainly intended to draw the post holder's attention to certain difficulties and to establish the appropriate support to remedy the situation.

If the managerial performance of middle management staff was deemed to be unsatisfactory in the last annual report, a procedure for reassignment to a non-managerial post may be initiated by the Director General concerned. Such a procedure must be initiated if the managerial performance was deemed unsatisfactory in two of the last three annual reports. For further information about the procedure, please see article 14, paragraph 1, point b) of decision C(2016)3288 concerning middle management staff.

Please note that the assessment of managerial performance is in addition to the overall performance assessment. The two aspects do not necessarily have to be linked; in other words, an unsatisfactory managerial performance does not automatically lead to a similar conclusion for the overall performance.

Phase III: The appeal dialogue

- If you reject your assessment report, the appeal assessor (usually the Director) will invite you to a second dialogue within ten working days of receiving your appeal.

You can be accompanied by a colleague or a member of U4U. You can contact us: REP-PERS-OSP-U4U@ec.europa.eu. Your appeal assessor may also invite another member of staff, other than your first assessor.

The appeal dialogue is limited to those elements already featuring in your self-assessment or referred to during the first dialogue or in your appeal application. It cannot be related to promotion.

The appeal assessor will enter his decision into Sysper2 (modification or confirmation of the first report) within 20 working days of the appeal. The comments of those present during the second dialogue will be included.

- If you reject your report with a conclusion of unsatisfactory performance, the appeal assessor (usually the Director General) will invite you to a second dialogue and will decide whether the report should be amended. The appeal assessor will consult the DG HR before making a decision. This procedure will be the subject of a General Implementation Provision. Your line manager must offer you remedial options.

Your report will then be closed, thus ending the annual assessment process.

In the case of disagreement, you still have the option of submitting a claim³ under the terms of article 90(2) and making an appeal to the European Civil Service Tribunal.

³ Tutorial on this procedure: http://u4unity.eu/document2/U4U_FORM_art90.pdf

Phase IV - Promotions

The promotion process follows the assessment process, although a good assessment does not guarantee promotion, which must take account of the comparison of merits of the promotable officials within the same grade of the same Directorate-General, and within the limits of the available budget (in other words, the number of possible promotions per grade, allocated by DG HR to the Directorate-General).

The Commission must approach the budgetary authority for the resources (number of promotions) as stipulated in annex 1B of the Staff Regulations. It does not always obtain the number of promotions that corresponds to the percentages referred to there, as the budgetary authority sees them as a maximum and usually awards less. U4U does not agree with this minimalist approach⁴.

Next, the DG HR distributes the promotion options to the Directorates-General and services on the basis of the number of officials eligible for promotion for each grade on a pro rata basis.

In addition to these percentages, the Commission also has to comply with certain collective rules:

- The average seniority per grade (the average period spent in a given grade) is shown in annex IB of the Staff Regulations⁵, in the form of promotion rates expressed in percentages over a five-year period:

Grade	Assistants	Administrators
13	—	15%
12	—	15%
11	—	25%
10	20%	25%
9	8%	25%
8	25%	33%
7	25%	36%
6	25%	36%
5	25%	36%
4	33%	—
3	33%	—
2	33%	—
1	33%	—

Grade	Secretaries / Clerks
SC 6	—
SC 5	12%
SC 4	15%
SC 3	17%
SC 2	20%
SC 1	25%

The rate for the AST4/D grade is 10%.

⁴ 2 See in particular the first article of Circular no. 37: <http://u4unity.eu/dochtm/circulaire37.htm>

⁵ 33% means an average waiting time of 3 years; 25% an average waiting time of 4 years; 20% an average waiting time of 5 years and 15% an average waiting time of 7 years

- The collective guarantees known as 'Kallas' or now 'Sefcovic' guarantee that a minimum percentage of officials in one grade will be promoted at the average seniority for the majority of grades. This means that in the early stages of their careers (AST 1 to 4 and AD 5 to 8) **85% of staff must be promoted within 3 years**. In the middle stages of their careers (AST 5 to 9 and AD 9 to 12) **75% of staff must be promoted within 4 years**.
- Beyond that, i.e. in the case of grades AST 9 to AST 10 (8% promotion rate), there is an appointment process reserved for *seniors assistants*. The normal promotion system then covers AST 10 to AST 11 (20% promotion rate). There are no collective guarantees for these latter grades.
- For end-of-career AD staff who are not managers, movement from AD 12 to 13 is achieved by an appointment process limited by a rate of no more than 15%⁶ in accordance with Annex IB. For AD 13 to 14 who are heads of unit or senior experts or advisors, the promotion rate is a maximum of 15%. These promotions only concern heads of unit and advisors and equivalent (small percentage of AD 12 and 13 – approximately 5% – called *equivalents*). These latter officials acquire this "qualification" by appointment and can then be promoted (although there is no guarantee that this will be the case). These promotions to high grades are not covered by the "collective guarantees".
- The other AD 12 and AD 13 officials "not heads of unit, advisor or equivalent" are excluded from the promotion system.

The so-called *Sefcovic* collective guarantees are important for the smooth functioning of the exercise. These guarantees are often little known or poorly understood by staff

Of course, these collective guarantees (see also *intracomm*) are statistically applicable to everyone working within each grade. A particular individual may be promoted at the average rate specified by these guarantees, but he may also experience a fast-track career or even, if his performance is poor, a slow or very slow career.

Phase V: Appeal against non-inclusion in the list of proposals for promotion

After the end of the assessment procedure, the Heads of Unit discuss with their Director those persons they believe to be deserving of promotion. The Directors will then discuss their proposals with the Director-General, who usually acts as an arbitrator between the proposals of the Directors, taking account of the promotion quotas allocated to the DG.

Each DG receives a promotion quota for each grade. (For example 5 promotions for AST 4, 8 promotions for AST 5, 5 promotions for AD 5, etc.). The Director-General can use "cascades". This means, for example, that he can decide not to promote an AD12, even though he has the necessary quota; instead he can use (or "cascade") this promotion to a lower grade (e.g. AD5). Each DG can use this option 6 times for ADs and 6 times for ASTs, depending on the size of the DG. The cascades always go from the higher grades to the lower grades. They are essentially intended to speed up the

⁶ In practice, these rates are much lower and, depending on the year, are around 5%, and more rarely 10%.

promotions of deserving colleagues in the early or middle stages of their career, or to compensate for a shortfall in the quota for a grade or even to compensate for a shortfall in certain DGs.

Meetings of the Directors-General with the Staff Committee.

Each Director-General then organises a meeting with representatives of the Staff Committee to discuss the proposals of the Directorate-General on a grade-by-grade basis. These meetings usually take place in May or June. During these meetings, the staff representatives raise objections if a promotion does not appear to be justified or if a promotion that seems to be deserved is not suggested. They may also propose solutions. The Directors-General may modify their proposals after such meetings, although they are not obliged to do so. The Human Resources unit for each DG then draws up the definitive list of the proposals and sends it to DG HR for verification.

U4U will assist you during this phase if you feel you have been overlooked.

Don't face a problem alone! Contact U4U for help and advice: REP-PERS-OSP-U4U@ec.europa.eu

Or get in touch with one of the [Contact persons](#) (the Contact page of our website)

Publication of the proposals by the Directorate General:

The proposals of the Directors-General are usually published in June of each year in Sysper2. You then have five days to file an appeal in SYSPER2 if you are not proposed by your Directorate-General.

You must then justify your appeal, explaining why, in your opinion, your seniority in the grade, your merits described in your assessment report, and the responsibilities actually exercised merit a promotion. Your appeal must be short and factual. You are advised not to write more than one A4 page. U4U will also help you in this phase. Contact us if necessary.

How to write your appeal

An appeal must be short and highlight the positive elements of your past evaluations. Do not hesitate to use quotes.

- Do not react emotionally, as you must prepare your call correctly and calmly.
- Start by indicating your situation in relation to the promotion. Your seniority in your grade, your department, your job and if you have made a mobility during this exercise.
- You must indicate in an introductory sentence that you have not been proposed for promotion by your DG and that you want to appeal. Do not say that it is unfair, do not give your opinion on the procedure, it is useless: the Appeal Committees are not interested in criticising the system.
- Summarize in a few lines your work and responsibilities during this period. You should go back to the evaluations of the previous 3 or 4 years, depending on your seniority in the current grade. Also check your average seniority as defined in the

Statute (e.g. AST4 to AST5, 3 years, AST/SC 1 to AST/SC2, 4 years, AD8 to AD9, 3 years,...). This is always useful to see where you stand.

- You should make references to your evaluator's positive comments for each part (performance,...) such as:

"In 2020, my evaluator indicated that my performance was excellent, that I was well organized and competent, flexible and proactive,..."

Do not indicate points that may seem average or even negative to you. The Committee will do its analysis.

- Do not forget the languages and especially make reference to the languages used at work.

- The section concerning your responsibilities can be decisive, especially in certain grades or for seniority below the average defined in the Statute. Therefore, also refer to the comments of your evaluator in this section.

- You can also indicate your professional background in a few lines (e.g.: former certified AST, Contract Agent or Temporary Agent,...).

- Also indicate if you have done any work in the interest of the service (e.g., grading competitions, membership in recognized work groups, committees, schools, networks, etc.).

- In conclusion, simply ask the Committee to check your file in order to put you on the list of those promoted for this exercise.

- Feel free to have someone else review your file.

- Try to talk to your union about your file for advice or further guidance. Colleagues may also need additional information to advocate for you on these committees.

- Good work and above all, stay cooperative.

It's no use, don't do this:

- Comparing yourself to your colleagues will be seen as very negative.

- Evaluate your boss or your department.

- Talk about the system that is not working well.

- Make references to Tribunal decisions, at least at this stage, because this is not a Art. 90.2. and therefore a pre-litigation claim but an appeal.

The appeals are then examined (normally in September) by working groups that prepare the meeting of the Joint Promotion Committees.

In October, the appeal will be submitted to a Joint Promotion Committee (composed of DG HR, your own DG, and staff representatives). The Committee can either reject or allow the appeal.

It should be noted that, in responding to appeals, the Promotion Committee only has a quota of 5% of all promotions for the current year, which amounts to a maximum of approximately 250 promotions.

Once the Promotion Committee has recommended a list to the Appointing Authority, by adding names to the proposals of the Directors-General, the Appointing Authority (AIPN) – in this case, the Director-General of the DG HR – makes a new check and usually adopts the final list.

The promotions take effect on 1st January of the current year. They become effective on payslips in December of the current year with retroactive effect.

Art. 90 (2) complaint against non-proposal for promotion

If you are not on the list adopted by the AIPN, you have further avenues of appeal.

If you are not promoted, it is possible to lodge a complaint under the terms of article 90 para. 2 of the Staff Regulations. It is possible to submit this complaint once the final promotion lists have been published. This complaint must be lodged within 3 months of the publication of the promotion lists.⁷ It is recommended that you first complete the appeal process referred to in the previous paragraph (via SYSPER2), although this does not change the 3-month deadline for submitting your complaint.

An art. 90 (2) complaint will only have a chance of success in certain cases. Before beginning this process, consult U4U or a lawyer. If you are a member of U4U, you are entitled to a free consultation.

Complaint before the Tribunal

If the art. 90 (2) complaint fails, you still have the option of applying to the European Civil Service Tribunal (CST). Before taking this step, it is of course necessary to have your case appraised by our lawyers as, in order to have a chance of success before this Tribunal (whose procedures are complex, lengthy and expensive), you need to be certain of presenting particularly strong arguments. The case law is accessible via the CURIA app.

In addition, the pleas put forward in an appeal must already have been referred to in the wording of the Article 90 (2) complaint. Therefore, if you intend to go as far as the Tribunal, you should prepare your Article 90 (2) complaint very carefully. In practice, this requires **the involvement of a lawyer**

⁷ See http://u4unity.eu/document2/U4U_FORM_art90.pdf

Timetable guide

NB: the exact dates for the year in progress can be found on *MyIntracomm*

Evaluation exercise

Date	Step	Comments
From early January	Start of self-assessments	SYSPER is open for self-assessments.
From mid-January	Dialogues	Provided the self-assessment is completed and the assessor is available for the dialogue, the dialogue can take place from the second week of January.
	Deadline for signing self-assessments	All post holders should have at least 8 working days to complete their self-assessments, not including days when they have no access to SYSPER, for example because of leave, illness or missions.
	Deadline for holding dialogues	Another date can be set by the DG, provided the final deadline for reports is not compromised.
February	Deadline for signing the report	Within 10 working days of the dialogue
	Sending reports to post holders	The reports are sent to the post holders as soon as they have been completed.
End of February	Deadline for comments and appeals	Post holders have 5 working days, not including days when they have no access to SYSPER, from the date the report was sent to make their comments or submit their appeals (with the option of requesting a dialogue).
March	Deadline for decisions on appeals	The amendment or confirmation of the report by the appeal assessor, after a dialogue if requested, must take place within 20 working days of the appeal.

Promotion exercise

Date	Step
January-February	DG HR informs the DGs of the available slots per Grade
April - May	DGs prepare proposals
May - beginning of June	Meetings of the Staff Committee with the DGs
mid-June	Promotion proposals communicated to individuals within SysPer2
Appeals against non-proposal for promotion (5 working days)	Lodging an appeal in SysPer2 within 5 working days. The deadline is extended in case of justified absence.
September	The Working Groups of the Staff Committee examine the appeals for non-promotion and prepare the next Promotion Committees.
mid-October	The AD and AST Promotion Committees meet in plenary session to discuss promotion proposals.
end Oct to early November	Decision and publication of final promotions list.

February 2018