

Appraisal Reports

Lessons Learnt from last year

Our advice for the 2021 exercise



The 2021 Appraisals and Promotions exercise has just started with the “Auto-Evaluation” phase.

Your self-appraisal is an important part of the appraisal report, and your appeal comments are an essential element of the appeal process, even if the management tends to treat these as being in some way less reliable because they are written by you, and takes more notice of the Reporting Officer's comments.

At this early stage, it is essential that your objectives are made explicit and properly updated.

The Federation staff representation will as always take a full part in the whole process and have put together some advice to help you increase your chances of success this year.

The appraisal reports are the most important source of information when staff representatives meet management to discuss promotion proposals. They are used when the DGs discuss their draft proposals with the staff representatives before the revised promotion lists are published in June, and also at the appeal stage where the AD and AST Joint Committees of staff representatives and management meet to examine appeals.

The staff representatives in general do not know the staff personally and the whole process is confidential.

So the written appraisal reports and the appeal comments are all that they use to form an opinion on candidates for a promotion.

It is therefore very important that the appraisal reports are a true and accurate reflection of the merits of each candidate in terms of the three main criteria: your performance over their time in the grade, level of responsibility, and the use of languages.

Unfortunately, Reporting Officers are very far from consistent in how they write appraisals. Some Reporting Officers write factual appraisals for all of their staff, while others, possibly to keep good relations with all of their staff, fill the appraisals with terms such as 'very good', 'excellent', 'key member', 'pillar', 'outstanding' and 'many thanks' and 'should be promoted'.

Note that the DG HR guidelines [\[1\]](#) to ROs actually advise that value judgments such as 'very good', 'excellent' should not be written in appraisals.

This lack of harmonisation makes it very difficult to arrive at a fair evaluation of candidates for promotion.

Another common problem is that a significant number of Reporting Officers lazily copy-paste appraisals from one year to the next and make only a few minor changes.

But no one does the same work or performs at the same level each year, so these reports give a false impression that their work has not changed and the staff member has not progressed.

The staff representatives have continually pointed out these problems to DG HR and to the DGs and some DGs now do much better than others. But if you are in the 'wrong' DG you are put at a disadvantage, no matter how good you are.

Here therefore is some advice on how to check your appraisal reports and how to write your appeal texts:

DO's

Your appeal text actually is given less weight than the Reporting Officer's appraisal comments, and it is therefore more effective to write a short bullet point list to guide the staff representatives as to what to look at in your

appraisal reports and how to interpret any negative comments that there may be in your appraisals.

Remember that the decision is based on all of your appraisal reports, not just the latest one, so look carefully at all reports in your time in the grade.

This is easier said than done, but try to avoid there being any negative comments from your Reporting Officer in any of your appraisal reports. The reason is that in order to justify a non-promotion, the management side tends to look for any negative comments at all in any of the years you have been in the grade, and then emphasises even a single negative comment as being enough to disbar you from promotion.

Note also that even a mention that you have 'improved' is often taken as being negative rather than a positive as the management uses such comments to say that your performance was or is lower than expected.

DON'Ts

Don't accept an appraisal which is largely a copy-paste year after year. Your Reporting Officer should write a new appraisal each year.

Try not to raise questions about discrimination because of your age, gender, ethnicity and so on in your appeal as there are other more appropriate channels which should be used for such complaints.

In addition, no reference to your medical situation should appear in your report.

Don't criticise the Reporting Officer or Appeal Assessor or colleagues in your self-appraisal and appeal texts. No matter how justified what you write may be, such comments are usually viewed negatively and can be used against you by the management side, so it is better just to state the facts and stay objective.

And finally, the **FEDERATION** is here, as always, to help you through the appraisal and promotion exercise this year!

<https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/staff/Documents/talent-management/appraisal-promotion/reporting-officers/ROC-dialogue-and-fair-report-EN.docx>