



Writing Effective Initial Summary Ratings

Initial Summary Rating (ISR)

At the end of the performance cycle, the rating official must prepare an ISR in ePerformance for each SES member who has completed at least 90 days on an established performance plan. Rating officials must take into account the SES member's accomplishments achieved during the performance cycle and the impact to the organization's performance. Rating officials must appraise executives realistically and fairly and avoid ratings inflation.

Additionally, the rating official should consider the impact of documented disciplinary issues when assessing performance against the appropriate performance requirements. If the disciplinary issue affected performance, the Critical Element(s) should reflect an appropriate rating (e.g., Leading People).

The rating official must take into account the Executive Accomplishment Narrative and any interim ratings related to a detail, reassignment or transfer when preparing the ISR at the end of the performance appraisal period.

Writing an Effective ISR (max 8000 characters including spaces)

Before writing:

- Read definitions of rating levels and critical element targets carefully
- Review Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year Goals
- Read the Executive Accomplishment Narrative

While writing:

- Address critical elements individually and in the order they appear on the plan
 - State "did not meet", "met", "exceeded", "outstanding" for each critical element
- Expand on accomplishments – do not cut and paste the executive's narrative
- Quantify and qualify results and describe challenges which impacted the result
- Provide additional examples other than what the executive provided to support the rating
- Talk about impact and provide context - answer the questions "So what?" and "Why should they care?"
- Address any performance requirements unable to be met and reasons why
- Limit the use of jargon and technical terms; avoid flowery language

Performance Ratings

- The objectives stated in the performance plan set the standard for a Fully Successful rating; if the executive accomplishes everything you expected, he/she is Fully Successful, which is a high standard
- A Highly Successful executive demonstrates a very high level of performance beyond that required for successful performance; the executive:
 - Is a proven, highly effective leader who builds trust and instills confidence
 - Consistently exceeds established performance expectations, timelines or targets
- An Outstanding executive demonstrates exceptional performance and optimizes results in the organization, DOE, or government-wide; the executive:
 - Continually contributes materially to or spearheads efforts that further DOE goals
 - Consistently achieves expectations at the highest level of quality and handles challenges, exceeds targets, and completes assignments ahead of schedule at every step along the way

Additional Resources

- HR University (<https://hru.gov/index.aspx>)
 - **Course Title:** How to Rate Performance and Write an Effective Narrative
 - **Estimated Time to Complete:** 0.5 hours
 - **Cost:** Free