

Sample Language to Support Overall and Competency Ratings

This guide supports managers in using consistent, fair, and mission-aligned language when assigning performance ratings. This approach emphasizes Clarity, Accountability, Growth, and Development.

Use the sample language as a foundation. Be sure to customize with specific examples and avoid copying the language without giving context. When rating the competency area and assigning an overall rating, make sure that the comments support the rating. Examples provided should cover the full review period.

If you have any questions, please contact Shirley Mata, Director of Employee Development & Wellness at smmata@scu.edu or your [Senior HR Partner](#).



Overall Ratings for Performance Evaluations

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
The employee's performance is considerably below acceptable and agreed upon standards. Unmet performance expectations have been discussed by supervisor and employee. Improved performance has not been forthcoming and appropriate corrective action (warning letter or suspension) has been implemented. Failure to immediately improve performance will lead to termination. • Does not achieve results that meet the requirements of the job; • Makes errors consistently and often repeats the same mistakes, requiring repetition of duty or completion by others; • Demonstrates an inability to perform key job functions despite repeated explanation and counseling; • Lacks appropriate knowledge of their field; • Requires excessive/constant direction or supervision and does not complete assigned tasks; shows an indifference to job responsibilities; • Resists changes in the work environment and does not readily adapt to them..	The employee achieves many of the performance expectations but not all. Improvement in some performance expectations is needed. Unmet performance expectations have been discussed by supervisor and employee and, as appropriate, have discussed needed improvement. • Achieves results that meet the minimum requirements of the job in many areas of responsibility; fails to meet minimum performance expectations in some area of responsibility • Displays inconsistency in the performance and output at times falls below performance expectations; • Has an appropriate working knowledge of their field; • Generally needs little supervision but on occasion requires additional direction or supervision; • Tasks are sometimes completed outside agreed upon time lines or are incomplete; • Does not always anticipate changes in the work environment and could adapt to these changes more quickly.	The employee consistently achieves performance expectations or may occasionally exceed them. Work is of high quality in significant areas of responsibility. The employee meets required performance expectations on a day-in, day-out basis. • Achieves results that consistently meet the requirements of the job in major areas of responsibility and occasionally may exceed them; • Completes assignments or job duties in a timely manner with an acceptable level of direction or supervision; • Work output achieves desired or required outcomes or expectations; • Displays and maintains an effective and consistent level of performance; • Demonstrates ability to solve problems, makes few errors, and seldom repeats those which have been made; • Has extensive knowledge in their field; • Problems or errors are quickly reported and corrected; • Anticipates and adapts to changes in the work environment.	The employee consistently achieves performance expectations and frequently exceeds them. Demonstrated performance is very high quality in areas of responsibility. Exceptional or unique contributions are made in the performance of the department and University objectives. Quality of performance is clearly above the norm. • Displays a consistently high level of skills, abilities, initiative, and productivity; • Achieves results that consistently exceed those assigned or expected in key areas of responsibility; • Demonstrates superior judgment and an ability to solve relatively complex problems; • Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge in their own field and is frequently consulted by peers and colleagues; • Is a "self starter" who requires little direction or supervision; • Anticipates changes and readily adapts to them, occasionally creating new ways of approaching job responsibilities.

Effective Communications

Able to express ideas in a clear, concise, and effective manner, whether speaking or in writing. Uses correct grammar and sentence structure in communications. Demonstrates effective listening skills, and openness to differing viewpoints. Openly shares information and keeps all relevant parties updated. Able to effectively tailor communication style to different audiences.

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Struggles to communicate ideas clearly in verbal and/or written formats, leading to confusion or misinterpretation. • Frequently uses incorrect grammar or unclear structure in professional communications. • Does not consistently listen to others or consider differing viewpoints. • Fails to keep relevant stakeholders informed or provides incomplete/inaccurate updates. • Does not adjust communication style appropriately for different audiences or situations.	• Communicates clearly in some situations but lacks consistency across audiences or formats. • Written and verbal communication is generally understandable but may require clarification or revision. • Listens to others but does not always fully engage with or incorporate differing perspectives. • Provides updates when prompted but may miss opportunities to proactively share information. • Attempts to adjust communication style but does not always do so effectively.	• Communicates ideas clearly and concisely in both verbal and written formats. • Uses correct grammar and sentence structure in professional communications. • Listens actively and acknowledges differing viewpoints in discussions. • Provides necessary updates to relevant stakeholders in a timely manner. • Adjusts communication style appropriately based on the audience and situation.	• Consistently delivers articulate, persuasive, and impactful communication tailored to various audiences. • Demonstrates exceptional grammar, sentence structure, and clarity in all forms of communication. • Proactively seeks out diverse perspectives, fostering inclusive and productive discussions. • Anticipates information needs and proactively keeps stakeholders informed without prompting. • Enhances team and organizational communication by developing best practices, templates, or training sessions.

Job Knowledge

Demonstrates the professional, administrative, supervisory, and/or technical knowledge required to perform the job successfully. Continuously strives to further improve job knowledge. Serves as a reliable resource for other employees regarding areas of expertise. Utilizes job knowledge, skills, and judgement to effectively problem solve, think critically and troubleshoot.

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Lacks sufficient understanding of job responsibilities, requiring frequent guidance. • Demonstrates difficulty applying knowledge to complete tasks accurately. • Does not seek opportunities to improve skills or expand knowledge. • Is not viewed as a reliable resource by colleagues. • Struggles with problem-solving and requires frequent intervention to resolve issues.	• Demonstrates basic knowledge of job responsibilities but has gaps in key areas. • Applies knowledge effectively in routine situations but struggles with more complex tasks. • Occasionally seeks opportunities to build skills but lacks consistency. • Can provide support to others in limited areas of expertise. • Uses judgment appropriately at times but may need guidance for problem-solving.	• Demonstrates a solid understanding of professional, technical, and administrative responsibilities. • Applies job knowledge effectively to complete tasks accurately and efficiently. • Continuously seeks opportunities to expand knowledge through training, research, or experience. • Serves as a reliable resource for team members by sharing knowledge when requested. • Uses sound judgment and critical thinking to troubleshoot and resolve routine problems effectively.	• Demonstrates expert-level knowledge and consistently applies it to improve team performance. • Proactively identifies and implements innovative solutions to complex problems. • Actively mentors and trains colleagues, enhancing overall team competency. • Anticipates challenges and takes proactive steps to address them before they arise. • Contributes to process improvements, knowledge-sharing initiatives, or best practices that enhance operational efficiency.

Producing Results

Assignments/projects are consistently completed in a timely manner with the desired level of quality and quantity. Follows up on the outcome of work efforts to ensure desired results.

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Frequently misses deadlines or delivers incomplete work. • Work quality does not meet established standards and requires rework. • Does not effectively prioritize tasks or manage workload. • Fails to follow through to ensure desired outcomes are achieved. • Requires ongoing supervision to complete assignments.	• Meets deadlines in some cases but is inconsistent in timeliness. • Work quality is acceptable in some areas but inconsistent overall. • Demonstrates basic ability to manage workload but may struggle with prioritization. • Follows up on work intermittently but may miss details or outcomes. • Requires occasional supervision or reminders to complete tasks.	• Completes assignments and projects on time while meeting quality and quantity expectations. • Ensures work aligns with established standards and organizational goals. • Follows up on completed work to verify accuracy and effectiveness. • Manages workload effectively, prioritizing tasks to meet deadlines. • Takes responsibility for assigned tasks and ensures they are completed with minimal supervision.	• Consistently delivers high-quality results ahead of deadlines, often exceeding expectations. • Proactively identifies and addresses potential obstacles to ensure project success. • Regularly seeks feedback and makes improvements to enhance work outcomes. • Goes beyond assigned tasks by suggesting and implementing process efficiencies. • Demonstrates exceptional attention to detail and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Service Excellence

Makes excellent customer service a top priority and constantly seeks to improve customer service. Is responsive to changes and anticipates what customers want and need. Delivers on promises made to customers and follows up appropriately.

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Does not consistently prioritize customer needs or service quality. • Responds slowly or inadequately to customer inquiries or concerns. • Struggles to adapt to changing customer needs or expectations. • Fails to follow through on commitments to customers. • May display unprofessional or dismissive behavior in customer interactions.	• Provides acceptable service in routine situations but lacks consistency. • Responds to customer needs but may require prompting or follow-up. • Demonstrates willingness to adapt but may do so slowly. • Generally follows through on commitments but may miss details. • Maintains professionalism but does not consistently go beyond basic expectations.	• Prioritizes excellent customer service in daily interactions, ensuring customer needs are met. • Responds to customer inquiries and concerns in a timely and professional manner. • Adjusts to changes in customer needs and expectations with a positive attitude. • Follows through on commitments and ensures that customer issues are resolved satisfactorily. • Maintains a courteous and professional demeanor when addressing customer concerns	• Proactively anticipates customer needs and offers tailored solutions before issues arise. • Consistently receives positive feedback from customers for going above and beyond expectations. • Identifies opportunities to improve customer service processes and implements effective enhancements. • Builds strong, long-lasting relationships with customers by providing exceptional service and personalized attention. • Actively seeks customer feedback and applies insights to enhance future service delivery.

Honesty and Integrity

Adheres to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct. Exemplifies commitment to the [SCU core values](#)

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Demonstrates behavior that does not consistently align with organizational policies or ethical standards. • May fail to take accountability for actions or decisions. • Does not consistently demonstrate fairness or respect toward others. • Has difficulty maintaining confidentiality or transparency when required. • Actions may not consistently reflect organizational values.	• Generally follows policies and ethical standards but may show inconsistency. • Takes accountability in most situations but may require prompting. • Treats others respectfully but may not always demonstrate fairness in all interactions. • Maintains confidentiality in most cases but may need reminders. • Demonstrates alignment with organizational values but not consistently.	• Consistently demonstrates ethical behavior and professionalism in all work interactions. • Adheres to policies, regulations, and the highest standards of conduct without exception. • Treats colleagues, customers, and stakeholders with fairness and respect. • Upholds confidentiality and ensures transparency in decision-making processes. • Aligns daily work with Santa Clara University (SCU) core values, maintaining a commitment to excellence, service, and justice.	• Serves as a role model for ethical behavior and integrity, influencing others to uphold SCU's core values. • Proactively addresses ethical concerns and takes initiative in promoting a culture of honesty and accountability. • Demonstrates unwavering commitment to doing the right thing, even in difficult or high-pressure situations. • Goes beyond compliance, advocating for fairness, inclusivity, and ethical decision-making within the organization. • Encourages open dialogue on ethical issues, fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes integrity and trust.

Fostering Belonging for All Broncos

Values the Jesuit principle of recognizing everyone's inherent dignity and supports holistic care. Demonstrates appreciation for shared humanity by respecting diverse contributions from all individuals [which include and are not limited to all races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, ages, genders, gender expressions and identities, sexual orientations, marital and registered domestic partner statuses, physical or mental disabilities (including perceived disabilities), medical conditions, pregnancies (including childbirth, breastfeeding and related medical conditions), or any other aspect of beliefs, viewpoints and ideologies]. Cultivates a positive, inclusive environment at SCU by promoting belonging and addressing non-inclusive behavior appropriately.

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Does not consistently demonstrate respect for diverse perspectives and backgrounds. • May engage in or fail to address non-inclusive behavior. • Shows limited awareness of personal biases and their impact. • Does not actively contribute to an inclusive or welcoming environment. • May unintentionally exclude others from participation or decision-making.	• Treats others respectfully but may not actively promote inclusion. • Demonstrates some awareness of diversity and inclusion concepts. • Participates in inclusive practices when prompted. • Addresses non-inclusive behavior inconsistently. • Contributes to a positive environment but does not actively lead inclusion efforts.	• Treats all individuals with dignity and respect, valuing diverse perspectives and experiences. • Actively listens to and acknowledges the contributions of others, fostering an inclusive environment. • Demonstrates awareness of biases and takes steps to ensure equitable treatment of colleagues, students, and community members. • Supports a welcoming and respectful environment at Santa Clara University (SCU) by adhering to inclusive practices. • Addresses non-inclusive behavior professionally and appropriately when observed.	• Actively champions diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, contributing to policies and programs that promote belonging. • Serves as a role model by fostering meaningful conversations about inclusivity and shared humanity. • Proactively identifies and implements strategies to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. • Takes initiative in addressing and educating others on non-inclusive behavior, encouraging constructive dialogue. • Develops and participates in mentorship, training, or community engagement programs that empower underrepresented groups at SCU.

Leadership (Supervisor only)

Ability to work with a group to set its objectives and agenda, generate allegiance to those objectives, and guide and motivate their achievement. Articulates the end results needed and allows people to exercise initiative and discretion without micromanaging. Enforces standards/rules fairly and consistently and leads with courage.

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Does not effectively set clear goals or direction for the team. • Provides limited guidance or support, leading to confusion or misalignment. • Fails to motivate or engage team members. • Applies rules and standards inconsistently or unfairly. • Avoids making difficult decisions or addressing performance issues.	• Sets goals but may lack clarity or consistency in communication. • Provides guidance but may not fully empower team members. • Motivates team members inconsistently. • Applies rules fairly in most cases but may show inconsistency. • Addresses challenges but may delay difficult decisions.	• Works collaboratively with teams to establish clear objectives and align efforts toward shared goals. • Clearly communicates expectations and provides guidance while allowing team members autonomy in execution. • Motivates and supports colleagues by recognizing contributions and encouraging professional growth. • Holds team members accountable by enforcing rules and standards fairly and consistently. • Demonstrates confidence and integrity in decision-making, even in challenging situations.	• Inspires a shared vision and cultivates a culture of high performance, engagement, and innovation. • Empowers team members by fostering professional development and encouraging independent problem-solving. • Proactively addresses challenges and removes barriers to team success through strategic leadership. • Leads by example with courage and conviction, making difficult but necessary decisions in the best interest of the organization. • Champions a positive, inclusive work environment by mentoring and developing future leaders.

Staff Development (Supervisor only)

Addresses learning, training, and career development needs of individuals, teams, or organization. Works with employees to establish job and career development goals. Provides accurate, timely, and on-going feedback, including introductory period and annual reviews.

Not Meeting Expectations	Sometimes Meets Expectations	Consistently Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
• Does not actively support employee development or career growth. • Fails to provide timely or constructive feedback. • Does not engage in performance discussions or goal-setting. • Provides limited access to training or development resources. • Does not prioritize staff growth or learning.	• Supports development in some cases but lacks consistency. • Provides feedback periodically but not always timely or actionable. • Engages in goal-setting but may not follow through consistently. • Encourages training but may not actively facilitate opportunities. • Demonstrates some commitment to staff development but could improve.	• Supports employees in identifying and pursuing professional development opportunities aligned with their roles. • Provides timely, constructive feedback, including during introductory and annual performance reviews. • Encourages continuous learning through training, mentorship, or skill-building initiatives. • Collaborates with employees to set realistic and achievable career development goals. • Ensures staff have access to resources and guidance to enhance their skills and performance. •	• Proactively identifies and implements innovative staff development programs that enhance team capabilities. • Acts as a mentor, providing coaching and career guidance. • Advocates for employee growth by securing training resources, stretch assignments, or leadership opportunities. • Regularly seeks feedback from employees to improve development initiatives and ensure alignment with career aspirations. • Creates a culture of continuous learning, inspiring others to pursue excellence and long-term career progression. •