

Performance Appraisal – Systems
Ref: OPM Performance-Management-FAQS

1. [What's the difference between an appraisal system and an appraisal program?](#)

An appraisal system describes the general policies and parameters for the administration of performance appraisal programs in the agency. An appraisal program is the specific procedures, methods, and requirements for planning, monitoring, and rating performance. Programs have to be designed within the boundaries of the system but can be tailored to the needs of the organization.

2. [Does OPM have to approve an agency's performance appraisal system?](#)

Yes. OPM is required by statute to approve performance appraisal systems to ensure they meet statutory and regulatory requirements.

3. [Can an agency have more than one appraisal system?](#)

Yes. Federal employee appraisal law requires Federal agencies to establish one or more appraisal systems. If an agency finds a need to describe different general policies and parameters for different groups of employees, it can develop more than one appraisal system. However, the Office of Personnel Management anticipates that most agencies will not find it necessary to develop more than one set of general policies and guidelines.

4. [Should there be performance management training for rating officials?](#)

Yes. OPM regulations require agencies to train rating officials on performance management topics (including developing performance plans, providing feedback, appraising and rewarding performance).

5. [Can an agency exclude temporary employees from its performance appraisal system?](#)

Yes. Provided the temporary employees meet the Governmentwide requirements. An agency may exclude an employee who: is serving in a position under a temporary position for less than 1 year, agrees to serve without a performance evaluation, and will not be considered for a reappointment or for an increase in pay based in whole or in part on performance. Reference: 5 USC 4301(2)(H)

6. [Can an agency request that OPM exclude certain groups of employees from the appraisal requirements in Governmentwide regulations?](#)

Yes, for excepted service positions only. OPM has the authority to exclude positions not in the competitive service from the requirements when requested by the head of the agency.

7. [Must OPM approve changes to an agency performance appraisal system \(OPM Form - 1631\)?](#)

Whenever an agency proposes to change its performance appraisal system to modify a provision that is subject to a regulatory requirement, the agency must submit the changes to OPM for review and approval prior to implementation.

8. [If an agency is in the middle of the appraisal period and decides to change the number of summary levels used in its appraisal program, is it required to end the current period and give employees a rating of record?](#)

No. Regulations do not require that the appraisal period be ended to change appraisal programs. However, agencies need to remember that the regulations permit only a single rating of record in a given appraisal period.

9. [Does an agency have to complete the current appraisal period \(or rating cycle\) before changing the number of summary levels?](#)

Technically, no. However, agencies need to consider carefully the effect that switching to a different pattern of summary levels may have on employee expectations regarding performance appraisal results and their related consequences. Such expectations are established at the beginning of the appraisal period.

10. [May an agency establish exceptions to coverage of employees under a performance appraisal system?](#)

Yes, so long as the employees the agency excludes are covered by another performance appraisal system (unless the employees are in the excepted service and the agency has obtained, from OPM, a separate approval for their exclusion).