

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL NOTICE NO. 62

30 April 1973

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Fitness Report Preparation

1. The process of preparing a Fitness Report requires a structured approach for the resulting documents are frequently used in the evaluation of an individual with respect to his peers. Consequently every reasonable effort should be made to provide for uniformity in the points and values considered and in their documentation. It is the purpose of these Guidelines to provide a means for preparing documentation that offers a common basis for personnel assessment thereby insuring the filing of fair and just Fitness Reports.

2. Emphasis is directed to the fact that each Supervisor is responsible for insuring that work assignments have been made grade compatible and that duties and expected performance were made known to the employee at all times. The actual expression of these duties on a Fitness Report must not introduce new considerations.

3. This General Notice deals in turn with the key areas of the Report; namely, Duty Statements, Overall Performance, and the Narrative Section. The use of the Letter Ratings is discussed separately.

4. Duty Statements must be carefully prepared. By the choice of words one can swing a given function (duty) over several grade levels and thereby swing the letter rating over several values. For this reason, it is essential to start the written evaluation with a clear understanding of the factors which establish Grade Level. To this end the ORD Career Service Panel and its Special Panel for clerical and secretarial personnel have established frames of reference for keying job responsibilities to grade level. Two categories of guidelines have been generated; those for clerical and secretarial personnel are listed in Attachment A and those for professionals in Attachment B. Due to the diversity of assignments in ORD some employees do not fall into either category and must be evaluated using other guidelines.

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5. Having established a frame of reference for grade level performance expectations, one must then prepare Duty Statements which reflect these expectations. It is recommended that a standard set of duties be considered as a baseline for clerical, secretarial, and professional personnel at various grade levels; details or other duties may be added when appropriate. Taking the case of a project officer as an example, the suggested duties (which should be appropriately modified to reflect grade differences) include:

- a. Develops new concepts of intelligence collection or analysis and prepares studies relating to the initiation of contract actions for their investigation or development.
- b. Manages technical projects in support of office goals.
- c. Participates in the development of an overall program of research and exploratory development.
- d. Maintains liaison with appropriate elements of the intelligence and R&D communities.
- e. Supervises project officers in the implementation of the research and exploratory development program (where appropriate).

Clearly, an employee on a scientific track will have a different mix of duties from one on a managerial track. It is important, however, that some consistency exist in the duties upon which various officers are rated if competitive evaluations are to be made.

6. At this point it is appropriate to address the topic of "Overall Rating." This evaluation is intended to include certain considerations not directly involved in the Duty Statements. Typical of these points are:

Ambition	Professional Image
Attitude	Responsiveness
Creativity	Versatility
Decisiveness	Work Habits

The Overall Rating is not some attempted average of the letters assigned to the Duty Statements. The meaning of the letter evaluation is very literal.

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7. The letter ratings cover a wide spectrum:

Outstanding		Marginal
	Proficient	
Strong		Unsatisfactory

Each rating is carefully defined on Form 45; when properly applied to Duty Statements appropriate to the incumbent's grade, Proficient becomes the norm for any population of employees. This will become the case in ORD; it is anticipated that any letter value will be used, including Marginal and Unsatisfactory when called for. The impact of this change in Office usage is the basis for a specific memorandum, a copy of which is being placed in the Office file of each ORD employee.

8. The Narrative Section of the Fitness Report should address (a) specific strengths and weaknesses, (b) any change in performance during the Rating Period, (c) personal extenuating circumstances, (d) the general relationship of the individual's performance to that of others in his peer group, and (e) recommendations as to continuing professional development. While such matters as training or selection for special assignment are appropriate for discussion, promotion, per se, is not.

9. In summary, the Fitness Report should be an effective personnel management tool. The written evaluation and the beneficial relationship developed between the employee and his supervisor combine to inform both the employee and management of an individual's status and potential. Preparation of these Reports is an important supervisory duty. It is hoped that the structured approach presented here will improve the capability of review groups such as the Career Service Panel to do a fair and effective job in making the personnel assessments and selections which arise from time to time.

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Sayre Stevens
 Director of Research and Development

2 Attachments
 As stated