

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF REPORTING AND COUNTERSIGNING OFFICERS

The following is meant solely as a guide for supervisors who are faced with the duty of completing a Confidential Staff Report on a subordinate officer. It will be in the form of explanations of some of the markings found on the Reporting Form.

MARKINGS

1. **Outstanding** *This applies to a performance which is exceptionally effectively the person gets through a lot of work, which is of a very high standard.*

2. **Very Good** *Although the person's performance may have fallen short of the highest standards on occasions, he/she is a real asset to the organization.*

3. **Good** *The performance of duties is generally effective. Short-comings in some areas are offset by good performance elsewhere.*

4. **Fair** *There are weaknesses in performance, but they are not serious ones. The person is getting through his or her duties after a fashion, but the reporting officer would like to see the duties done better.*

5. **Unsatisfactory**

This, the lowest marking, indicates that the person is definitely

Not up to the duties of the grade. He should not have reached

This stage without having been warned on more than one

occasion about the standard of his work, and it is likely that he will already have been interviewed by someone in a senior position, who will have tried to find out the reason for the poor performance.

20. The assessment "Good" denotes that the officer is satisfactory, i.e. that he satisfies reasonable expectations and leaves no room for complaint. Higher or lower assessment should be determined by the extent to which the officer is above or below that standard. As far as possible each officer should be judged by himself and not in comparison with others or by reference to the general standard of officers in the section, for that standard may happen to be particularly good or rather indifferent at a particular time. An officer may be quite well marked in this section without necessarily being ready for promotion.

Fitness for Promotion (Section D)

21. The point outlined below should be borne in mind concerning an officer's Fitness for Promotion".
22. Promotion is not given as a reward for past services; it is given primarily in the interest of the Department's work, and should go to those who are best fitted to perform the higher duties.
23. No officer has a prescriptive right to promotion, the fact that an officer does his present work very well does not necessarily mean that he is fitted for promotion, or if he is, that there may not be many other officers elsewhere who are still better fitted. Further, it should not be assumed that an officer who was given the opportunity of "acting" temporarily to a higher grade is necessarily better fitted for promotion than an officer who did not have that opportunity.
24. Greater weight is given to seniority in making promotions from the lower grades and it is taken into account in making other promotions. But this is arranged by the Public Service Commission and Reporting Officers should judge an officer's fitness for promotion solely on his own merits and should not themselves attempt to give weight to seniority according to their own ideas.

25. Before an officer is recommended in any degree for promotion, two tests should be applied:
- (a) Would the Reporting Officer be perfectly satisfied to retain the officer on his own staff in the higher grade.
 - (b) Is the officer suitable for the general duties of the higher grade. If the Reporting Officer thinks that the officer could only be expected to do one particular kind of job satisfactorily; it is his duty to say so quite plainly.
26. The assessment "**Exceptionally well**" should be used only for wholly exceptional officers who may be expected to do very well indeed in the higher grade and if there are still other steps for promotion, to proceed much further.
27. The assessment "**Very well**" should be used only if the Reporting Officer is fully satisfied that the Officer is good enough on his merit for immediate promotion, and is likely to do really well in the higher grade.
28. The assessment "**Satisfactory**" implies that the officer is capable of the general duties of the higher grade and that the Reporting Officer would be perfectly willing to retain him in the event of promotion, but that on his present showing, he is unlikely to excel in the higher grade or to go beyond it. The giving of this assessment when it is not properly justified e.g. for the kindly object of "giving the officer a chance" or for the less worthy object of saving the Reporting Officer from possible embarrassment, may result in an unjustified promotion or may raise hopes which cannot be realized.
29. The assessment "**Likely to qualify in time**" is intended to cover officers who may not be far short of a recommendation for promotion but who, for one reason or another cannot yet be recommended. It implies that the officer should be kept under review. This assessment would be appropriate to an officer who is, as yet, insufficiently experienced but who shows promise. It should not be used for an officer who shows no real capacity for higher responsibilities.
30. The assessment "**Unlikely to qualify**" covers not only the officer who, despite experience, seems unlikely to qualify for promotion, but also the officer of less experience who has not as yet shown any real promise of becoming suitable for promotion. Where this assessment is given, an explanation must be given in Section E – Reporting Officer's General Remarks and Certificate.

Reporting Officer's General Remarks (Section E)

31. The "**General Remarks**" should be as informative as possible and in particular should mention any good qualities.

(v) ***Oral expression.***

Exactly the same points are to be borne in mind, the reporting officer is to be concerned with the manner and not the matter, and volubility alone is not enough. A comment should be made if the marking refers only to telephone conversation and not to face-to-face communication.

(vi) ***Numerical ability.***

The particular skill being examined will in various grades and posts, but the ability to add a column of figures and get the right answer is not always the main thing to be identified here. In the higher grades, what is being sought is the ability to handle and interpret figures, whether they are contained in balance sheets or in statistical tables. This is not to say that the ability to calculate is totally irrelevant a person in any grade who could not add a column of figures correctly would, on the face of it, be a candidate for the "F" marking, but it would be necessary to be much more than an efficient calculator to merit on "A".

(vii) ***Relation with others.***

Where Departments have not subdivided this heading into "Relations with colleagues" and "Relations with the Public" it applies to both groups, and reporting officers should comment on any difference in the way in which they are dealt with, although it is to be expected that a common marking will usually cover both. To qualify for the highest marking, a person should be something more than acceptable in a hail-fellow-well-met way. He should command the respect, as well as the liking of his fellow-men and, where it is appropriate, would be able to understand their personal difficulties and offer useful solutions to them. The "F" marking will be appropriate to the person who is totally unconcerned with the problems and emotions of others.

(viii) ***Acceptance of responsibility.***

This is related to the degree of willingness to assume responsibility and not in any sense to what a person does with that responsibility when he has taken it. In other words, someone who consistently took it upon himself to act without reference to his seniors and, just as consistently, made errors of judgment in the work for which he took responsibility, would be marked at "A" under this head, (with an appropriate remark in the "comments" space) and would get "low" markings at other parts of the form. It is sometimes difficult to mark the performance of staff in basic grades under this heading, especially if there are agreed lists of the duties proper to certain grades and little opportunity to go beyond those duties. But there will often be other work to be done, outside these lines of demarcation altogether, and people can be judged on their reaction to this a remark would be appropriate.

(ix) ***Management of staff.***

This should be completed if at all possible – even if the person had only partial responsibility for staff, or acted as a manager or supervisor for only a part of the period, an assessment of his capacity to get the best out of staff together with a comment on the limits of his responsibility will be useful. To get the top marking, a manager should demonstrate that he has two qualities

which do not always go together – the ability to organize the work of his staff and the capacity to inspire them by the way in which he treats them. The man who is marked “F” will be one who is inefficient at organizing work and who produces low morale in his staff either by this inefficiency or by an unfortunate manner.

(x) ***Application of professional/technical skills.***

This can relate to staff in any class or grade. The reporting officer here is concerned not with whether the person possesses a particular skill, but the way in which he uses it to get the job done.

The above was adapted from : Notes for the guidance of Reporting and Countersigning Officer.

This pamphlet is used along with a booklet entitled:
Staff Reporting – Management Personnel (Training) Division
Civil Service Department.