

Form 2: Supervisor Assessment FY24 - Research

Employee: Wei Cheng
Job Title: Senior Researcher

Department: DSSS

Hire Date: 08/31/2015
Supervisor: Haifeng Chen

	Communication	Collaboration	Transformation	Execution	Disruption	Impact
Supervisor (FY23)	3	3	4	4	5	4
Employee (FY24)	3	4	4	4	5	4
Supervisor (FY24)	4	3	4	4	5	3

Accomplishment Assessment

Wei has been conducting groundbreaking research at the frontier of LLMs and foundation models, achieving remarkable milestones in FY24. As a pioneer in exploring reasoning capabilities within LLMs during early 2024, a time when pre-trained LLMs still dominated and reasoning-focused models were in their infancy, Wei made significant strides in advancing this field. One of his notable contributions was an in-depth investigation into OpenAI's O1 model, through which he proposed an innovative solution search technique to enhance inference scaling during the reasoning phase. This technique will be presented at the ICLR conference this year. Furthermore, Wei developed a novel technique to decompose complex tasks into manageable components for LLMs, providing an effective framework for tackling intricate problems. His research holds immense potential to significantly enhance the reasoning capabilities of NEC's Cotomi model.

In addition to LLMs, Wei is also productive in other research topics such as time series analysis and graph mining. For example, his time series analysis paper won the best paper runner-up award in the ICLR'24 workshop.

Since early 2025, Wei has been actively delving into the research field of agentic AI. Through extensive brainstorming and discussions, he proposed techniques to significantly enhance the planning capabilities of AI agents, as well as strategies for debugging and addressing issues when AI agents make mistakes.

Performance Assessment

Wei has shown exceptional skill and dedication in spearheading the rapidly advancing research on LLMs and foundation models. His research projects are highly aligned with emerging trends in AI, ensuring our work remains at the forefront of innovation. His groundbreaking contributions have significantly set our lab's disruptive research apart from other teams, further solidifying our leadership in the AI domain.

Wei consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to collaborative research efforts. He actively organizes and contributes to numerous research discussion meetings within the team. Beginning in 2025, he took the responsibility of managing our collaboration with the LLM team at DSL lab in NEC Japan.

Attributes for Development

Wei is encouraged to continue serving as a role model within the team by maintaining his outstanding performance and actively supporting and mentoring junior members. Additionally, he is expected to drive disruptive research forward while placing greater emphasis on accelerating the integration of his research into the company's business products. To achieve this, Wei is encouraged to focus more on tool usability and the potential business impact during the project incubation stage. Adopting this proactive approach will help ensure a seamless transition from research outputs to practical business applications.

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Overall Performance Rating by Supervisor—Evaluate employee's overall performance for the review period.

Outstanding and Very Good ratings are reserved for exceptional performance noted during the review period and are expected to represent approximately 5% for Outstanding and 20% for Very Good.

- ☐ Outstanding—Performance was exceptional in all aspects.
- ☒ Very Good—Performance was exceptional in many aspects.
- ☐ Good—Performance was of high quality in all or most aspects.
- ☐ Needs Improvement—Performance was deficient in one or more critical aspects. Corrective action and sustained progress are necessary.
- ☐ Unacceptable—Performance showed serious shortcomings. Separation will result if plans for progress are unsuccessful.

Wei made groundbreaking research at the frontier of LLMs and foundation models. His significant contributions not only advanced the research community but also played a pivotal role in strengthening the reasoning capabilities of NEC's Cotomi model.

FY25 Development Focus—Specify recommendations to develop specific skills or abilities, which will enhance completion of objectives and/or prepare individual for future growth.

Wei is encouraged to continue serving as a role model within the team by maintaining his exceptional performance while actively supporting and mentoring junior team members. I am also looking forward to seeing both groundbreaking research and successful business outcomes in his projects.

Employee Signature: _____	Date: Jun 11, 2025
(Your signature verifies that this evaluation has been discussed with you and is not an expression of agreement.)	
Supervisor Signature: <u>hansen</u>	Date: 5/29/2025
Approval Signature: <u>Christopher A. White</u>	Date: 5/25/2025
Human Resources Signature: <u>Ellen Ferguson</u>	Date: May 26, 2025

Employee Comments (to be completed after performance appraisal meeting with supervisor)