

A VALUABLE RESOURCE

The HR Academy is your source for learning, collaboration and support.



THE HR ACADEMY CONNECTION

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Employee Engagement Questionnaire – Thank You for Your Participation!

Thank you for participating in the Employee Engagement Questionnaire earlier this summer. Your participation gives us the data we need to identify and address specific learning and training opportunities for the coming year. We combine the questionnaire results with other data such as the Competency Gap Assessment results, to help guide the development of training curricula and new programs. It also helps HR Academy allocate resources to high priority areas.

Focus Groups – We Can't Improve Without You!

Thank you for participating in the recent HR Academy focus groups. We appreciated hearing your thoughts on what HR Academy does well, where we can improve and what you'd like to see in the future. We're currently reviewing the information from these focus groups to inform future learning programs. For additional questions about the focus groups or how the data will be used, please contact, Kimberly Jackson, HR Academy Communications Lead, via email at kimberly.jackson6@va.gov.

HR HIGHLIGHTS

HR Highlights helps keep you up-to-date with the latest news and trends in the HR community. It contains timely and relevant information that you can use in your role as an HR professional. This month, we focus on the last phase of VA's performance management cycle.

The Performance Management Cycle - Bringing the Year to a Close

Summer is over, bringing an end to VA's annual performance management cycle. At this time of year, everyone should be preparing for their end-of-cycle discussions. Managers should review their staff's performance objectives to see if they've been met or exceeded. Staff should review their achievements and begin writing their end-of-cycle self-assessments.

The end-of-cycle self-assessment gives employees the opportunity to highlight what they've accomplished toward their performance objectives and Individual Development Plans. Written in narrative form, the self-assessment should be detailed, but not lengthy and should clearly convey the employee's perception of his or her performance throughout the year.

continued on page 2...

HR2U is Now Virtual!

This fall, HR Academy is reintroducing HR2U as a virtual learning program. It's revamped, retooled and ready to help you take your career to the next level. The original HR2U was a four-day, location-based outreach and learning program. It included best practices and HR tools but required travel to the training facility, which cost you time and money.

The new HR2U is now a virtual two-day learning program with no travel required. You'll still receive the same great information, tools and training you need to advance your career, but without the time, cost and inconvenience of travel. HR professionals from any location can participate.

continued on page 2...



ADVANCE
TRANSFORMING POTENTIAL INTO PERFORMANCE

ADVANCE is an HR&A initiative to invest in people development, workforce engagement and talent management for the delivery of high-quality health care, benefits and other services to Veterans and their families.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

The Performance Management Cycle - Bringing the Year to a Close...continued



Employees aren't expected to document everything they've done during the performance period. In the [July 2013 issue](#), we encouraged managers and staff to keep a record of their significant achievements using a journal, saving emails or keeping hard copies of their work products. These activities can help make the self-assessment easier to write and help keep it focused on the performance objectives.

As managers and staff prepare to write their self-assessments, we should remind them of the following guidelines:

- Be concise, clear and focused on your outcomes for each performance objective
- Address each performance objective individually
- Highlight your most significant accomplishments during the performance period
- Connect your accomplishments to VA's mission and goals
- Acknowledge challenges that you faced during the performance period and how you overcame them
- Focus on specific examples where your actions positively impacted the outcome of a performance objective(s)
- If discussions with a staff member result in adjustments to their performance plan or objectives, the manager should implement the changes and make sure the plan is approved.

These guidelines will help managers and staff prepare effective self-assessments that position them for future growth and achievement.

HR2U is Now Virtual ...continued

We're very excited to bring a virtual approach to HR2U. As with all of our virtual courses, HR2U will run on Blackboard Collaborate, an effective and easy-to-use web conferencing platform. As a participant, you'll be able to participate in live presentations, interact in real time with your instructor, and collaborate with your colleagues – all from your desk.

We believe that a virtual HR2U will provide an enriching learning experience for our HR professionals.

- You'll have access to skilled instructors and VA SME's no matter where you're located
- You'll participate in an engaging, hands-on learning experience – this isn't just a series of PowerPoint presentations
- Finally, by interacting with HR professionals from across the country, you'll build a network that spans the entire VA enterprise

The virtual HR2U agenda includes the complete Career Planning Workshop, as well as presentations on topics like Human Capital Strategic Planning, Knowledge Management, and Workforce Development Planning.

During the Career Planning Workshop component, you'll:

- Complete a self-assessment to evaluate your current capabilities
- Learn about the career maps available on the HR Academy website and how to use them
- Receive guidance on how to identify and use the right career map to determine your career path

HR2U will give you what you need to take control of your career. It's relevant to all HR professionals regardless of your job function or level. If you're serious about positioning yourself for success, then be sure to check out the new HR2U.

For more information about the new virtual HR2U learning program, including future dates and times, visit the [HR2U page](#) on the HR Academy website.



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