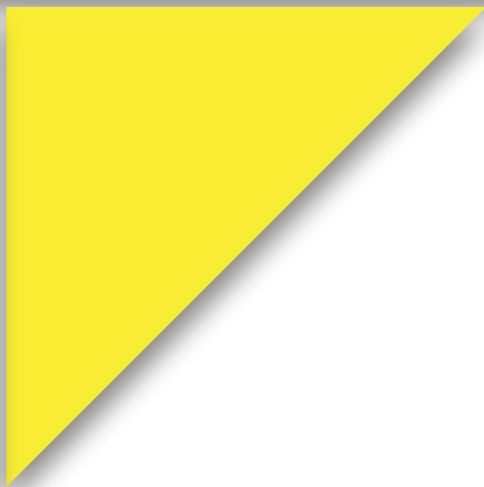




**BUILDING YOUR SKILLS**



people in print



Canada

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# BUILDING YOUR SKILLS

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## WHO WE ARE

The Canadian Printing Industries Sector Council (CPISC) is a national forum that collaborates with printing and graphic communications industry employers, employees, educators, suppliers and representatives of governments to create and implement innovative strategies for skills development and progressive HR management practices. In doing so, CPISC enables all key players in the printing and graphic communications industry to work together in partnership to improve the quality of the industry's current and future workforce.

Through the completion of its national Skill Standards and three watershed reports—the Skills and Technology Roadmap, *Charting Our Course*; the HR Study, *An Industry Redefined*; and the Training Needs Assessment, *Bridging the Gaps*—CPISC has built a solid foundation and understanding of what the industry needs. Moving forward, CPISC is building on those findings and evolving from a research-based organization into one that also offers services, tools, programs and resources to maximize the career potential of every employee and support the industry's prosperity.

CPISC has identified four key long-term objectives in its 2010-2013 Strategic Plan. These objectives describe the behaviours that the organization would like to influence and see exhibited by the industry in the coming years. The industry will become one that:

- has skilled workers with transferable skills;
- retains existing workers and recruits new workers;
- adopts strategic HR management and best practices; and
- takes coordinated action on common HR issues.

To achieve these objectives, CPISC is focusing on goals and activities in four key areas: skills, training, career pathways and HR management, which includes providing timely and informative data on the industry.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPISC wishes to express sincere appreciation to all those who contributed, directly or indirectly, to this project; and more specifically to the members of the Project Working Group, who provided direction to the project. Made up of representatives from printing companies, suppliers, educators, training institutions and unions, the members of the Project Working Group included: Gerry Federow (Chair), Mike Drimmie, Louis DuPerron, Roger Holmes, Doug Lewis, Mark Menzies, Jeff Polley, Tim Trainor and Mike Yez.



## SKILLS AT WORK

*Skills at Work* is a suite of five tools to help the industry implement the national Skill Standards in the workplace. Developed with industry stakeholders, the guides and tools included in the *Skills at Work* suite enable **employers** and **employees** in the industry to use the Skill Standards on the job to assess skills, identify gaps and ultimately develop an on-the-job training strategy to ensure employees have the skills they need to thrive. The *Skills at Work* suite includes the following components:

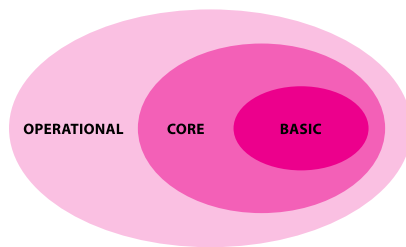
- ◆ ***Growing Your Company's Talent*** is a guide for employers that introduces the concept of Skill Standards and sets out the ideal process for using CPISC's Skill Standards to assess skill sets, identify gaps and establish a plan to fill those gaps.
- ◆ ***Building Your Skills*** is the companion guide for employees that introduces the concept of Skill Standards, the many benefits of qualifying to the standards, and the process to assess skill sets, identify gaps and establish a plan to fill those gaps.
- ◆ ***Skills Assessment Checklist*** presents the national Skill Standards with a rating scale for use by supervisors to assess employees' levels of competence and employees to conduct self-assessments. A checklist has been developed for each occupation for which national Skill Standards have been created.
- ◆ ***Pass It On*** is a guide to implementing on-the-job training company-wide. It helps facilitate the transfer of knowledge from peer-to-peer. It describes methods and best practices by which experienced, highly skilled supervisors and co-workers can serve as trainers to individual employees.
- ◆ ***Training Tracker*** is a document that enables employers and employees alike to record ongoing in-house training and skills development. A Training Tracker is available for each occupation for which Skill Standards have been developed.

These tools, which have been developed for the industry by the industry, strive to ensure that the printing and graphic communications sector has skilled workers with transferable skills.

## READY TO SUCCEED

The printing and graphic communications industry needs skilled employees. Specifically, the industry needs employees who are highly specialized and multi-talented—employees whose broad range of skills and expertise extend beyond the traditional bounds of their process areas, and who are able to solve problems, make decisions, interact with customers, collaborate with colleagues and operate computers. By continuing to learn new skills, you can create a career with endless possibilities. The Canadian Printing Industries Sector Council's (CPISC) national Skill Standards can help. Learn about the standards, their benefits, and the ways in which you can make them work for you and your organization.

## SKILL STANDARDS FOR OUR INDUSTRY



Skill Standards outline the skills and knowledge employees must possess to fill specific occupations in the printing and graphic communications industry.

To develop the standards, CPISC gathered together representatives from printing companies, suppliers, unions, and education and training institutions across the country, and analyzed all of the tasks required in prepress, press, bindery, finishing and production support occupations. These experts determined that employees—like you—must demonstrate three types of skills to succeed in the workplace: basic skills, core skills and operating skills.

## BASIC SKILLS

The eight basic skills are **essential** in every occupation, in every industry. They enable people to understand their responsibilities, and to communicate, cooperate and problem solve. They are also called enabling skills because they make it possible for workers to use and develop other skills.

SKILL	BEHAVIOUR
Reading	Read simple and brief work-related materials to perform routine tasks.
Writing	Write brief messages using short or point-form sentences.
Mathematical skills	Complete basic calculations, apply statistical methods and take measurements using a variety of instruments.
Interactive communication	Understand and use standard trade terms and work-related terminology.
Planning and organizing	Develop, set and adjust plans and priorities to achieve maximum productivity.
Decision making	Make decisions that involve varied levels of risk and ambiguity.
Problem solving	Identify problems and their solutions.
Computer literacy	Operate computerized equipment and use a limited number of software programs routinely.

## CORE SKILLS

Core skills cover those elements that comprise a broad-based knowledge of the industry. For the most part, these core skills will span multiple process areas, although some may be more relevant to a particular area. Required of all employees, the six core skills are:

SKILL	BEHAVIOUR
Teamwork	Work collaboratively with others to achieve organizational goals.
Health and safety	Adhere to health and safety, and environmental standards, regulations and policies.
Printing processes	Possess a basic understanding of the printing industry.
Workflow process and control	Monitor and chart the flow of work through production processes.
Quality assurance	Verify accuracy and quality of work to ensure that products meet expectations.
Client service	Respond to client needs, and provide seasoned advice and added value.

## OPERATING SKILLS

Available on the CPISC website ([www.cpisc-csic.ca](http://www.cpisc-csic.ca)), operating skills relate to specific operating functions within a process area. A function is defined as a set of related work activities organized in either chronological or operational order that often cut across occupations. To date, Skill Standards have been completed for a number of occupations within the printing and graphic communications industry. You can find all of them at [www.cpisc-csic.ca](http://www.cpisc-csic.ca). Categorized by process area, these occupations are:

### Prepress:

- Prepress Operator
- Colour Specialist
- Output Specialist

### Press:

- Lithographic Sheet-fed Offset Press Operator
- Lithographic Web Offset Press Operator
- Flexographic Press Operator
- Digital Press Operator

### Bindery and finishing:

- Bindery Operator
- Finishing Operator

### Production support:

- Estimator
- Sales Representative
- CSR/Production Coordinator

Here are examples of operating skills for prepress operators, lithographic web offset press operators, and bindery operators.

## PREPRESS OPERATOR

### E.1 Operate prepress computer systems

#### Requires knowledge of:

- Internal and external network environments
- Operating systems (e.g., PC, Mac)
- File types and extensions

#### Requires ability to:

- Select applications based on task
- Use applications, such as:
  - Compression (e.g., compress, span, extract, expand)
  - File transfer (e.g., add accounts, connect, transfer)

## LITHOGRAPHIC WEB OFFSET PRESS OPERATOR

### B.1 Follow make-ready checklist

#### Requires knowledge of:

- General operating procedures
- Print processes

#### Requires ability to:

- Check customer requirements and read and understand instructions and specifications
- Verify that materials meet production file specifications—both for quality and in quantity
- Schedule a productive make-ready plan
- Load paper

## BINDERY OPERATOR

### C.3 Verify quality of product throughout production

#### Requires knowledge of:

- Characteristics of the cut, such as:
  - Squareness
  - Position
- Types of marks, such as:
  - Clamp
  - Offset Press

#### Requires ability to:

- Verify quality of raw materials throughout production, such as:
  - Print imperfections (e.g., hickeys, colour variation, registration, offsetting)
  - Marking
  - Adjust machine for quality defects

## GET QUALIFIED. GET CERTIFIED.

You're skilled. You're experienced. You're motivated. And you're working in one of the fastest-changing, most technologically advanced industries in Canada. Why not take advantage of the Skill Standards to take inventory of your skills and set new goals for yourself? Reviewing the Skill Standards will help you answer some of the following questions:

- What is the true level of *my* skills compared with the current expectations of the printing and graphic communications industry?
- What skills must I develop in order to improve my contribution, enrich my job, get promoted and move my career forward?
- What training will best help me build the skills I need?

Taking inventory of your skills can help you assess your strengths and weaknesses, identify gaps and training requirements and, in the long run, help you set and reach your career goals. Skill Standards might also

give you the additional insight you need to mentor peers or newly hired employees in a focused and practical way.

Knowing the Skill Standards may also inspire you to consider earning certification in the printing and graphic communications industry. To be certified, you will need to excel in all core and operational skills outlined in the national Skill Standards particular to your occupation—even those that may not necessarily pertain to your day-to-day job responsibilities right now.

You can quickly check if you already have the skills you need with the ***Skills Assessment Checklist***—a form you can download yourself or get from your employer at [www.cpisc-csic.ca](http://www.cpisc-csic.ca).



## SETTING A NEW STANDARD

As a member of the Canadian printing industry you know an organization's success relies on the ability to produce high quality goods for clients, often within very tight deadlines, in what has become an increasingly competitive marketplace. Keeping quality and service at the highest possible level is essential for companies to remain competitive in the current market. Ensuring every single employee is performing to the best of his or her abilities is a key part of remaining competitive—and that's a specialty all on its own.

For your part, you are a professional who has knowledge and skills that the company values. Your contribution is welcome, respected and valued.

Yet ours is an industry in transition. New processes, new markets, new equipment and changing technologies have sparked a kind of revolution in print. The opportunities are many, but the knowledge and skills needed to take advantage of them are also evolving.

As a professional working in the printing and graphic communications industry, you can see the changes happening around you. You may wonder if your knowledge and skills are enough to allow you to keep building your career. Perhaps you already know of areas where you could update your skills to be ready when opportunity knocks.

Skill assessment will be key, and assessment to Skill Standards will be your quickest, most practical route to professional development.

Typically, skills assessment falls into three phases of activity. As you work with those in your company to plan your own professional development, it will help to know what they are.






	PHASE 1 PLAN	PHASE 2 ASSESS	PHASE 3 MONITOR
EMPLOYER	Determine where the company's business will be coming from in the future, and identify what skills the company will need to have on hand to do that business well.	Discuss your work and your progress, and help identify any gaps in your current knowledge and skills. Create a training plan that lists all the learning objectives they and you think are relevant.	Training progress will be monitored, you'll receive feedback to further help you succeed. This is often done with a qualified staff member who, acting as your Trainer, helps you learn on the job.
EMPLOYEE	Read the Skill Standards applicable to your occupation to learn what you should know and be able to do to contribute to the company's success.	Evaluate your own work and then meet with your employer to talk about your knowledge and skills and how the company can help you improve them. You can ask anything you want about how this training could help you in your career.	While doing training be sure to ask for help whenever you need it. Staying in close touch with your Trainer, you will be able to strengthen the knowledge and skills identified in your training plan as <i>learning objectives</i> .

## PHASE I: PLAN

In the planning phase, you should receive a copy of the national Skill Standards for your occupation. Read the Standards that apply to you carefully; they detail the exact skills and knowledge on which you will be assessed. Also, obtain a copy of the **Skills Assessment Checklist** for your occupation from your employer or download it from CPISC's website.

## PHASE 2: ASSESS

In this phase, you will meet to discuss your assessment results with your employer, and to see how you might address identified gaps and improve your contribution to the organization by further developing your knowledge and skills. Here are five things you should do.

-  **Mark the date.** You and your employer will schedule a meeting. Pencil in the time and place, and make arrangements to arrive five minutes early.
-  **Fill out the form.** Leading up to the meeting, make time to complete the **Skills Assessment Checklist**. This form is tailored to your occupation. Consider your performance and, in the 'Rating' box next to each skill, score yourself. Bear in mind that the rating scale is from one to four, with 4–*Mastery* meaning you are skilled enough to teach someone else and 1–*None* usually meaning you have not had the opportunity to acquire this skill yet.
-  **Enjoy the meeting.** Speak openly and honestly about your knowledge and skills. Offer your employer examples of your achievements and the reasons you rated yourself as you did on the **Skills Assessment Checklist**. Your employer has the duty to assess your knowledge and skills honestly, and you have the opportunity to make sure he or she is aware of your opinion too.
-  **Set your goals.** Talk to your employer about your ambitions, his or her expectations of you, and discuss any skills that your self-assessment and review suggest you can improve. Using the **Training Tracker**, identify activities that will address those gaps, and that best suit your goals and learning style. As you identify together the areas in which you would like to improve your knowledge and skills, set realistic and measureable performance targets. Be sure to talk about the various professional development opportunities that could help you reach your goals. These might include on-the-job training, mentoring, job shadowing, and both online and classroom learning.
-  **Speak your mind.** In the **Skills Assessment Checklist** form, you have the opportunity to ensure that your view of your knowledge and skills is formally documented. Put your thoughts down on paper in the *Employee Comments* field. When you're done, sign the form to show that you have read and discussed it.

### PHASE 3: MONITOR

Your job in this phase is simply to learn and progress. Be sure to participate in all planned activities, and work hard to act on all feedback from your employer—whether through a trainer, mentor or colleague. Your employer or a senior colleague should track your progress through one of the **Training Trackers** developed specially for occupations in Canada’s printing and graphic communications industry.

Meet with your employer regularly as planned to discuss your progress. Speak freely about activities that have helped you learn new skills, as well as any challenges that have arisen since your review.



### YOUR OPINION MATTERS

You know what you know, and you know what you can do. From time to time, you will have the chance to make sure your employer knows too. Every year, you will be asked to complete a self-assessment form before you meet for a review. This self-assessment gives you the opportunity to rate yourself and ensure your employer hears your opinion about the level of your knowledge and skills.

When the time for the review comes, you could be evaluated by your team leader, trainer, mentor, supervisor or manager. In any case, it will always be someone familiar with your work and who, with you, is accountable for how you perform on the job. When you hear their thoughts, you will have the chance to comment on your review—usually toward the end of the meeting. Remember, professional development is a group effort and your opinion matters. Your notes and observations will be respected and regarded as part of the official record of your meeting. Once completed, the report of your evaluation is considered confidential and will be stored in a secure location.



## USEFUL TERMS

<b>Skill:</b>	A skill is the ability to do a task. The Standards detail both the skills and knowledge required to perform specific jobs.
<b>Basic skills:</b>	These skills are essential in every print-industry occupation. They enable people to understand their responsibilities, communicate, cooperate and solve problems. They are also called enabling skills because they make it possible for employees to use and develop other skills.
<b>Core skills:</b>	These skills cover the broad-based knowledge that employees need to succeed in the printing industry. Many core skills cut across process areas, although some are especially relevant to a particular process.
<b>Operating skills:</b>	These skills relate to specific operating functions within a printing process area.
<b>Operating function:</b>	A set of related work activities organized in either chronological or operational order. Functions are not highly specific job tasks but rather groups of related activities that often cut across job titles.
<b>Skill development:</b>	A three-phase cycle of setting employee-skill expectations, assessing performance, and monitoring progress and providing feedback.
<b>Skill management:</b>	A process that identifies opportunities for skill improvement through the use of Skill Standards, goal setting, monitoring and evaluation.
<b>Manager:</b>	The person who is accountable for—and in a position to evaluate—a worker's performance. A manager could be a worker's team leader, trainer or supervisor. An employee may have one manager for operating skills and another for basic and core skills.
<b>Training:</b>	All methods of learning new skills and gaining knowledge, including on-the-job practical training, mentoring, job-shadowing, and web or classroom learning.
<b>Trainer:</b>	The person responsible for teaching a worker operating skills. A trainer may be a team leader, manager or business owner.
<b>Learning plan:</b>	A document that outlines the skills an employee needs to develop, the person responsible for overseeing the employee's training activities, and the details of when and where these activities will be carried out.









# APPENDIX A

## SKILLS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST SAMPLE

# SAMPLE

## SKILLS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### PREPRESS OPERATOR

EMPLOYEE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### REVIEW PERIOD

From: (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

To: (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

# INSTRUCTIONS

This checklist has been designed for use with **Building Your Skills**.

**Please note:** This form has been provided as a sample. Download any of the 12 occupation-specific **Skills Assessment Checklists** at [www.cpisc-csic.ca](http://www.cpisc-csic.ca).

There are two parts to this form:

1. Skills Review
2. Discussion Summary



## SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Use the Rating Chart and Skills List below to rate the level of knowledge and skills against the industry developed national Skill Standards.

### RATING CHART

ASSESSMENT STEPS	PROFICIENCY RATING	DESCRIPTOR
1. Description of task and observation	<i>1 None</i>  <i>2 Learning</i>	Employee has no knowledge or experience  Employee is acquiring knowledge and experience to develop skills
2. Employee performs simple elements of the task		
3. Employee performs the entire task with coaching and supervision	<i>3 Competent</i>  <i>4 Mastery</i>	Employee is able to perform task without supervision  Employee is able to perform task well enough to teach it to someone else
4. Employee performs entire task without supervision		
5. Employer follows up with employee to observe task performance		



## BASIC SKILLS

Basic skills are required of all employees. Basic skills, essential in all occupations, enable employees to communicate, cooperate and solve problems.

DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	PROFICIENCY LEVEL			
<b>READING</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Reading text (print and non-print media) to understand and comprehend work-related matters. Locating and integrating information from various sources to apply to work-related situations.	Reads simple and brief work-related materials to perform routine tasks.				
	Reads lengthy texts to extract single or multiple pieces of simple information.				
	Reads complex texts to extract and interpret information.				
	Reads factual materials on work-related topics to locate specific details.				
<b>WRITING</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Communicating in writing to ensure information and messages are clear, concise and easy to understand	Writes brief messages using short or point-form sentences.				
<b>MATHEMATICAL SKILLS</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Performing mathematical calculations. Performing measurements using a variety of instruments.	Completes basic calculations.				
	Takes measurements using a variety of instruments.				
	Completes complex mathematical calculations.				
	Performs complex measurements.				
	Applies statistical methods.				
<b>INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Listening to others, understanding and communicating in an effective manner. Interactive communication may be expressed in other forms for individuals with impairments.	Listens and understands information.				
	Presents information in a clear manner.				
	Uses standard trade terms and work-related terminology.				
	Communicates in complex situations.				
	Adapts communication content, style and medium.				

DEFINITION		EXAMPLES	PROFICIENCY LEVEL			
<b>PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION</b>			None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Developing, setting and adjusting plans and priorities to achieve maximum productivity.	Plans and organizes own activities.					
<b>DECISION MAKING</b>			None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Making decisions involving varied levels of risk and ambiguity.	Makes decisions using explicit guidelines and procedures.					
	Makes decisions by interpreting rules and procedures and weighing several factors.					
<b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b>			None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Identifying problems and their solutions.	Identifies and solves basic problems using readily available information.					
	Identifies and solves complex problems that may not have precedent-based solutions.					
	Shares best practices.					
<b>COMPUTER LITERACY</b>			None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Using computer software and computerized equipment.	Uses a limited number of software programs routinely.					
	Operates computerized equipment.					
	Uses multiple software programs and computerized equipment.					
	Supports others in developing computer literacy.					



## CORE SKILLS

Core skills cover the broad-based knowledge required for successful employee performance in the printing and graphic communications industry.

DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	PROFICIENCY LEVEL			
<b>TEAMWORK</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Working collaboratively with others to achieve organizational goals.	Collaborates with others.				
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Maintaining a healthy and safe working environment to prevent injury and/or loss. Adhering to health and safety and environmental standards, regulations and policies.	Maintains a healthy and safe working environment.				
	Maintains equipment and devices to ensure safety of self and others.				
	Follows safety practices.				
	Follows safety procedures.				
	Abides by current federal and provincial safety legislation and regulations.				
<b>PRINTING PROCESSES</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Possesses a basic understanding of the printing industry.	Demonstrates a basic understanding of the steps involved in printing processes (prepress, press, bindery and finishing).				
	Demonstrates a basic understanding of the printing industry.				
<b>WORKFLOW PROCESS AND CONTROL</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Monitoring and charting the flow of work through production processes. Managing the performance of processes to achieve optimal results.	Adheres to production schedules and requirements.				

DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	PROFICIENCY LEVEL			
<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Verifying accuracy and quality of work to ensure that products meet expectations.	Verifies the quality of materials.				
	Adheres to established quality standards.				
	Ensures that equipment outputs meets standards.				
	Verifies production accuracy and quality.				
	Provides ongoing constructive feedback to improve quality of work.				
	Builds culture of quality improvement.				
<b>CLIENT SERVICE</b>		None	Learning	Competent	Mastery
Providing service excellence to internal and/or external clients.	Responds to client needs.				
	Provides added value.				
	Provides seasoned advice.				



# OPERATING SKILLS

Operating skills relate to specific operating functions within a process area. A function is defined as a set of related work activities organized in either chronological or operational order that often cut across occupations.

The following section outlines the operating skills all prepress operators need to do their jobs effectively.

## B. PERFORM PRE-FLIGHT OPERATIONS

This task is important because it helps to:

- Ensure that materials are complete and meet the job-order requirements.

PROFICIENCY LEVEL			
None	Learning	Competent	Mastery

### B1. VERIFY ACCURACY AND QUALITY OF MATERIAL PROVIDED BY CLIENT

#### REQUIRES KNOWLEDGE OF:

a. Mac OS and PC platforms				
b. Pre-flight and industry standard software				
c. File specifications and standards				
d. Desktop publishing terminology				
e. File naming conventions				
f. Printing terminology				

#### REQUIRES ABILITY TO:

a. Verify files received against job order				
b. Open files using appropriate software				
c. Verify that images meet company, industry and client standards				
d. Check that all images and graphics are provided				
e. Verify that all required fonts are accessible, complete and compatible with appropriate applications				
f. Produce in-house proof				
g. Verify file characteristics				
h. Verify that files have the appropriate layout and geometry				
i. Document potential production issues				
j. Verify accuracy and quality of work so that products meet expectations				
k. Communicate issues with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimators</li> <li>• Planners</li> <li>• Operators</li> <li>• Production support staff (e.g., customer service representatives, supervisors, managers)</li> <li>• Sales representatives</li> </ul>				



## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Summarize the main points of the meeting. Your employee may also wish to add comments.

### MANAGER DISCUSSION SUMMARY & COMMENTS

### EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

MANAGER'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_







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