

Guidelines for Designating Supervisors in the Integrated System (IS)

What is the role of a supervisor?

Simply put, a supervisor is someone who is responsible for the performance of others. The role of a supervisor is to provide direction to employees, set priorities, assign work, ensure quality and resolve complex problems. This role includes not only front line supervisors, but also managers, directors, faculty, and senior academic/administrative leaders of the University. In addition, those in a supervisory role act as representatives of the University, taking action or making commitments on behalf of U.Va.

What else do we expect of supervisors here at U.Va?

At U.Va., a successful supervisor is expected to be people focused and have an interest in leadership and progressive supervisory experience. The supervisor mentors others, builds collaborative relationships, is resourceful and action oriented. Additionally, the successful supervisor has a clear understanding of the University's vision and culture, and works directly in support of that vision. These abilities are described further in the [University Leadership Characteristics](#).

What functions are they responsible for?

At a minimum, to be designated a supervisor in the Integrated System (IS), individuals must demonstrate a willingness and an ability to perform the following supervisory functions.

- participating in the hiring process by developing position descriptions, interviewing and selecting new hires
- discussing and assisting in setting employee performance goals
- ensuring that employee work is completed successfully
- providing support for employee learning and development
- discussing and assisting in employee career planning
- providing ongoing training, coaching, mentoring and performance feedback
- conducting an annual performance evaluation
- participating in the salary increase and rewards process
- taking disciplinary action, when necessary
- completing the transactions & reporting required to support these functions
- approving time and leave
- reviewing and approving travel and purchases, as needed
- providing financial and administrative oversight as required for effective internal controls
- adhering to U.Va. policies and procedures and applicable state and federal law

Why is it important to designate the correct supervisor in IS?

U.Va employee surveys clearly show that an employee's relationship with their supervisor is the most important factor in their decision to come and stay at U.Va. Highly effective supervisors, therefore, are a key to our goal of having a talented workforce to meet the future needs of the University.

Surveys also indicated that supervisors want more flexibility than the State Classified system provides, and better tools to recruit, develop and retain employees. The new University Staff HR Plan is providing the flexibility and tools to meet the needs of supervisors; but this increased flexibility requires an emphasis on supervisory skills and effective decision-making.

Many of the tools for performing essential supervisory functions have been moved online and will be accessed through the Integrated System. The supervisor designation is used by multiple systems, including:

- **Human Resources (HR)**
- **Manager Self-Service (SSHR)**
- **Self Service Time and Leave (SSTL)** (approval of time & leave)
- **iExpense** (for expense report approval)
- **Finance** (to identify manager/supervisor for key project/award members)
- **Jobs@U.Va**
- **LEAD@U.Va** (conduct performance planning & evaluation, learning & career development, and participate in the compensation management process)

In some cases, authority to perform certain transactions may be delegated to others; however, accountability for compliance cannot be delegated. It continues to be the responsibility of the designated supervisor to ensure that the transactions are performed in accordance with University policies and procedures. Therefore, it is critical that each school/unit correctly designate supervisors/managers in IS, who are willing and able to be responsible for the functions described above.

What other considerations are important when designating supervisors?

FLSA guidelines state that a supervisor is someone who is held accountable for the performance of other employees, and exercises independent judgment on matters other than routine or clerical tasks. A supervisor also spends at least 15% of their time performing the majority of the supervisory functions listed above.

In reality, effective supervision of employees typically involves much more than 15% and may constitute the majority of a supervisor's time. Supervisors should be interested in management, and in acquiring the necessary supervisory skills to do the job well. Supervisors must be familiar with their employees' work. In all cases the supervisor should be in a position to effectively evaluate performance, and provide meaningful development and coaching, even if the supervisor and employee are in different locations.

Typically, supervisors should have no more than 7 – 10 direct reports; however, the actual number of direct reports for a supervisor should be determined by their ability to effectively perform the functions listed. For example:

- If a supervisor oversees a diverse group of functions, then the number of direct reports should be limited. Having many direct reports would most likely exceed the supervisor's span of knowledge or control.
- If a supervisor has a group of the same or similar functions, then it is reasonable to have more direct reports, because the reports' work is similar. The number should still be limited by the supervisor's ability to provide their employees with effective supervision, performance, development and career management.
- Employees who function as "leads" in their area and who help direct the day to day activities of co-workers may not be considered supervisors because they do not perform the majority of the work listed above. Schools and units have an opportunity to identify employees in these positions who have an interest and aptitude for management, and begin developing their supervisory skills to prepare them for formal supervisory roles.

How do we change supervisor designations?

Supervisor designations may be updated in the IS by HR representatives within the schools/units, or by contacting Human Resources Consulting Services.