U.S. Department of the Interior

Performance Appraisal Handbook (370 DM 430)

A Guide for Managers/Supervisors and Employees

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Timeline for the Performance Appraisal System

5-Level Performance System

Or as otherwise approved by the DOI Office of Human Resources	October 1 to September 30	**Appraisal Period** – The appraisal period coincides with the fiscal year, October 1 to September 30.
Or 30 days after the end of the Performance Appraisal Period	October 1 to 31	**Complete the performance appraisal for prior fiscal year that ended on September 30.**
Or 60 calendars from beginning of appraisal cycle	October 1 to November 30	**Maximum time to finalize performance standards** – Timeframe in which performance standards are finalized and approved. The maximum time a rating official has to put an employee under elements and standards, i.e., establish an Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP).
	90 Calendar Days	**Minimum Appraisal Period** – The length of time, 90 calendar days, that the employee must be performing under an approved EPAP in a given position in order to be eligible for an interim or annual rating.
Or approximately midway through Performance Appraisal period	March through May	**Progress Review** – Discussion with the employee <u>at least once</u> during the appraisal period to review the employee's progress and communicate performance as compared to the established standards; to make any recommended revisions to critical elements/performance standards; and to consider/identify any developmental needs or performance improvement required.
	As Required	**Interim Appraisal** – Required when an employee has worked under standards in the position for 90 days and if one or more of the following occurs: Employee changes position (i.e., reassignment, promotion, change to lower grade, transfer), completes a temporary assignment of 120 days or more (i.e., detail, temporary promotion, etc.), the rating official leaves a supervisory position, or to document a level of competence determination for within-grade increase purposes when the employee's most recent rating of record is not consistent with the level of competence determination.

INTRODUCTION

Managing employee performance is an integral part of the work that all managers and rating officials perform throughout the year. It is as important as managing financial resources and program outcomes because employee performance, or the lack thereof, has a profound effect on both the financial and program components of any organization.

The Department of the Interior's performance management policy is designed to document the expectations of individual and organizational performance, provide a meaningful process by which employees can be rewarded for noteworthy contributions to the organization, and provide a mechanism to improve individual/organizational performance as necessary.

To accomplish these objectives, managers need to identify organizational goals to be accomplished, communicate individual and organizational goals to employees that support the overall strategic mission and Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals of the Department, monitor and evaluate employee performance, and use performance as a basis for appropriate personnel actions, including rewarding noteworthy performance and taking action to improve less than successful performance.

The Office of Personnel Management defines performance management as the systematic process of:

- **planning** work and setting expectations
- continually **monitoring** performance
- **developing** the capacity to perform
- periodically **rating** performance in a summary fashion; and
- **rewarding** good performance

This handbook is designed for Department of the Interior rating officials and employees to assist with the management of employee performance that is aligned with and supports organizational goals. It is divided into five areas coinciding with OPM's definition, with the final section expanded to include taking other actions based on performance including dealing with poor performance.

SECTION 1 - PLANNING

In an effective organization, work is planned in advance. This includes setting performance expectations and goals for individuals in order to channel efforts toward achieving organizational objectives. Involving employees in the planning process is essential to their understanding of the goals of the organization, what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and expectations for accomplishing goals.

Performance elements tell employees what they have to do and standards tell them how well they have to do it.

DEVELOPING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PLANS (EPAP) The regulatory requirements for planning an employee's performance include establishing the elements and standards in their EPAP (EPAP). An EPAP outlines the specific elements and standards that the employee is expected to accomplish during the rating cycle. Performance elements and standards should be measurable, understandable, verifiable, equitable, and achievable. In addition, EPAPs should be flexible so that they can be adjusted for changing program objectives and work requirements. When used effectively, these plans can be beneficial working documents that are discussed often, and not merely paperwork that is filed in a drawer and seen only when ratings of record are required.

ELEMENTS The Department's policy outlines that employees may have a minimum of one and no more than five elements in their appraisal plans, all of which will be considered critical. Through these elements, employees are held accountable as individuals for work assignments and responsibilities of their position. A critical element is an assignment or responsibility of such importance that unsatisfactory performance in that element alone would result in a determination that the employee's overall performance is unsatisfactory. As defined by law, failure on one or more critical elements can result in the employee's reassignment, removal, or reduction in grade. Consequently, critical elements must describe work assignments and responsibilities that are significantly influenced by an employee's work effort and within the employee's control. For most employees this means that critical elements **cannot** describe a group's performance. However, a supervisor or manager can and should be held accountable for seeing that results measured at the group or team level are achieved. Critical elements assessing group performance may be appropriate to include in the EPAP of a supervisor, manager, or team leader who can reasonably be expected to command the production and resources necessary to achieve the results (i.e., held individually accountable).

Supervisors and managers may use several documents and/or sources to assist them in determining the appropriate critical elements for their employees. These include but are not limited to:

- Goals and objectives as outlined in the Department's strategic plan
- Specific performance goals established for a given program area as outlined in the Department's annual performance plan
- Bureau/Office specific program goals and objectives
- Functional area/organizational goals and objectives
- Other internal management policy/direction
- Laws and/or regulatory requirements
- Customer/stakeholder feedback
- Employee input
- Employee position descriptions

Mandatory Elements: Department policy requires the following mandatory elements be included:

- **All supervisors/managers**— EPAPs for all supervisors and managers shall include the following critical element (one of the maximum of 5 elements)**:**

  Supervisory/Managerial Element: *Performance of supervisory/managerial duties will be carried out in accordance with regulatory requirements and other Bureau/Office policies governing the following areas:*
  - *Diversity/EEO obligations;*
  - *Internal management controls;*
  - *Merit Systems Principles;*
  - *Safety and Occupational Health obligations;*

- *Effective performance management; and*
- *Effective management of ethics, conduct & discipline issues.*

(See Benchmark Standards below for description of standards for supervisors at the various performance levels.)

- **All employees**—EPAPs must have at least one performance element that is linked to the strategic mission and Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) goals of the Department, Bureau/Office, and/or work unit. Rating officials should determine which appropriate GPRA/mission strategic goal(s), end outcome goal(s), end outcome performance measure(s), strategies, or strategy performance measure(s) can best be utilized to develop the critical element(s) and standards in each employee's performance appraisal plan. This element(s) should be clearly labeled on the EPAP. (See Appendix 1 for some specific Bureau/Office examples.)

STANDARDS The performance standards are expressions of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met for each element at a particular level of performance. They must be focused on results and include credible measures such as:

- **QUALITY,** addresses how well the employee or work unit is expected to perform the work and/or the accuracy or effectiveness of the final product. It refers to accuracy, appearance, usefulness, or effectiveness. Measures can include error rates (such as the number or percentage of errors allowable per unit of work) and customer satisfaction rates (determined through a customer survey/feedback).

- **QUANTITY** addresses how much work the employee or work unit is expected to produce. Measures are expressed as a number of products or services expected, or as a general result to achieve.

- **TIMELINESS** addresses how quickly, when, or by what date the employee or work unit is expected to produce the work.

- **COST-EFFECTIVENESS** addresses dollar savings or cost control. These should address cost-effectiveness on specific resource levels (money, personnel, or time) that can generally be documented and measured. Cost-effectiveness measures may include such aspects of performance as maintaining or reducing unit costs, reducing the time it takes to produce or provide a product or service, or reducing waste.

To develop specific measures, the rating official must determine which of the above general measure(s) are important for a given element, and then determine how to measure it.

When specific standards are developed in addition to, or in lieu of, the benchmark standards listed below, regulation requires description at the Fully Successful level, at a minimum. However, rating officials are strongly encouraged to develop standards at additional levels so employees clearly understand their performance expectations at various levels.

In addition, if the benchmark standards below are not used, standards developed by the rating official should require levels of performance that are essentially equivalent to that described by the benchmark standard at each level. See Appendix 2 to assist you in developing your own standards.

The following benchmark standards are provided for your use in describing expected performance at the various levels of the plan. These benchmark standards can be applied to every position, but should be augmented with specific standards that describe the results expected at the various levels of performance for each element.

While each and every criterion described in the standards will not have to be met by the employee in absolute terms to assign a particular rating level, the rating official MUST ensure the employee understands the overall level of performance they are expected to meet in order to be assigned a given rating level.

The standards are separated into Non-Supervisory and Supervisory.

Benchmark Employee Performance Standards

Exceptional:

Employee demonstrates particularly excellent performance that is of such high quality that organizational goals have been achieved that would not have been otherwise. The employee demonstrates mastery of technical skills and a thorough understanding of the mission of the organization and has a fundamental impact on the completion of program objectives.

The employee exerts a major positive influence on management practices, operating procedures and/or program implementation, which contributes substantially to organizational growth and recognition. The employee plans for the unexpected and uses alternate ways of reaching goals. Difficult assignments are handled intelligently and effectively. The employee has produced an exceptional quantity of work, often ahead of established schedules and with little supervision.

The employee's oral and written communications are exceptionally clear and effective. He/she improves cooperation among participants in the workplace and prevents misunderstandings. Complicated or controversial subjects are presented or explained effectively to a variety of audiences so that desired outcomes are achieved.

Superior:

Employee demonstrates unusually good performance that exceeds expectations in critical areas and exhibits a sustained support of organizational goals. The employee shows a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of the job and the procedures for meeting them.

Effective planning by the employee improves the quality of management practices, operating procedures, task assignments and/or program activities. The employee develops and/or implements workable and cost-effective approaches to meeting organizational goals.
The employee demonstrates an ability to get the job done well in more than one way while handling difficult and unpredicted problems. The employee produces a high quantity of work, often ahead of established schedules with less than normal supervision.

The employee writes and speaks clearly on difficult subjects to a wide range of audiences and works effectively with others to accomplish organizational objectives.

Fully Successful:

The employee demonstrates good, sound performance that meets organizational goals. All critical activities are generally completed in a timely manner and supervisor is kept informed of work issues, alterations and status. The employee effectively applies technical skills and organizational knowledge to get the job done. The employee successfully carries out regular duties while also handling any difficult special assignments. The employee plans and performs work according to organizational priorities and schedules. The employee communicates clearly and effectively.

Minimally Successful:

The employee's performance shows serious deficiencies that requires correction. The employee's work frequently needs revision or adjustments to meet a minimally successful level. All assignments are completed, but often require assistance from supervisor and/or peers. Organizational goals and objectives are met only as a result of close supervision. On one or more occasions, important work requires unusually close supervision to meet organizational goals or needs so much revision that deadlines were missed or imperiled.

Employee shows a lack of awareness of policy implications or assignments; inappropriate or incomplete use of programs or services; circumvention of established procedures, resulting in unnecessary expenditure of time or money; reluctance to accept responsibility; disorganization in carrying out assignments; incomplete understanding of one or more important areas of the field of work; unreliable methods for completing assignments; lack of clarity in writing and speaking; and/or failure to promote team spirit.

Unsatisfactory:

The employee's performance is unsatisfactory. The quality and quantity of the employee's work are not adequate for the position. Work products do not meet the minimum requirements expected.

The employee demonstrates little or no contribution to organizational goals; failure to meet work objectives; inattention to organizational priorities and administrative requirements; poor work habits resulting in missed deadlines and/or incomplete work products; strained work relationships; failure to respond to client needs; and/or lack of response to supervisor's corrective efforts.

Benchmark Supervisory Performance Standards

Exceptional:

Supervisory: The employee demonstrates excellent leadership skills and with only rare exceptions develops effective working relationships with others. The employee immediately handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness, and demonstrates foresight in correcting situations that may cause future problems before they arise. The employee encourages independence and risk-taking among subordinates, yet takes responsibility for their actions. The employee is open to and solicits the views of others, and promotes cooperation among peers and subordinates, while guiding, motivating and stimulating positive responses.

The employee demonstrates a strong commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity and the affirmative action objectives of the organization, and has a significant positive impact on achievement of goals in this area. In addition, the employee demonstrates innovation and specific positive achievements in meeting other management obligations such as safety, internal management controls, merit systems principles, performance management, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

Superior:
Supervisory: The employee demonstrates good leadership skills and establishes sound working relationships. The employee almost always handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness. The employee shows good judgment in dealing with others and considering their views. The employee has a strong sense of mission and seeks out responsibility. The employee demonstrates a commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity and the affirmative action objectives of the organization, and has a positive impact on achievement of goals in this area. In addition, the employee promotes a safe working environment and solutions to problems encountered in meeting other management obligations including internal management controls, merit systems obligations, managing performance, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

Fully Successful:

Supervisory: The employee is a capable leader who works successfully with others and listens to suggestions. The employee generally handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness. The employee also works well as a team member, supporting the group's efforts and showing an ability to handle a variety of interpersonal situations. The employee's work with others shows an understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal opportunity and meets all management commitments related to providing a safe working environment, merit systems obligations, performance management, and internal controls, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

Minimally Successful:

Supervisory: The employee's supervisory performance shows serious deficiencies that require correction. The employee sometimes fails to motivate subordinates and promote team spirit; provide clear assignments and performance requirements or sufficient instructions to subordinates; provide sufficient explanation of organizational goals to subordinates; satisfy customer needs and/or meet customer service objectives; and/or meet production or mission goals in a timely and quality manner. The employee's work with others fails to show a consistent understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal opportunity. The employee does

not meet all management obligations related to internal controls, merit system obligations, performance management, and/or management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

Unsatisfactory:

Supervisory: The employee's supervisory performance is unsatisfactory. The employee usually fails to motivate subordinates and promote team spirit; often provides unclear assignments and performance requirements or insufficient instructions to subordinates; frequently fails to provide sufficient explanation of organizational goals to subordinates; generally fails to satisfy customer needs and/or meet customer service objectives; and/or frequently fails to meet production or mission goals in a timely and quality manner. The employee's work with others consistently fails to show an understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal opportunity. Employee frequently fails to meet other management obligations related to internal controls, merit systems obligations, performance management, and/or management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION
Supervisors/managers should encourage employees to participate in establishing the EPAP for their position. By participating, employees get a clearer understanding of what is required and what role their position plays in the activity of the organization. The final decision regarding critical elements and standards always rests with the management official, however.

Employee participation may be accomplished as follows:

(1) Employee and rating official jointly developing the EPAP;
(2) Employee providing the rating official with a draft plan;
(3) Rating official providing the employee with a draft plan, or
(4) Employee writing one of the critical elements that he/she performs in his/her position.

DOCUMENTING ELEMENTS AND STANDARDS The critical elements and associated descriptions of expected performance described at the "fully successful" level, at a minimum, must be documented on the EPAP (See Appendix 8) and signed by the rating official and the employee. Reviewing officials may be required to review/approve the EPAP as determined by their Bureau/Office.

EPAPs should be developed and put in place within 60 days of the beginning of the appraisal period, the employee's entrance on duty, the assignment of an employee to a detail or temporary promotion scheduled to exceed 120 days, the assignment of an employee to a new position, or their assignment to a new or different supervisory position. Rating officials who move out of their position more than 90 days before the end of the rating period should finalize progress reviews and where standards had been in place for the minimum of 90 days, prepare an interim appraisal for the incoming rating official. If an employee moves to a supervisory position in the new organization, a review of the previous EPAPs should be accomplished and if accepted, both the new rating official and the employee sign and date the EPAP. If the new rating official makes changes to the plan, a new plan must be put in place, allowing the employee a minimum of 90 days under the new plan before a rating may be assigned.

In order for the employee to receive a rating of record during the rating year, elements and standards must be in place a minimum of 90 days before the end of the rating period.

SECTION 2 - MONITORING

Effective and timely feedback during the performance appraisal period addressing employee performance on elements and standards is an essential component of a successful performance management program. Employees need to know in a timely manner how well they are performing. They need to be told what they are doing well and if there are areas needing improvement.

Feedback can come from many different sources: observation by managers and rating officials, measurement systems, feedback from peers, and input from customers, just to name a few. It will be up to rating officials to determine how best to gather the information, and from which sources, to ensure an effective rating of the employees under their supervision.

Designing effective feedback into a performance management program will improve individual and team performance and will make your organization more effective. With effective feedback processes, employees can see their progress and that motivates them to reach their performance goals successfully.

When providing feedback, the following concepts should be kept in mind:

- Feedback works best when it relates to a specific goal, such as those established in the employee's performance appraisal plan. Basing feedback on the employee's performance against his or her elements and standards is key to providing tangible, objective, and powerful feedback. Telling employees that they are doing well because they exceeded their goal by 10 percent is more effective than simply saying, "You're doing a good job."
- Employees should receive information about how they are doing in as timely a fashion as possible. If they need to improve their performance, the sooner they find out about it, the sooner they can correct the problem. If employees have reached or exceeded a goal, the sooner they receive positive feedback, the more rewarding it is to them.
- Feedback should be given in a manner that will best help improve performance. Since people respond better to information presented in a positive way, express feedback in a positive manner. This is not to say that information should be sugar-coated, but present accurate, factual, and complete feedback; it is more effective when it reinforces what the employee did well and then identifies what the employee needs to do in the future to further improve his/her performance.

Part of the monitoring process includes conducting at least one formal progress review during each appraisal period at approximately mid-way through the rating cycle. The completion of this progress review should be noted on the employee's performance appraisal plan and signed and dated by both the rating official and the employee. While only one progress review is required, rating officials are encouraged to frequently discuss performance with subordinate employees during the appraisal period. This is particularly critical in the case of an employee who <u>is</u> <u>not</u> performing at the "fully successful" level. In this case, it may be necessary to provide additional written criteria on performance expectations and/or set up regular feedback sessions with the employee. **<u>It is important to contact your servicing human resources office for advice and assistance before taking any action</u>**.

Some issues that may be discussed in a performance review:

For both employees & supervisors

- Communication
- Training Needs (formal, on-the-job, etc.)
- Sufficiency of skills and knowledge level for successful performance
- Status of work (challenging, fulfilling)
- Delegation of assignments
- Getting/giving regular feedback

For supervisors

- What could I do to help make your job easier or help you in any way?
- Is your staff responding to assignments appropriately and in a timely fashion?

Rating officials should document employee performance, both good and when improvement is needed, throughout the year. Doing this will allow the rating official to provide specific examples to the employee during progress reviews, during the rating of record, or at other times throughout the year.

See Appendix 3 for additional supervisory guidance on Performance Reviews.

See Appendix 4 for additional employee guidance on Performance Reviews.

Rating officials should contact their servicing Human Resources Office or Employee Relations Specialist for assistance as soon as problems with an employee's performance develop. Also see Section 5 for more information on dealing with poor performance.

SECTION 3 –DEVELOPING EMPLOYEES

The process of performance management provides an excellent opportunity to identify developmental needs. During planning and monitoring of work, deficiencies in performance become evident and can be addressed. Areas for improving good performance also stand out, and action can be taken to help successful employees improve even further.

Providing employees with training and developmental opportunities encourages good performance, strengthens job-related skills and competencies, and helps employees keep up with changes in the workplace, such as the introduction of new technology.

Developing employees is more than just training employees. Developing employees covers all efforts to foster learning, which happens on the job every day. When organizations focus on developing their employees' capacity to perform rather than just training them, employees will be able to adapt to a variety of situations, which is vital for the survival, well-being, and goal achievement of individuals as well as organizations.

Employee development can be either formal or informal. **Formal** development may include:

- **traditional training** in structured courses, classrooms, and formal development programs;
- **self-study courses**, including those using computer technology, such as distance learning over the Internet, CD-ROM courses, and Intranet courses provided to employees addressing agency-specific skills and competencies.

One effective means of identifying formal training for an employee is establishing an Individual Development Plan (IDP), as follows:

The Individual Development Plan 1-2-3 Process

1. Self-Assessment. The employee reviews prior job experience, training, education and other developmental experiences to provide concrete information regarding current strengths and skills. This could include a review of past applications for employment and past training records.

The employee reviews the standards for work performance to determine core competencies necessary for the job and past performance evaluations for indications of areas needing improvement and identifies core skills specific to that need.

The employee assesses personal career goals and determines both short and long term steps toward achieving the goals.

The employee identifies specific opportunities for developmental experiences and researches possible sources for development. The employee may seek out career counseling from a variety of sources including peers, current and past supervisors, and the human resources staff.

The supervisor is available for clarifying and counseling.

2. Discussions and Collaboration. In order to obtain mutual commitment between the supervisor and the employee, open discussion and collaboration is necessary.

The employee and supervisor mutually agree to discuss the results of the self-assessment and draft IDP prepared by the employee. The discussion includes both perspectives of organizational needs, job requirements, the employee's strengths and developmental needs, financial limitations, timing and learning opportunities that the supervisor will actively support.

The supervisor coaches the employee by giving open and constructive feedback, identifying challenging assignments, discussing career paths in the organization and reasonable timeframes for meeting the objectives of the IDP.

The supervisor and employee sign a completed IDP based on mutual agreement or final decisions of the supervisor.

3. Implementation and Follow-up. The employee ensures that any necessary procurement or training request forms are prepared and monitors work that is assigned to best accomplish the IDP's developmental experiences. The employee reports on completion of items in the IDP. The supervisor and the employee meet periodically throughout the year to review and update the IDP.

Bureaus/Offices may require the use of an IDP at their discretion. Check with your Human Resources Office for the IDP or other appropriate form to be used by your Bureau/Office for documenting employee development needs.

While managers have a large influence over formal training, they have even greater impact on creating a climate for **informal** employee development, which can take a wide variety of forms:

- **Feedback** is a natural part of the monitoring process of performance management, but specific and timely feedback to employees about their performance against established expectations also provides the foundation for discussing developmental needs.
- **Job rotations and special assignments** can stretch and challenge employees and broaden their understanding of the organization.
- **Coaching and counseling** provides individualized advice and instruction.
- **Mentoring** helps employees clarify career goals, understand the organization, analyze strengths and developmental needs, build support networks, and deal with roadblocks.
- **Using the manager as an informal teacher** acknowledges that managers consciously teach employees through their own model, habits, and system of values.
- **Learning teams** can form to meet regularly to focus on improving performance.
- **Self-development** includes a broad collection of techniques and approaches, demonstrations at other organizations.

Although these informal developmental strategies cost very little, they have potentially big payoffs in terms of improved individual and organizational performance.

As part of a "performance improvement period," training and/or development may also become a critical component of demonstrating assistance to employees who are not meeting performance requirements.

Rating officials should contact their servicing Human Resources Office or Employee Relations Specialist for assistance as soon as problems with an employee's performance develop. Also see Section 5 for more information on dealing with poor performance.

For additional information about the IDP, see Appendix 5.

SECTION 4 - RATING

Within the context of formal performance appraisal requirements, rating means evaluating employee performance against the elements and standards in an employee's performance appraisal plan and assigning a rating of record. The rating of record is based on work performed during the entire 12-month appraisal period, including temporary assignments over 120 days.

To be eligible for a rating of record an employee must:

- Be a permanent full-/part-time employee; and
- Be under established standards for a minimum of 90 days;

OR

- Be a temporary employee who has worked more than 120 days during the annual appraisal period; and
- Be under established standards for at least the last 90 days.

INTERIM APPRAISALS Interim appraisals are written ratings prepared when an employee has worked under performance standards in the position for 90 days and if one or more of the following occurs:

- The employee changes position (i.e., reassignment, promotion, change to lower grade, transfer);
- The employee completes a temporary assignment of more than120 days (i.e., detail, temporary promotion, etc.);
- The rating official leaves the supervisory position more than 90 days before the end of the rating cycle;
- To document a level of competence determination for within-grade increase purposes when the employee's most recent rating of record is not consistent with the level of competence determination. A rating for this purpose becomes the rating of record.

A copy of the interim appraisal will be provided to the new rating official and to the employee. Any interim appraisals should be considered by the new rating official in assigning an official annual rating of record.

The weight given to interim ratings in deriving annual ratings of record shall be proportional to their share of the appraisal period.

RATING CRITICAL ELEMENTS Rating officials should compile performance data from various sources as a part of the rating process. It is often a good idea to ask employees to keep track of their own progress using data identified during the planning phase so they can provide a complete account of their accomplishments during progress reviews and the final rating. As discussed above, rating officials, as they deem appropriate, should also talk to customers and peers, review documentation, and incorporate other feedback if available to ensure a complete picture of the employee's performance.

The rating assigned reflects the level of the employee's performance as compared to the standards established. If an employee does not have an opportunity to perform a critical element during the rating period, no rating will be assigned and the words "Not Rated" should be written on the EPAP for that element.

When assigning a rating for each element, the rating official should consider the following:

1. Read carefully each performance standard level beginning with the Fully Successful one. It is to be considered the base level standard.
2. Determine the level that best describes the employee's performance on the element. Each and every criterion in the standard does not have to be met by the employee in absolute terms to assign a particular rating level. The sum of the employee's performance of the element must, in the rater's judgment, meet the assigned level's criteria.

Each performance element should be assigned one of the following ratings based on the employee's performance for the appraisal period and documented on the
Plan:

Rating Level	Points Assigned
Exceptional	5 points
Superior	4 points
Fully Successful	3 points
Minimally Successful	2 points
Unsatisfactory	0 point

RATING OF RECORD Within 30 days following completion of the appraisal period (including any extensions, if applicable), the rating official shall review the performance of each employee based on previously communicated elements and standards and prepare the annual rating of record.

Rating officials shall not assign employee ratings under an arbitrary distribution system (such as a bell curve). This is contrary to the intent of the appraisal system and would interfere with assigning ratings based on actual performance.

A narrative summary must be written for each critical element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory. This narrative should contain examples of the employee's performance that substantiate and explain how the employee's performance falls within the levels assigned. The narrative summaries are recorded on the EPAP. A narrative summary is encouraged, but not required, for ratings of Superior and Fully Successful.

All ratings of record of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, and Unsatisfactory must be reviewed and approved by the reviewing official prior to discussion with the employee. A review of the summary rating is not required for ratings of Superior and Fully Successful, unless established by internal Bureau/Office guidance. See Appendix 8 for a sample completed EPAP.

DISCUSSION WITH EMPLOYEE The rating official will discuss the completed EPAP with the employee after all required approvals are obtained.

The rating official should be prepared to have a thorough performance rating discussion. In preparation for the discussion, the rating official should ensure the following:

- All necessary approvals of the rating of record have been completed.
- Employee performance on each critical element during the rating period has been reviewed and noted, including tasks that were completed well and any areas needing improvement. Specific examples should be noted when possible.
- A private location and adequate time has been put aside to meet with the employee, including time for employee input (As a general rule, 30 minutes to one hour per employee).
- Future expectations and goals of the organization have been considered.

During the meeting, the rating official should do the following:

- Be professional, calm and focused on performance issues.
- Begin with positive feedback on tasks the employee has done well regardless of what the final rating is.
- Go through each element and discuss items of note, both positive and negative as appropriate and assign a rating.
- Provide specific examples when possible.
- Describe any changes in performance required and ensure the employee understands.
- Allow for employee questions and input throughout.
- Summarize the performance and assign the rating of record.
- Have the employee sign and date the "Employee" block on the EPAP.
- Sign and date the "Rating Official" block on the EPAP.

Rating Officials should keep a copy of the completed EPAP for their files, provide a copy of the completed and signed form to the employee, and send the original to the servicing Human Resources Office within 60 days of the end of the rating period to be filed in the Employee Performance Folder (EPF).

EMPLOYEE SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS An employee may submit written comments to the overall rating of record, the element ratings and/or the

narrative comments if they desire. This may occur if an employee wishes to provide specific information on noteworthy accomplishments that the rating official did not include, or if they have other comments that they wish to include as part of the performance appraisal plan. NOTE: **THIS PROCESS MAY BE UTILIZED ONLY WHEN THE EMPLOYEE IS NOT CONTESTING THE RATING HE/SHE RECEIVED ON A GIVEN ELEMENT, WHICH, IF CHANGED, WOULD AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE OVERALL RATING OF RECORD.**

These comments must be submitted to the rating official within 30 days of the date the employee receives/signs the rating of record on the EPAP. The rating official should forward these comments to their Servicing Human Resources Office to be filed with the completed EPAP in the EPF. These written comments will not change the rating of record as determined by the rating official.

RECONSIDERATION PROCESS When an employee has a concern about the rating given on a particular element, which, if changed, will affect the outcome of the rating of record, he/she may request a reconsideration of this rating through their Bureau/Office reconsideration process.

Each Bureau/Office may determine the process that will be utilized when an employee requests reconsideration of a rating, and whether to use the reviewing official in the reconsideration process, or choose a reconsideration official, reconsideration committee, or other designee to review the reconsideration request. Bureaus/Offices have discretion to change the process and/or timeframes outlined below, but must ensure the process includes an informal and formal stage and that timeframes are reasonable. In addition, the authority to make a final decision on a request for reconsideration must remain within a given Bureau/Office. Each Bureau/Office must formally notify all employees of its reconsideration process.

Informal Reconsideration Procedure - When possible, the employee and rating official should informally attempt to resolve any disagreement about the performance appraisal and/or rating.

An employee must discuss their dissatisfaction with the rating official before requesting a formal reconsideration unless the employee requests in writing to move directly to the formal stage and this is allowed by the Bureau/Office reconsideration process. This informal discussion should take place within 7 calendar days of the employee's receipt of the Employee Performance Appraisal Form, and the rating official's decision must be communicated to the employee, either verbally or in writing, within 7 calendar days of the informal reconsideration discussion.

If agreement cannot be reached informally, the employee may request a formal reconsideration of the rating through their servicing Human Resources Office.

Requesting a Formal Reconsideration - To request a formal reconsideration, the employee should send a written request to their servicing Human Resources Office within 7 calendar days of receipt of decision of the informal meeting. This request should include the following:

- Employee organization and duty station;
- Copy of the annual appraisal for which a reconsideration is being requested;
- Specific area(s) or details of the annual appraisal for which the reconsideration is being requested;
- The identity of the employee's designated representative (name, title, address, and telephone number), if applicable;
- Why the employee believes the rating is in error, with supporting facts and documents;
- The action the employee requests of the reconsideration official or the reconsideration committee; and
- A copy of the written decision of the informal reconsideration by the rating official, a statement confirming that the informal process was followed, or a written request to move directly to the formal stage.

The Servicing Human Resources Office will review the formal request for reconsideration to determine if it is appropriate for acceptance under these procedures. If it is not accepted, the request will be returned to the employee with an explanation of the reason(s) for non-acceptance. If accepted, the request

for reconsideration is referred within 14 calendar days of receipt to the reconsideration official, reconsideration committee, or other designee established by the Bureau/Office.

The **formal reconsideration process** shall be carried out by a person or person(s) as determined by the Bureau/Office, who have not been involved in the reconsideration request and, when practical, who do not occupy a position subordinate to any official who recommended, advised, or made a decision in connection with the appraisal involved. The servicing Human Resources Office shall advise the reconsideration official or committee members of their responsibilities during this formal process.

An employee may be represented during the formal reconsideration process. The Bureau/Office may disallow the employee's choice of representative for reason of conflict of interest or position or unreasonable cost to the Government.

The authority of the reconsideration official or reconsideration committee is limited to an impartial reconsideration of the employee's dissatisfaction with the rating given on a particular element that he/she believes may adversely affect the annual rating of record. The employee may not dispute (1) the number or type of performance elements identified for their position, or (2) the substance or contents of performance standards, including the objective criteria against which performance will be measured.

The reconsideration official or reconsideration committee shall be provided all the resources necessary to complete the impartial reconsideration and render the Bureau/Office decision.

The reconsideration official or reconsideration committee is responsible for the following actions in considering an employee's formal reconsideration request:

(1) Reviewing any evidence or information submitted by the employee, rating official, and/or reviewing official;
(2) Consulting with the employee, the employee's representative (if applicable), the rating official, the reviewing official, and staff experts as necessary and appropriate;
(3) Increasing the summary rating or an element rating; removing or modifying narrative comments, or leaving the summary rating, element ratings, or narrative comments unchanged; and
(4) Issuing a final written decision within 20 calendar days of receipt of the request for reconsideration that includes documentation of the basis for the decision. This document must be given to the employee and filed in the Employee Performance File (EPF).

The decision rendered by the reconsideration official or reconsideration committee (or other designee as determined by the Bureau/Office) is final and becomes the official rating of record.

Timeframes outlined above (or in the established Bureau/Office reconsideration process) may be extended on a case-by-case basis upon mutual consent of the parties and with concurrence of the servicing Human Resources Office.

Employees covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement that includes a reconsideration procedure will be governed by that procedure as the exclusive method to request reconsideration.

SECTION 5 - ACTIONS BASED ON PERFORMANCE

A basic principle of effective management is that all behavior is controlled by its consequences. Those consequences can and should be both formal and informal and both positive and negative. Positive consequences include rewards and recognition, promotions, within-grade-increases, etc. Negative consequences may include counseling, reassigning, removing, or downgrading the employee.

REWARDING PERFORMANCE Rewarding performance means providing incentives to, and recognition of, employees for their performance and acknowledging their contributions to the agency's mission. Recognition is an ongoing, natural part of day-to-day experience. Good performance should be recognized without waiting for nominations for formal awards to be solicited.

Awards may come in many forms, including cash, time off, non-monetary items, honor awards, etc. Many of the actions that reward good performance — like saying "You did a good job." — don't require specific regulatory authority and are easy to give.

Under Departmental policy 370 DM 430, an employee must be rated at Level 4 (Superior) or Level 5 (Exceptional) to be eligible for an award for sustained superior performance. Employees rated at Level 5 (Exceptional) must be considered for an award.

Supervisors/Managers have the flexibility to recognize employees using any of the following forms of recognition or combination thereof (i.e., individual cash award and a Time-Off Award):

- **Exceptional** (Level 5): Eligible for an individual cash award up to 5% of base pay; a Quality Step Increase; Time-Off Award; or other appropriate equivalent recognition. Additionally, may be eligible for a salary increase of up to 5% from the Human Capital Performance Fund.

- **Superior** (Level 4): Eligible for an individual cash award up to 3% of base pay; Time-Off Award, non-monetary award, or other appropriate equivalent recognition.

- **Fully Successful** (Level 3): Eligible for awards such as monetary, non-monetary, Time-off, or other appropriate equivalent recognition, given for reasons other than sustained performance tied to the rating of record.

- **Minimally Successful** (Level 2): Ineligible for any performance recognition.

- **Unsatisfactory** (Level 1): Ineligible for any performance recognition.

Supervisors/Managers should contact their servicing Human Resources Office for further information and assistance regarding appropriate delegations and procedures that must be followed.

LINKS TO OTHER PERSONNEL ACTIONS The rating of record has a bearing on various other personnel actions, such as granting within-grade pay increases, promotions, determining additional retention service credit in a reduction in force, etc. The relationship of the rating of record to other personnel actions includes the following:

Within-Grade Increases: For General Schedule Employees: In order to justify granting a within-grade increase, the employee must be performing at an "acceptable level of competence." An employee whose current performance of a critical element fails to meet the standards or whose overall performance is less than Fully Successful is not performing at an acceptable level of competence and the within-grade increase must be withheld. An employee's rating of record must be no lower than Level 3 (Fully Successful) for an employee to receive a within-grade increase. This may require a rating official to prepare a new rating of record before the end of the waiting period for a within-grade increase in order to document that an employee previously rated at Level 1 or 2 has improved performance to an acceptable level of competence. Conversely, for an employee whose most recent summary rating is at Level 3 or higher, but whose performance has deteriorated to the degree that the rating official wishes to withhold a

within-grade increase, the rating official must prepare a new rating of record to document that performance has fallen to a Level 1 or 2. **Supervisors/Managers should contact their servicing human resources office for further information and assistance.** (See Section 4, "Interim Appraisals.")

For Federal Wage System Employees: An employee under a regular Federal Wage System (FWS) schedule with a current rating of record of Fully Successful or better shall be advanced to the next higher step within the grade upon completion of the required waiting period. FWS employees with a current performance appraisal of Minimally Successful or Unsatisfactory shall have step increases withheld until their performance improves to the Fully Successful level. The rating of record should reflect appropriate performance at the time the step increase is given.

Promotion: In order to be noncompetitively promoted to a higher grade in a career ladder, an employee must have a current rating of record of Fully Successful or better in addition to meeting other prescribed requirements. In considering an employee for merit promotions under competitive procedures, due weight will be given to supervisory appraisals of past and/or present performance.

Probationary/Trial Periods: New employees must be carefully observed during the probationary/trial period to determine whether they have the qualities needed to become satisfactory career employees. Proper use of periodic progress reviews to determine progress during the probationary/trial period can do much to assure that these employees have adequately demonstrated their qualifications and fitness. However, an employee may be removed at any time during the probationary/trial period if his/her performance is less than "Fully Successful."

Probationary Period for Supervisors and Managers: Individuals serving a supervisory or managerial probationary period need to be observed to determine whether they perform supervisory or managerial duties in a fully successful manner. New supervisors and managers who do not successfully complete the probationary period are normally returned to a position of the same grade and pay as that held prior to the supervisory or managerial position. Proper use of progress reviews during this period can do much to ensure that the employee has fully demonstrated the qualifications and skills necessary for the supervisory or managerial position.

Reductions-in-Force: An employee's performance rating of record is used to determine the employee's assignment rights during a Reduction-in-Force. Employees are given performance credit for RIF retention by adjusting the employee's service date for RIF purposes. Generally the employee receives additional service credit based on the average of the three most recent ratings of record received during the 4-year period prior to the issuance of the RIF notice. Service credit is provided as follows:

Level 5 (Exceptional) Rating - 20 years
Level 4 (Superior) Rating - 16 years
Level 3 (Fully Successful) Rating - 12 years
Level 2 (Minimally Successful) Rating - 0 years
Level 1 (Unsuccessful) Rating - 0 years

If an employee received a rating of record under other than a 5-level system during the timeframe used to determine the average years of service to be credited, he/she will receive service credit for RIF purposes in accordance with 5 CFR 351.504.

Performance credit is only one of many variables that must be considered in a RIF. Supervisors and employees should contact their servicing Human Resources Office for further information.

DEALING WITH POOR PERFORMANCE At any time in the performance appraisal cycle that you find that the employee's performance is not meeting performance expectations outlined at the fully successful level, it is important that you take appropriate action to deal with the poor performance. This includes contacting your servicing Human Resources Office for advice and assistance. They are available to provide support to rating officials in documenting performance, providing feedback to the employee, and assessing courses of action.

There is a difference between poor performance and misconduct. *Poor performance (can't do)* is failure of the employee to do the job at an acceptable level that is at least fully successful. *Misconduct (won't do)* is

generally failure to follow a workplace rule (whether written or unwritten). Examples of misconduct are: tardiness, absenteeism, unprofessional/discourteous conduct; damaging/destroying government property; falsification, etc. Also a conduct problem is when an employee is capable of performing his/her duties at an acceptable level but chooses not to. Sometimes, misconduct can result in poor performance. Sometimes performance and misconduct can be interrelated; however, it is important to recognize the difference between the two. Contact your servicing Human Resources Office for advice and guidance.

There is a formal regulatory process outlined to deal with employees who are not performing acceptably that includes the following steps:

Step 1: Communicating Expectations and Performance Problems

The first step in the process is to meet with the employee to counsel or discuss the deficiencies of his/her performance. Counseling is a communication process occurring between a rating official and an employee with the intent of resulting in some positive change in the employee's performance. Most performance problems can be resolved through effective communication when done in the early stage of the process. The counseling session is an opportunity to discuss performance deficiencies and to clarify expectations. The focus of the counseling session should be to tell the employee exactly what must be done to bring performance to an acceptable level.

Preparing to Counsel the Employee

Prior to counseling the employee, the rating official should first determine if it is a performance or misconduct problem. It is critical that the rating official reviews, prior to the counseling session, the employee's standards to ensure they clearly convey what needs to be done in the job. The rating official needs to ensure that standards are clear, reasonable and are not "backwards" or impermissibly "absolute" *(See Appendix 2).* You should be prepared to identify specifically the critical element(s) in which the employee has exhibited deficiencies and provide examples of the employee's work. Your human resources staff can assist you in this review.

In addition, the rating official should prepare to have a thorough performance rating discussion, by ensuring the following:

- Employee performance on the critical element(s) in question has been reviewed and documented, including specifics related to the areas of concern. Examples should be noted when possible.
- A private location and adequate time has been set aside to meet with the employee, including time for employee input.
- Expectations for improved performance have been outlined.

Counseling an Employee

After preparations have been completed, you are ready to counsel the employee. The counseling session should be in a private and uninterrupted environment. During the counseling session you should do the following:

- Identify the critical element(s) where the employee is working at an unsatisfactory level of performance.
- Provide specific examples of the poor performance and suggest ways that performance can be improved.
- Invite feedback from the employee and be a good listener.
- Maintain a constructive tone, along with a calm and professional demeanor; do not argue with the employee.
- Plan some specific actions the employee will take to improve his or her performance, such as taking training or working closely with another employee for a period of time, etc. As appropriate, give the employee the responsibility of finding the course or providing ideas on how he/she can improve by a specific date and reporting back to you.
- At the end of the session, tell the employee your expectations and what the employee must do to bring his or her performance to an acceptable level.

- Document the counseling session, schedule the next session, and provide the employee a copy of the documentation.

Use the checklist at Appendix 6 to make sure all actions related to Step One have been completed.

Step Two: Providing an Opportunity to Improve

When dealing with unsatisfactory performance under Part 432 of Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, an employee must be provided with information concerning his/her performance and how it can be improved, and then be given an opportunity to demonstrate minimally successful performance before an agency proposes a reduction in grade or removal based on unsatisfactory performance. Before any performance-based action is proposed, the following must be considered:

Initial Determination of Unsatisfactory Performance

For an initial determination of unsatisfactory performance to be valid, an employee must receive a copy of the critical elements and performance standards for his/her job and his/her performance must be measured against those performance standards. The quality of the EPAP is, therefore, of key importance for taking action based on unsatisfactory performance. Unsatisfactory performance must be measured against the critical elements of the EPAP; however, a formal performance rating denoting unsatisfactory performance is not required preceding an opportunity to improve period. Unsatisfactory performance is the only basis for removal or reduction in grade action under Part 432. Minimally Successful performance is not a basis for removal or reduction in grade, but will result in denial of a WGI.

Reasonable Opportunity to Demonstrate Minimally Successful Performance

The employee must be notified in writing of unsatisfactory performance, what is needed to bring performance up to a Minimally Successful level and what assistance will be provided. This written notification is in the form of a Performance Improvement Plan, often referred to as a “PIP.” The employee should be warned concerning the consequences of continued performance below the Minimally Successful ("acceptable") level and given a *reasonable* time to demonstrate at least Minimally Successful performance before a reduction in grade or removal is considered. Additionally, rating officials are encouraged to make efforts to help employees with Minimally Successful performance raise their performance to a Fully Successful level.

The performance elements and standards for the performance improvement period shall be based on the EPAP in effect at the determination of unsatisfactory performance. The notification to the employee of the improvement period may include clarification and greater specificity regarding performance expectations. Care should be taken to avoid the appearance that higher performance standards are required during the performance improvement period than in the original EPAP. If the new requirements constitute a significant change, such as standards or performance requirements that exceed the context of the current plan or which had not previously been applied or communicated to the employee, it may be necessary to treat them as a new EPAP requiring a period of 90 days before the employee can be rated.

The amount of time necessary to give the employee a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate Minimally Successful performance is not dictated in regulation or departmental guidance. The reasonable time to improve will be determined by management and can vary according to the requirements of individual positions and EPAPs and the amount of time and effort already devoted to correcting performance deficiencies. As a general rule, less time and effort are required in cases where rating officials have appropriately managed performance and documented their efforts to resolve performance problems. (Note: For bargaining unit employees, the applicable collective bargaining agreement should be checked for additional requirements.)

Assistance to the employee in any combination of counseling, training, or changes in the level of supervision provided is required. Therefore, such assistance and communications to the employee should be fully documented in progress reviews, on

the performance appraisal form, and/or in other documentation to the employee.

This documentation must demonstrate that:

- The employee was informed that his/her performance has been determined to be unsatisfactory in one or more critical elements and of specific needs for improvement.
- The rating official, or other designated staff worked with the employee in an attempt to resolve work-related problems, provided any necessary formal training, on-the-job training, or counseling, and met periodically with the employee to clarify assignments, explain what was needed to be done, and answer questions about the EPAP.
- The employee was informed of the consequences of failure to improve (e.g., removal, reassignment, or reduction in grade).

Use the checklist at Appendix 6 to make sure all actions related to Step Two have been completed.

Step Three: Taking Action

Overview

A rating official has the authority to take action against an employee based on poor performance. This is usually accomplished in accordance with 5 CFR Part 432, Performance Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions. However, under some circumstances, it is more advantageous to take action under 5 CFR Part 752, Adverse Actions. The specific facts of your case, along with the weight of your evidence, will be determining factors in deciding under which authority to take your action. Seek guidance from your servicing Human Resources Office as soon as you determine that you have an employee whose performance is less than fully successful, and they will assist you in determining how to proceed.

Taking Performance-Based Actions under 5 USC Chapter 43:

If after completing steps one and two above, the employee's performance does not improve to at least the minimally successful level, an agency may reassign the employee, reduce an employee in grade or remove the employee.

If using Chapter 43 to deal with poor performance, performance must be evaluated after the opportunity period, and if still unsatisfactory in one or more critical elements, the employee must be provided 30 days advance written notice of the proposed action (demotion or removal), specifying instances of unsatisfactory performance occurring in the past year which are related to the critical elements identified in the notice of unsatisfactory performance. The 30-day notice period may be extended for a period not to exceed 30 days, or can be extended further in accordance with the provisions in 5 CFR § 432.105(a)(4)(i)(B).

The notice must provide:

- A reasonable time to reply, orally and in writing;
- Right to representation;
- Consideration of medical conditions when raised by the employee.

Final written decision by a higher-level official must be issued within 30 days, or upon expiration of approved extensions and must be issued on or before the effective date of the action to be taken. The decision must consider any response to the proposal that the employee provided, and must be based only on instances of unsatisfactory performance occurring during the 1-year period ending on the date of the advance notice of proposed action. It must specify the instances of unsatisfactory performance and provide the applicable appeal rights information.

Figure A. outlines the steps that must be followed in taking a demotion or removal action under 5 CFR Part 432.

Figure A. Elements of a Part 432 Action

Demotion and Removal Based on Unacceptable Performance Under 5 CFR Part 432	
1. Beginning of appraisal period	Give employee the performance elements and standards in writing.
2. Informal steps to improve performance	Provide discussion, counseling, training, documentation, etc.
3. Formal opportunity to improve	Issue a notice of unsatisfactory performance and establish a formal period to show minimally successful performance.
4. Notice of proposed action	Give employee 30 days advance written notice; only specify instances of unacceptable performance occurring in the past year and relating to the critical elements involved.
5. Employee's answer to proposal notice	Provide a reasonable time to reply; employee has a right to representation.
6. Decision issued	Issue decision within 30 days after notice period expires; a higher level official concurs with the decision.
7. Notice of right to appeal/grieve	Give employee appeal/grieve rights information

Taking Performance Actions under 5 USC Chapter 75:

Under 5 USC Chapter 75, and 5 CFR Part 752, an agency may take action to suspend for more than 14 days, demote or remove an employee for such cause as will promote the efficiency of the service, to include a performance-based adverse action. The rating official will be required to show that informal steps such as discussions, counseling and training were taken to assist the employee in improving performance deficiencies, but a formal performance improvement opportunity period is not required. If using Chapter 75 to deal with poor performance, the following procedures apply:

- Performance expectations must have been communicated to the employee;
- Informal steps must be taken to improve performance deficiencies, including discussion with employee, counseling, training, etc.;
- A 30-day advance written notice of proposed action must be issued, giving specifics of the performance deficiencies;
- The employee must be provided a reasonable period of time to reply orally and in writing (not less than 7 days); and
- The employee has the right to representation by an attorney or other representative.

A written decision must be issued at the earliest practicable date, giving the specific reasons for the action decided upon. Only those reasons specified in the notice of proposed action and any information provided by the employee in the reply to the notice may be considered. The decision must be provided to the employee on or before the effective date of the action. The decision must provide the employee with appeal rights information.

Figure B. Elements of a Part 752 Action

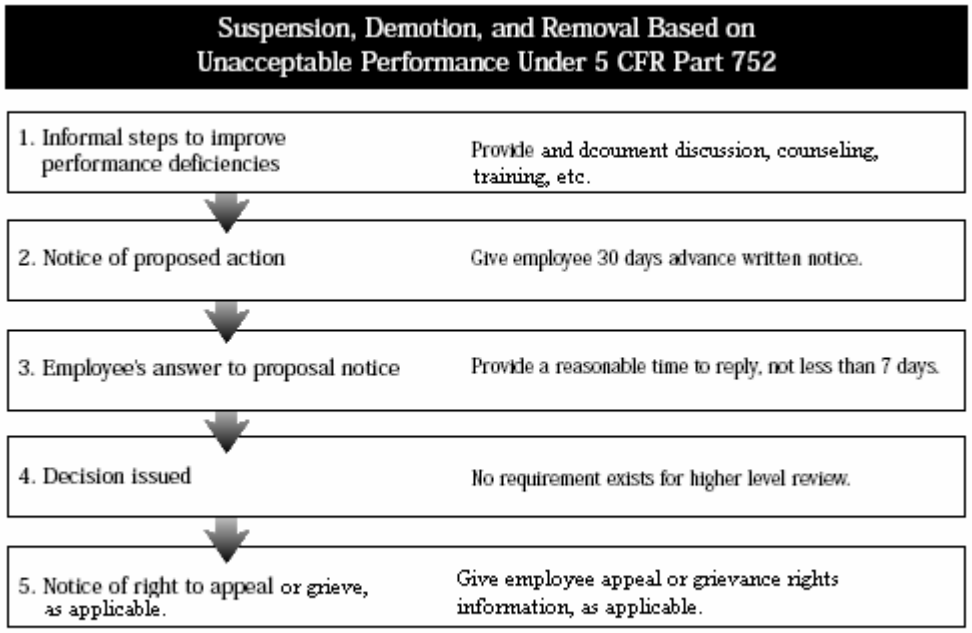

Figure C. Comparison of Part 432 vs. Part 752

5 CFR Part 432 vs. Part 752		
	PART 432	PART 752
Types of Actions	Actions: Demotion or Removal	Actions: Suspension, Demotion, or Removal
Actions Taken For	Actions taken for "unacceptable performance."	Actions taken for "such cause as will promote the efficiency of the service."
Proof	Actions must be proven by "substantial evidence" (lower standard than Part 752).	Actions must be proven by a "preponderance of the evidence" (higher standard than Part 432).
Actions Based On	Actions can only be based on an employee's formal, established, communicated standards.	Actions can be based on expectations or established/formal standards.
Opportunity Period	Employee is entitled to an opportunity period.	No requirement for an opportunity period.
Time Limits	Time limited to performance "deficiencies" occurring within the 1 year prior to the proposal notice.	No time limit for inclusion of "incident/charges" in Part 752.
Immediacy of Action	Employee remains on the job throughout the opportunity period.	Can initiate immediate action because no requirement for an opportunity period exists.
Mitigation	Action may not be mitigated (action will either be sustained or reversed).	Action may be mitigated (penalty reduced).

While a performance-based action taken under Part 752 does not require providing the employee a formal opportunity to improve performance to the minimally successful level, the arbitrator or judge will be interested in the efforts taken by the rating official to provide assistance to help the employee improve his/her performance to the minimally successful level. Therefore, providing an opportunity to improve performance will help the agency present a stronger case before a third party hearing and we strongly recommend providing a performance improvement period regardless of what authority is used to deal with performance deficiencies.

Part 752 also allows for taking adverse action based on ad hoc standards such as explicit instructions or work assignments, or professional standards established for certain occupations. If an ad hoc standard is no more stringent than the established performance standards, it may be appropriate to take a 752 performance-based action on failure to meet that ad hoc standard.

Appeal Rights

Employees have the right to appeal a performance-based removal or demotion to the Merit Systems Protection Board, and some employees covered by collective bargaining agreements may have the right to grieve the action through their negotiated grievance procedure. An employee can choose between these two methods of appeal, but cannot pursue both avenues.

In addition, allegations of discrimination, reprisal for whistleblowing, and other prohibited personnel practices can be raised in an employee's appeal of a performance-based removal or demotion. Such allegations can also be filed directly with the Bureau/Office Equal Opportunity Office or the Office of Special Counsel.

Use the checklist at Appendix 6 to make sure all actions related to Step Three have been completed.

GPRA Examples for Individual Bureaus/Offices

Example #1 Human Resources Specialist, GS-0201

President's Management Agenda

Strategic Management of Human Capital

End Outcome: Workforce has knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals. (Align human capital policies, recruitment, training, leadership development, and diversity initiatives to effectively support accomplishment of the bureau's mission, goals, and strategies.)

Intermediate Outcome Goal: Human Capital Management

Individual Performance Measure: Develop an emerging leaders program: Complete a needs assessment by August 31, 2004. Begin development of an emerging leaders program as a component of BLM's succession planning. The needs assessment will survey 25% of the target group; results will be compiled and form the basis for course content, development, and delivery.

Example #2 Mining Engineer, GS-0880

Strategic Goal: Resource Use

End Outcome Goal: Manage or influence resource use to enhance public benefit, promote responsible use, and ensure optimal value-energy.

Intermediate Outcome Goal: Enhance responsible use management practices.

Individual Performance Measure: The percent (enter the ___ %) of solid minerals inspection and enforcement reviews completed.

Example #3 Monument Manager, GS-0340

Strategic Goal: Resource Protection

End Outcome Goal: Protect cultural and natural heritage resources.

Intermediate Outcome Goal: Manage special management areas for National Heritage Resource objectives.

Individual Performance Measure: Complete priority projects to achieve the resource condition objectives for __% of the national monuments and national conservation areas.

Example #4 Natural Resources Specialist, GS-0401

Strategic Goal: Resource Use

End Outcome Goal: End Outcome Goal: Manage or influence resource use to enhance public benefit, promote responsible use, and ensure optimal value-energy.

Intermediate Outcome Goal: Optimize value through effective lease and permit management.

Individual Performance Measure: Increase the percent (insert %) of pending cases of permits and lease applications that are processed for energy minerals.

Example #5 Natural Resources Specialist, GS-0401

Strategic Goal: Resource Use

End Outcome Goal: End Outcome Goal: Manage or influence resource use to enhance public benefit, promote responsible use, and ensure optimal value-energy.

Intermediate Outcome Goal: Improve information base, information management and technical assistance.

Individual Performance Measure: Improve customer satisfaction rating by __% with energy resources permitting process.

Example #6 Outdoor Recreation Planner, GS-0023

Strategic Goal: Recreation

End Outcome Goal: Provide for a quality recreation experience, including access, and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources on DOI managed and partnered lands and waters.

Intermediate Outcome Goal (Strategy): Provide effective interpretation and education programs.

Individual Performance Measure: "Tread Lightly" interpretive presentations developed and delivered by June 30, 2004, to ___ % of Long-Term Visitor Area residents to promote appropriate off-highway vehicle use.

Example #7 Outdoor Recreation Planner, GS-0023

Strategic Goal: Serving Communities

End Outcome Goal: Protect lives, resources, and property.

Intermediate Outcome Goal (Strategy): Improve public safety and security and protect public resources from damage.

Individual Performance Measure: Inventories will be completed by August 31, 2004, in conformance with Yuma Recreation Management Plan (RMP) to designate routes for Imperial Refuge Cooperative Management Plan.

Example #8 Petroleum Engineer Technician, GS-0881

Strategic Goal: Resource Use

End Outcome Goal: Manage or influence resource use to enhance public benefit, promote responsible use, and ensure optimal value-energy.

Intermediate Outcome Goal: Enhance responsible use management practices.

Individual Performance Measure: Increase the percent of fluid energy resource compliance inspections and enforcement reviews completed by __%.

Example #9 Petroleum Engineer Technician, GS-0881

Strategic Goal: Resource Use

End Outcome Goal: End Outcome Goal: Manage or influence resource use to enhance public benefit, promote responsible use, and ensure optimal value-energy.

Intermediate Outcome Goal: Enhance responsible use management practices.

Individual Performance Measure: Percent (__ %) of fluid minerals violations (incidents of non-compliance) corrected by operators with first notice.

Example #10 Range Specialist, GS-0454

Strategic Goal: Resource Protection

End Outcome Goal: Protect cultural and natural heritage resources.

Individual Performance Measure: Percent (enter %) of number of herd management areas achieving appropriate management levels of Wild Horse and Burro.

Example # 11 Natural Resources Specialist, GS-0401

End Outcome Goal: Provide technical or financial assistance to Tribes in the areas of environmental management and endangered species preservation.

Individual Performance Measure: Provide technical or financial assistance to 9 tribes in the areas of environmental management and endangered species preservation.

Example # 12 Indian Self-determination Specialist, GS-1101

Strategic Goal: Promote Indian Self-Determination

End Outcome Goal: Promote Indian Self-Determination by providing P.L. 93-638 training sessions and technical assistance.

Individual Performance Measure: 90 training sessions will be held; 200 instances of technical assistance will be provided.

Example # 13 Housing Specialist, GS-0301

Strategic Goal: Serving Communities

End Outcome Goal: Provide repair or replacement work of eligible housing applicants.

Individual Performance Measure: Will sustain the 3 Tribes operating comprehensive welfare plans in the region.

Example #14 Secretary

End Outcome Goal (Strategy): Effective Water Management to Optimize Supply.

Individual Performance Measure: Clerical and administrative functions are accomplished in a timely and professional manner in order to facilitate effective water management, with no more than 2 instances per quarter of untimely or unprofessional execution of functions.

Example #15 Water Treatment Equipment Operator

Strategic Goal: Manage resources to promote responsible use and sustain a dynamic economy.

Individual Performance Measure: Maintains water treatment equipment in good operational condition, with no more than one malfunction per year that would result in a violation under environmental requirements as defined by State and Federal law.

Example #16 Clerk

Strategic Goal: Manage resources to promote responsible use and sustain a dynamic economy.

Individual Performance Measure: Office files, including those related to river water flow levels and the Endangered Species Act, are well organized and maintained so that information is complete and readily accessible, with no more than 3 instances in which files are not properly maintained.

Example # 17 Field Office Director

Strategic Goal: GPRA – Servicing Communities

Individual Performance Measure: Field Office Director provides direction and input for AML program grants application requests. Responses are made within 60 days of the application, to the extent funds are available, and actively promotes timely obligation of AML project funds to protect lives, resources, property, and reduce fatalities or serious injuries on DOI managed or influenced land.

Example # 18 Positions with significant Information Technology (IT) security responsibilities

Strategic Goal: Security of bureau IT systems and data.

Individual Performance Measure: Routinely applies established IT security requirements and procedures (operational, technical, etc.) when utilizing IT systems or accessing electronic data in accordance with the bureau's IT security plan. No more than 2-3 substantive violations of applicable regulations/policy during the appraisal period.

DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

The benchmark standards provided in this handbook describe levels of performance for any given position. However, rating officials are encouraged to augment those benchmark standards with specific standards, using the following guidance.

The best standards are:

- Stated concretely and specifically
- Practical to measure
- Meaningful
- Exceed able
- Realistic and based on sound rationale

Some questions that might be asked to assist in developing the standards include the following:

- Which general measures apply:
    - Is quality important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how well the work is done?
    - Is quantity important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how many are produced?
    - Is it important to accomplish the element by a certain time or date?
    - Is it important to accomplish the element within certain cost limits?
    - What measures are already available?
- How could quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness be measured?
- Is there some number or percent that could be tracked?
- If the element does not lend itself to being measured with numbers and can only be described, ask:
    - Who could judge that the element was done well?
    - What factors would they look for?

Rating officials should be careful that the “fully successful” standard is not impermissibly “absolute,” i.e., allows no room for errors, nor that it is a “backwards” standard, i.e., described in terms of work that does not get done.

Some questions that might be asked to help determine whether you are writing an absolute standard include:

- How many times may the employee fail this requirement and still be fully successful?
- Does the standard use words such as “all,” “never,” and “each”? (These words do not automatically create an absolute standard, but they often alert you to problems.)
- If the standard allows for no errors is that because an error would result in risk of death, injury, etc.?

Some questions that might be asked to help determine whether you are writing a backwards standard include:

- Does the standard express the level of work the rating official wants to see or does it describe negative performance? (Example of describing negative performance: Requires assistance more than 50 percent of the time. **A Better Choice is: Works independently more than 50 percent of the time.**)
- If the employee did nothing, would he or she meet the standard, as written? (Example: Completes fewer than four products per year. **A Better Choice is: No more than 3 products are completed after the established deadline.**)

A Supervisor's Guide on How to get the Most out of Performance Appraisals

Why do we have performance appraisal meetings, and how can they benefit you and your employees?

Giving and receiving feedback is one of the critical components of the performance appraisal process. As a rating official, it is incumbent upon you to ensure that the feedback provided is meaningful, that you take the time to prepare and that the employee has a chance to ask questions and provide input.

Meeting with your employees to discuss how they're doing can and should be very beneficial for both of you. Following are a few of the benefits that can result from good preparation and an open discussion:

* You get a chance to provide information directly to your employee about your expectations and standards and to provide feedback on the work he/she did well along with any areas needing improvement.

* You get to provide the employee information about the "big picture" and how what he/she does contributes to mission/organizational goals.

* You get a chance to ask the employee about how he/she feels about his/her job--Whether he/she enjoys the work, if he/she is ready for greater responsibilities, if he/she is feeling too overwhelmed by the work already assigned, whether he/she needs more assistance from you or coworkers, etc.

* You get a chance to get to know the employee a bit better, and he/she gets to know you a bit better, too. The more you know one another, the greater the chances that you'll be able to communicate well on an ongoing basis, especially if a problem crops up.

* You get the opportunity to discuss your employee's future with him/her. That can be as simple as discussing training opportunities to better handle a specific project or something as broad as the employee's career aspirations and how he/she plans to get there.

What Should You Do to Prepare?

While you are encouraged to provide feedback to your employees on an on-going basis, Department of the Interior policy requires that you meet formally with employees at least twice a year—once approximately mid-way through the performance appraisal cycle (called a Progress Review) and once at the end of the rating year. These meetings are a chance for you to engage in an open exchange with your employees about their performance.

Before the progress review or before you prepare the employee's appraisal:

--Request information from the employee on his/her key work accomplishments for the period being discussed. Keep a "kudos" folder for each employee with key accomplishments that you can refer to.

--If you have specific issues that you want to discuss with the employee, ensure that you have prepared to discuss these clearly and concisely.

--Think about (and document) what's most important for you to tell the employee about how he/she is doing.

--Write down what you feel the employee has done/accomplished/learned, what he/she did particularly well, and any areas in which you may have been disappointed in how the employee performed, including what they could have done better. You should include examples of specific projects or assignments.

--Think about whether the employee has the skills that you think he/she needs to do his/her job well, and write down any skills you think need to be gained or improved.

--Write down the key points and questions you want to discuss during the meeting.

<u>If in preparing for the performance discussions and/or finalizing the rating you believe that the employee is not performing at a fully successful level, you should immediately contact your Servicing Human Resources Office to discuss what steps to take prior to meeting with the employee</u>.

The Performance Discussion

During the actual performance discussion, you should review the employee's performance during the period in question including a summary of key accomplishments, praise him/her for work that he/she did particularly well, inform him/her of work that could have been improved and/or areas where he/she may need to focus more effort, etc. You should offer some examples, and give the employee the opportunity to ask questions for clarification or to provide information. This should definitely be a two–way dialogue rather than a lecture.

In addition, you should:

+ Ask the employee how he/she feels the past six months or year went, and what he/she liked and didn't like (with the goal of finding out in what ways he/she felt supported, or might have wanted feedback, or other information that you can use in working with the employee better in the future).

+ Ask whether the employee has adequate training and resources to carry out his/her work.

+ Ask the employee about his/her short and/or long-term career goals and offer suggestions or resources to assist him/her with these goals, as appropriate.

+ Clearly articulate your expectations for the next six months or during the coming year and ask if the employee understands them. Be prepared to clarify any areas of confusion.

+ Refer to your notes, so that you don't overlook any points that you feel are important.

+ Ensure that the employee has a chance to provide feedback and ask questions.

Once you have finished your discussion with the employee provide him/her the appraisal form to sign. At the end of the rating year, make sure that he/she receives a copy of the completed appraisal form.

If the employee has concerns with the final rating, provide him/her with a copy of your Bureau's/Office's reconsideration process or refer him/her to the appropriate individual who can provide that information.

Don't forget that you can and should continue to discuss the employee's performance with him/her throughout the year. While the setting might not be as formal as during progress reviews or rating discussions, it's still important to keep talking, day in and day out, with your employees.

An Employee Guide on How to get the Most out of Performance Appraisals

Why do we have performance appraisal meetings, and how can they benefit you?

Meeting with your supervisor to discuss how you're doing is a pretty good thing. In case you haven't really given it much thought, here are a few reminders for you.

* You get a chance to obtain information, directly from your supervisor, about his/her expectations and standards for you. That way, you know right up front what you need to do a great job.

* You get feedback on how you're doing. It's wonderful to hear about the good work that you're doing. It's also good to find out if you haven't been meeting expectations – once you know that there's something you could do better, you can work on it (which is definitely better than being in the dark and continuing to do something which doesn't work).

* You get the "big picture" about how you're doing on the job. Day-to-day feedback is great, but it helps, too, to step back and hear about how you're doing overall and how the work you do helps accomplish important goals of the organization.

* You get to talk with your supervisor about how you feel about your job. Do you enjoy the work you do? Are you ready for greater responsibilities? Are you feeling too overwhelmed by the work you've already been assigned? Do you need more assistance from your boss or your coworkers? This is your chance to have an open discussion with your supervisor's undivided attention about how you feel things are going.

* You get a chance to get to know your supervisor a bit better, and he/she gets to know you a bit better, too. The more you know one another, the greater the chances that you'll be able to communicate well on an ongoing basis, especially if a problem crops up.

* You get the opportunity to discuss your future with your supervisor. That can be as simple as discussing your interest in a training course to better handle a specific project, to something as broad as your career aspirations and how you plan to get there.

What Should You Do to Prepare?

Even though your supervisor is the one calling the performance meeting, you have considerable involvement in the discussion. In fact, you can and should give some thought to what <u>you</u> want to get out of this meeting.

Perhaps you want suggestions for how you can provide better customer service, or maybe you want specific feedback on what you do well and not so well when you give presentations. Just as your supervisor will be preparing for his/her meeting with you, you should do a bit of preparation of your own. Preparation for meeting with your supervisor has two phases:

1) Before your supervisor prepares your appraisal:

--Prepare a list of your key work accomplishments, and give that to your supervisor for his/her consideration in preparing your rating. This way, you can help ensure that your significant accomplishments are not overlooked. Keep a "kudos" folder with your accomplishments in it to refer to for this.

--If you have specific issues, which you will want to discuss with your supervisor, give him/her a "heads up", so that he/she can be well prepared for your discussion. And come prepared to discuss clearly and concisely.

2) In preparation for the meeting when your rating is communicated, think about the following:

What's most important for you to learn/find out about how you're doing?

What have you done/accomplished/learned during the year? Make yourself a list of key items, so that you can ask for your supervisor for feedback on specific projects or assignments.

What did you do particularly well? What are the ways you may have been disappointed in how you performed?

What kind of feedback would you like to give to your supervisor? (e.g., I really like it when you review and edit my drafts before they're put in final form, so that we don't waste a lot of time and paper revising documents at the last minute; thank you for letting me take so much time off when my parents were visiting; I really need to hear from you about how I'm doing when I'm working on a project, rather than assuming that your silence means I'm doing okay; etc.).

Do you have the skills that you think you need to do your job well? What skills might you want to work on polishing up?

Where do you see your career heading? How can your supervisor help you achieve your career goals?

It may help to jot down your key points and questions. That way, you can use your notes during your discussion and make sure that you don't forget to bring up the important thoughts and questions you have.

The Performance Discussion

The day has come for your performance discussion. You've put some thought into how you're doing, and you're ready to have a good discussion with your supervisor. There's one more thing you may want to consider – take a look at your *supervisor's perspective* on the discussion you're about to have.

Your supervisor will:

Review your performance over the past six months or year with a summary of key accomplishments, work that you did particularly well, work that could have been improved,

areas where you may need to focus more effort, etc. He/She will offer you some examples, and will give you the opportunity to ask questions for clarification or to provide information. This is definitely a two – way dialogue.

+ Ask you how you feel the past six months or year went, and what you liked and didn't like (with the goal of finding out in what ways you felt supported, or how you might have wanted feedback, or other information that he/she can use in working with you in the coming year).

+ Look ahead to the coming six months or year and discuss with you his/her specific expectation for you.

+ Ask you whether you feel that you have adequate training and resources to carry out your work. This will likely lead to a discussion of what additional information or materials you may need.

+ Ask you about your short and/or long-term career goals. Based on your response, he/she may offer suggestions or resources to assist you.

During the meeting, don't be shy about asking for clarification, particularly about your supervisor's expectations of you. Refer to your notes, so that you don't overlook any points that you feel are important. If your supervisor doesn't bring up the topic yourself – if you want specific information, then ask specific questions. You may be amazed at how informative this discussion will be.

And yes, there is the paperwork that needs to get done. Your supervisor will ask you to sign your appraisal form, and will make sure that you receive a copy of your rating.

That's it. By the time you finish your discussion, you should have a good feel for how well you're doing, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and where you're heading in the coming year. Don't forget, though, that you can and should continue to discuss your performance with your supervisor throughout the year. While the setting might not be as formal as during progress reviews or rating discussions, it's still important to keep talking, day in and day out, with your supervisor. If you're ever in doubt about how you're doing, don't forget that you have an amazing tool at your disposal - you can simply, but directly, ask your supervisor for feedback, at any point during the year.

Still have questions about any of this, or about the performance appraisal process in general? Stop to chat with your supervisor, who will be happy to address any questions you have.

Supervisor's Guide to Developing Individual Development Plans

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a valuable performance enhancement tool for any federal employee. The IDP can be of great assistance to those who want to enhance skills and strengths and learn more about matters of interest that are relevant to the performance of the agency. Bureaus/Offices may require the use of an IDP at their discretion. Check with your Human Resources Office for the IDP or other appropriate form to be used by your Bureau/Office for documenting employee development needs.

The following is a brief outline of the definition, steps and goals of an IDP.

Goals The employee and the rating official develop goals together. The IDP provides a connection between the employee's career interests and needs to the organizational mission and priorities. The most common goals of an IDP are to:

- Learn new skills to improve current job performance
- Maximize current performance in support of organizational requirements
- Increase interest, challenge, and satisfaction in current position
- Obtain knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for career growth

Definition An IDP identifies a broad spectrum of developmental opportunities for the employee, including on-the-job training, distance learning, formal classroom training, details, shadow assignments and self-development. It addresses the needs of the organization and of the employee beginning with a focus on maximizing employee performance in the current job.

An IDP is a guide to help individuals reach career goals within the context of organizational objectives. It is a developmental action plan to move employees from their current place to where they want to go. It provides the systematic steps to improve and to build on strengths as individuals improve job performance and pursue career goals.

An IDP is a partnership between the employee and the rating official in personal development. Preparing an IDP involves open feedback, clarification and discussion about developmental needs, goals, and plans. Periodic communication between the rating official and the employee is the key to the currency and success of an IDP.

An IDP is not a:

- *Performance appraisal. It is not used to determine pay, awards or other personnel actions based on performance.*

- *Contract for training. Final approval of training opportunities is made based on factors such as timing and budget availability.*

- *Position description. It is not used for clarifying discrepancies in the duties as described.*

- *Guarantee for promotion or for reassignment to another position. While the developmental experiences identified in an IDP may have some training that might qualify the employee for another position or grade, there is no guarantee of advancement.*

Responsibilities As in all aspects of the employee/supervisor relationship, direct and open communication is the key to the success of an IDP. The following responsibilities address the IDP process specifically.

The **employee** is responsible for:

- Assessing personal skills necessary for performing the current position
- Suggesting developmental experiences which would enhance the skills necessary for performing the current position and for the desired career goals
- Identifying personal career goals
- Understanding what skills are necessary for meeting the career goals
- Participating in open discussions with the rating official concerning the elements of the IDP
- Completing the developmental experiences in the IDP as approved by the rating official
- Alerting the rating official when the IDP needs review and updating

The **rating official** is responsible for:

- Providing constructive feedback to the employee about skills necessary for performing the current position
- Suggesting and reviewing employee suggestions for developmental experiences which would enhance the skills necessary for performing the current position
- Counseling the employee about career goals
- Identifying developmental experiences which would enhance the skills necessary for performing in the next type of position toward the employee's career goal
- Participating in open discussions with the employee concerning the elements of the IDP, in periodic updates and reviews of the IDP for currency
- Giving final approval to specific developmental experiences
- Monitoring the progress of the employee in completing the developmental experiences agreed upon in the IDP

SAMPLE Individual Development Plan *(Bureaus/Offices may require the use of an IDP at their discretion. Check with your Human Resources Office for the IDP or other appropriate form to be used by your Bureau/Office for the IDP or other appropriate form to be used by your Bureau/Office for documenting employee developmental needs).*

Individual Development Plan Plan Performance Year _____

Employee's Name	Position Title/Grade	Office Phone	Office Fax	Email Address
Current Supervisor's Name	Supervisor's Title	Office Phone	Office Fax	Email Address
Goals for Successful Performance in Current Position	Short-term Career Goals (2-3 years)	Long-term Goals (3+ years)		
Developmental Objectives: What do you need to do this year to work towards your goals?	Developmental Activities (training, assignments, projects, details, etc.)	Proposed Dates	Estimated Costs	Date Completed
Notes:		Employee's Signature/Date		
		Supervisor's Signature/Date		

1

SAMPLE Individual Development Plan

Instructions for completing the Individual Development Plan

Employee Development and Career Goals – the employee and supervisor work together to complete the goals for successful performance in the employee's current position and the employee's short- and long-term career goals on the IDP.

Developmental Objectives – describe what the employee needs to do this year to work toward his/her goals. Objectives describe what the employee needs to learn or achieve in order to reach his/her goals.

Determine a method of training and a training time frame – determine what type of training or activity is needed to accomplish the employee's developmental goals. It could be on-the-job training, a detail, or a formal training course or a combination of methods. Identify the proposed dates for the training or activity in the "Proposed Dates" column. Enter the actual or estimated cost of the activity in the "Estimated Costs" column. This column can be used in preparing your office's annual budget. Once the training is completed, write the date in the "Date Completed" column.

Methods of Training:

On-the-job training – this can include coaching by a skilled individual or details into positions that will give the employee the skills and knowledge needed.

Details – temporary assignments to another location and/or position to gain specific knowledge and/or experience.

Courses – formal training courses, e.g., from your agency, local universities, commercial vendors.

Satellite Broadcasts/Computer/Web Based Learning – a variety of topics available through your agency via satellite broadcasts, software packages, and on-line training.

Discuss the Development Plan with your Employee – discuss the IDP with the employee and make any necessary modifications. The supervisor and employee should sign and date the plan. This plan should be completed within 60 days from the beginning of the performance year.

Review and Modifications – the plan should be reviewed at each performance review and modified as situations or needs change.

Checklists for Dealing with Poor Performance

Step One Checklist – Communicating Expectations	Yes	No
1. Know the issue is primarily a performance problem (not misconduct).		
2. Be knowledgeable of the DOI regulations governing performance.		
3. Have previously and clearly communicated to the employee what constitutes minimally successful performance.		
4. Conduct the counseling session in a private and uninterrupted environment.		
5. Have documented examples of poor performance.		
6. Communicate to employee the specific critical element(s) where the employee's performance is not minimally successful.		
7. Listen to the employee and ask for employee's input in working toward a solution.		
8. Focus on poor performance and not personalities or other distractions.		
9. Remember your goal is to improve performance, not win an argument with the employee.		
10. Seek cooperation and not confrontation.		
11. State clearly performance expectations and ask employee if he/she understands those expectations.		
12. End session on a positive note by emphasizing your mutual goal is improving the employee's performance.		
13. Document the session and provide the employee a copy.		

Step Two Checklist – Opportunity to Improve	**Yes**	**No**
In the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) did you tell the employee that his or her work was unsatisfactory in one or more critical elements and how he/she is failing to meet them?		
Did the PIP tell the employee specifically what he or she had to do to improve performance in order to keep his or her job?		
Was it clear in the PIP that continuing failure to meet performance standards would result in demotion or removal?		
Is there any reason to suspect a physical, mental or emotional basis for the deficiencies? If so, has the agency met its legal obligations? • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referral • Provide an opportunity for the employee to submit medical documentation • Offer of assistance (documented in writing) • Reasonable accommodation		
Did you provide positive assistance to enable the employee to improve to at least the minimally successful level? • Documentation of assistance (shared with employee) • Documentation of results • Consider training needs • Closer supervision or on-the-job coach		
When the PIP period ended, was the employee still performing at an unsatisfactory level?		
When is the employee's next within-grade-increase due? Were steps taken to delay the within-grade-increase?		
If the employee succeeds in raising his or her performance to at least the minimally successful level, remind the employee of his or her continuing obligation to maintain performance above the unsatisfactory level.		

Use the following checklist to make sure that you have completed all the actions related to Step Three.

Step Three Checklist	Yes	No
For Actions Based on 5 CFR Part 432		
Do you have written performance standards/elements for the employee?	❑	❑
Do you have copies of any supervisory notes of counseling or assistance given to the employee?	❑	❑
Do you have copies of memoranda of counseling provided to the employee?	❑	❑
Do you have a copy of the written notice providing an opportunity to improve?	❑	❑
Did you document the employee's performance during the opportunity period?	❑	❑
For Actions Based on 5 CFR Part 752		
Do you have written performance standards/elements for the employee OR evidence that performance expectations were communicated?	❑	❑
Is there documentation that the employee was clearly "on notice" of performance expectations?	❑	❑
Do you have copies of any supervisory notes of counseling or assistance given to the employee?	❑	❑
Do you have copies of memoranda of counseling provided to the employee?	❑	❑
Do you have a copy of the written notice providing an opportunity to improve OR can you explain your reasons for not providing an opportunity to improve?	❑	❑
Did you document the employee's performance during the period in question?	❑	❑

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

1. <u>Who is covered under the performance appraisal requirement in Chapter 430 and who is required to have a performance appraisal</u>?

With the exceptions listed below, all permanent and temporary employees are covered and must receive annual performance appraisal ratings.

- Positions filled by political appointees
- Expert and consultant positions filled under 5 U.S.C. 3109
- Volunteers serving without pay
- Employees whose appointments are not expected to exceed 120 days in a 12-month period. (Note: In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 4301(2)(H), a temporary employee must agree to serve without a performance appraisal in order to be excluded from the performance appraisal system.)
- Senior Executive Service (SES), Senior Level (SL) and Scientific and Professional (ST) employees. These employees are appraised under a different system established by the Department
- Employees outside the United States who are paid in accordance with local prevailing wage rates
- Administrative law judges appointed under 5 U.S.C. 3105
- Board of Contract Appeals judges appointed under 41 U.S.C. 607

All other employees, including employees undergoing long-term training or developmental assignments, employees in Upward Mobility positions, employees serving on details for periods over 120 days and temporary employees whose appointments are expected to exceed 120 days in a 12-month period, are covered. All such employees must have performance elements and performance standards written for their positions and must receive performance appraisals. In the case of employees on details or temporary assignments over 120 days and employees in long-term training, the performance elements and standards must be written for their details or training assignment.

2. <u>When must performance elements and performance standards be developed for an employee's position</u>?

All employees covered under the system should have standards in place within 60 days of the beginning of the performance appraisal cycle, their entrance on duty, their assignment to a new position, or their assignment to a new or different supervisory position.

3. <u>When is the performance appraisal cycle</u>?

The appraisal cycle runs from October 1 through September 30 of the following year, unless the Department's Human Resources Office approves a different schedule.
For temporary employees whose appointments are over 120 days but less than one year, the appraisal cycle runs from date of appointment to termination of appointment.

For temporary employees whose appointments are greater than one year, the appraisal cycle is the same as permanent employees.

4. When are performance appraisal ratings due?

Appraisal ratings are due within 30 days of the end of the appraisal period, i.e., by October 31 of each year.

Appraisal ratings for temporary employees are due at the termination of the employee's tour of duty. (Not 30 days after.)

5. What are the eligibility requirements for receiving a performance appraisal?

An employee must have been working in the same position and under the supervision of the same rating official or reviewing official for at least 90 consecutive calendar days. In addition, the employee must have been working under a set of approved performance standards for at least 90 consecutive days.

6. How are ratings handled when an employee has been under the supervision of more than one rating official during the appraisal period?

The rating official for appraisal purposes is the individual supervising the employee at the end of the performance appraisal period. The rating or reviewing official will assign the rating of record, providing he or she has supervised the employee for at least 90 consecutive calendar days and providing the employee has worked under the same set of performance standards for at least 90 days prior to the end of the appraisal period.

If the employee has received a performance evaluation from another rating official during the current rating period, the rating official shall consider that rating when assigning the summary rating of record.

If, at the end of the performance appraisal period, the rating official has not supervised the employee for at least 90 consecutive calendar days, the reviewing official may serve as the rating official as determined by the Bureau/Office.

The appraisal period may be extended up to 90 days past the normal end date for an employee if, on the normal end date of the appraisal period, the employee has not been under standards for at least 90 days.

7. What is the role of the Reviewing Official?

The Reviewing Official is responsible for reviewing and approving ratings of "Exceptional," "Minimally Successful," and "Unsatisfactory;" and carrying out any other responsibilities as outlined by the Bureau/Office Head.

8. How many performance elements can be written for a position?

Each employee covered should have at least one and not more than five critical elements as part of their EPAP.

9. What is a critical element?

A critical element is a component of the position that is so important that failure to perform requires remedial action, and may serve as the basis for adverse action against the employee if performance does not improve.

10. How closely do performance elements have to match the employee's position description?

There must be a reasonable relationship between the position description (P.D.) and the elements used for appraisal. For example, if a P.D. states the individual is responsible for supervising employees, a performance element addressing performance appraisal would be appropriate, since appraisal is one aspect of a supervisor's duties.

11. Are performance standards negotiable?

No. The development of performance standards is a retained management right that cannot be negotiated or bargained. However, it is strongly encouraged that employees have input on developing their elements and standards, but the final decision regarding critical elements and standards always rests with the management official.

12. Are performance appraisals or other aspects of the performance appraisal process grievable or appealable?

Performance appraisal rating and concerns are not grievable under the Agency grievance system. If the employee is covered under a negotiated agreement that covers performance appraisal, the negotiated process must be followed. If the employee is not covered under a negotiated agreement which covers performance appraisal, the employee is entitled to file a request for reconsideration when an employee has a concern about the rating given on a particular element that, if changed, will affect the outcome of the rating of record.

13. Are performance reviews required during the appraisal cycle?

Supervisors are expected to establish effective and ongoing communication with employees regarding performance and ways of improving it. An annual counseling session is required where accomplishments against elements and standards are discussed and rating official and employee formally sign the appraisal. One Progress Review at approximately mid-year is required, and the results of that review are documented on the employee performance appraisal form. Additionally, periodic counseling sessions throughout the year are recommended as a good personnel management tool to assure that employees are kept up-to-date on management's assessment of their performance. For paperwork reduction purposes, however, no specific timetables are set for these counseling sessions and no form or other documentation is required to be filled out on such counseling sessions unless possible adverse action is anticipated in the future.

14. What are the requirements for granting or denying within-grade increases?

A within-grade increase is earned on the basis of performance during the waiting period. Regulations require the granting or denying of a within-grade increase to be based on the employee's most recent performance appraisal rating of record. To grant a within-grade increase, the employee must have a rating of record of at least fully successful (Level 3). To deny a within-grade increase, the employee must have a rating of record of less than fully successful.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
EPAP

Employee Name:		Title/Series/Grade:	
Duty Station:	Appraisal Period:	From:	To:

Part A: Notification of Standards: *Signatures certify that critical elements and performance standards were discussed. Critical elements and performance standards are contained in Part E.*

Employee:	Rating Official:	Reviewing Official (if applicable*):
Date:	Date:	Date:

*If determined by Bureau/Office

Part B: Progress Review: *Signatures certify that performance was discussed.*

Employee:	Date:	Rating Official:	Date:

Part C: Summary Rating Determination: To determine a summary rating, assign one of the numerical rating levels that accurately reflects the employee's performance for each of the critical elements (Use only whole numbers: **Exceptional = 5 points; Superior = 4 points, Fully Successful = 3 points, Minimally Successful = 2 points, and Unsatisfactory = 0 points.**) *See reverse for complete instructions for assigning a Summary Rating*.

Element Number	Numerical Rating
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
	Total:

Total Numerical Rating _____ ÷ **Number of Elements** _____ = **Numeric Summary Rating** _____

Part D: Overall Summary Rating: Use conversion chart below to determine Summary Rating. Check the appropriate box:

	Exceptional	4.6 – 5.00 AND No critical element rated lower than "Superior".
	Superior	3.6 – 4.59 AND No critical element rated lower than "Fully Successful".
	Fully Successful	3.0 – 3.59 AND No critical element rated lower than "Fully Successful".
	Minimally Successful	2.0 – 2.99 AND No critical element rated lower than "Minimally Successful".
	Unsatisfactory	One or more critical elements rated "Unsatisfactory".

Employee:	Rating Official:	Reviewing Official: (if applicable):
Date:	Date:	Date:

Check here if Interim Rating: _____

Employee's Signature above certifies that the overall summary rating was discussed. Reviewing Official's signature is required for Exceptional, Minimally Successful and Unsatisfactory ratings, and otherwise if determined by Bureau/Office.

Instructions for Completing the EPAP

Establishing Critical Elements and Performance Standards

Critical elements (at least one, but no more than five) should be established for each employee at the start of the performance year. Through these elements, employees are held accountable for work assignments and responsibilities of their position. A critical element is an assignment or responsibility of such importance that Unsatisfactory performance in that element alone would result in a determination that the employee's overall performance is Unsatisfactory. Please see the Performance Appraisal Handbook for more detailed information.

Performance standards are expressions of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met for each element at a particular level of performance. They must be focused on results and include credible measures. You may use the Benchmark Performance Standards from the Performance Appraisal Handbook (in conjunction with individually established performance standards) to describe, for each element, credible measures such as quality, quantity, timeliness and/or cost effectiveness, for at least the "Fully Successful" level. Rating officials are strongly encouraged to develop performance standards at additional levels, to ensure that the employee has a clear understanding of the level of performance expected.

Progress Reviews

A progress review should be conducted at approximately mid-way through the rating period. Part B should be completed after the progress review. Any written feedback or recommended training can be noted on a separate sheet and attached to the EPAP.

Assigning the Summary Rating

A specific rating is required for each critical element to reflect the level of performance demonstrated by the employee throughout the rating period. Only one numerical rating level is assigned for each critical element. Before the rating official assigns a summary rating, he/she should consider all interim summary ratings received for the employee during the annual appraisal period. The summary rating is assigned as follows:

A. Review the EPAP and assess how the employee performed relative to the described performance standards.

B. Appropriately document the employee's performance with a narrative summary that describes the employee's achievements for the critical elements as compared to the performance standards. A narrative must be written for each critical element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory. This narrative should contain examples of the employee's performance that substantiate and explain how the employee's performance falls within the level assigned. There is a block provided for the narrative summary for each critical element.

C. In Part C of this form, assign one of the numerical rating levels that accurately reflects the employee's performance for each of the critical elements (Use only whole numbers: Exceptional = 5 points, Superior= 4 points, Fully Successful = 3 points, Minimally Successful = 2 points, and Unsatisfactory = 0 points).

D. Add up the numerical rating levels to get a total.

E. Divide the total by the number of critical elements to get an average. (Elements that are "not rated" because an employee has not had a chance to perform them during the rating year are not assigned any points and should not be used to determine the average rating.)

F. Assign the employee a summary rating based on the table in Part D of this form.

Note: Whenever an employee is rated **"Unsatisfactory"** on one or more critical elements, the overall rating **must** be **"Unsatisfactory"** (regardless of total points). **The rating official should immediately contact the servicing human resources office.**

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 1:	
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	
Superior	
Fully Successful	
Minimally Successful	
Unsatisfactory	

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Critical Element 1:

[ ] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 2:	
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	
Superior	
Fully Successful	
Minimally Successful	
Unsatisfactory	

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Critical Element 2:

[ ] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 3:	
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	
Superior	
Fully Successful	
Minimally Successful	
Unsatisfactory	

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Critical Element 3:

[ ] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 4:	
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	
Superior	
Fully Successful	
Minimally Successful	
Unsatisfactory	

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Critical Element 4:

[ ] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 5:	
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	
Superior	
Fully Successful	
Minimally Successful	
Unsatisfactory	

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Critical Element 5:

[ ] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

Revised 8/23/04

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
EPAP

Employee Name: Eleanor Raymond		Title/Series/Grade: Supervisory Computer Specialist, GS-2210-13	
Duty Station: IT Services Division Herndon, VA	Appraisal Period:	From: 10/1/04	To: 9/30/05

Part A: Notification of Standards: *Signatures certify that critical elements and performance standards were discussed. Critical elements and performance standards are contained in Part E.*

Employee:	Rating Official:	Reviewing Official (if applicable*):
Date:	Date:	Date:

*If determined by Bureau/Office

Part B: Progress Review: *Signatures certify that performance was discussed.*

Employee:	Date:	Rating Official:	Date:

Part C: Summary Rating Determination: To determine a summary rating, assign one of the numerical rating levels that accurately reflects the employee's performance for each of the critical elements (Use only whole numbers: **Exceptional = 5 points; Superior = 4 points, Fully Successful = 3 points, Minimally Successful = 2 points, and Unsatisfactory = 0 points.**) *See reverse for complete instructions for assigning a Summary Rating*.

Element Number	Numerical Rating
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	NR
5	5
	Total: 17

Total Numerical Rating 17 ÷ **Number of Elements** 4 = **Numeric Summary Rating** 4.25

Part D: Overall Summary Rating: Use conversion chart below to determine Summary Rating. Check the appropriate box:

	Exceptional	4.6 – 5.00 AND No critical element rated lower than "Superior".
X	**Superior**	3.6 – 4.59 AND No critical element rated lower than "Fully Successful".
	Fully Successful	3.0 – 3.59 AND No critical element rated lower than "Fully Successful".
	Minimally Successful	2.0 – 2.99 AND No critical element rated lower than "Minimally Successful".
	Unsatisfactory	One or more critical elements rated "Unsatisfactory".

Employee:	Rating Official:	Reviewing Official: (if applicable):
Date:	Date:	Date:

Check here if Interim Rating: _____

Employee's Signature above certifies that the overall summary rating was discussed. Reviewing Official's signature is required for Exceptional, Minimally Successful and Unsatisfactory ratings, and otherwise if determined by Bureau/Office.

SAMPLE

Instructions for Completing the EPAP

Establishing Critical Elements and Performance Standards

Critical elements (at least one, but no more than five) should be established for each employee at the start of the performance year. Through these elements, employees are held accountable for work assignments and responsibilities of their position. A critical element is an assignment or responsibility of such importance that Unsatisfactory performance in that element alone would result in a determination that the employee's overall performance is Unsatisfactory. Please see the Performance Appraisal Handbook for more detailed information.

Performance standards are expressions of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met for each element at a particular level of performance. They must be focused on results and include credible measures. You may use the Benchmark Performance Standards from the Performance Appraisal Handbook (in conjunction with individually established performance standards) to describe, for each element, credible measures such as quality, quantity, timeliness and/or cost effectiveness, for at least the "Fully Successful" level. Rating officials are strongly encouraged to develop performance standards at additional levels, to ensure that the employee has a clear understanding of the level of performance expected.

Progress Reviews

A progress review should be conducted at approximately mid-way through the rating period. Part B should be completed after the progress review. Any written feedback or recommended training can be noted on a separate sheet and attached to the EPAP.

Assigning the Summary Rating

A specific rating is required for each critical element to reflect the level of performance demonstrated by the employee throughout the rating period. Only one numerical rating level is assigned for each critical element. Before the rating official assigns a summary rating, he/she should consider all interim summary ratings received for the employee during the annual appraisal period. The summary rating is assigned as follows:

G. Review the EPAP and assess how the employee performed relative to the described performance standards.

H. Appropriately document the employee's performance with a narrative summary that describes the employee's achievements for the critical elements as compared to the performance standards. A narrative must be written for each critical element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory. This narrative should contain examples of the employee's performance that substantiate and explain how the employee's performance falls within the level assigned. There is a block provided for the narrative summary for each critical element.

I. In Part C of this form, assign one of the numerical rating levels that accurately reflects the employee's performance for each of the critical elements (Use only whole numbers: Exceptional = 5 points, Superior= 4 points, Fully Successful = 3 points, Minimally Successful = 2 points, and Unsatisfactory = 0 points).

J. Add up the numerical rating levels to get a total.

K. Divide the total by the number of critical elements to get an average. (Elements that are "not rated" because an employee has not had a chance to perform them during the rating year are not assigned any points and should not be used to determine the average rating.)

L. Assign the employee a summary rating based on the table in Part D of this form.

Note: Whenever an employee is rated **"Unsatisfactory"** on one or more critical elements, the overall rating **must** be **"Unsatisfactory"** (regardless of total points). **The rating official should immediately contact the servicing human resources office.**

SAMPLE

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 1:	***Supervisory/Managerial Element:*** *Performance of supervisory/managerial duties will be carried out in accordance with regulatory requirements and other Bureau/Office policies governing the following areas:* ▪ *Diversity/EEO obligations;* ▪ *Internal management controls;* ▪ *Merit Systems Principles;* ▪ *Safety and Occupational Health obligations;* ▪ *Effective performance management; and* ▪ *Effective management of ethics, conduct & discipline issues.*
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	See attached benchmark standard
Superior	See attached benchmark standard
Fully Successful	See attached benchmark standard
Minimally Successful	See attached benchmark standard
Unsatisfactory	See attached benchmark standard

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.
In addition to ensuring the day-to-day completion of work and normal supervisory duties within the IT Services Division, Eleanor dealt with 2 significant employee issues during the past rating year. These employee issues had the potential for major negative impact on the division and even the region, but because of Eleanor's leadership and professionalism, the problems were dealt with effectively, with minimal disruption and with a positive outcome for all concerned. In addition, Eleanor hired 3 new employees, which has increased the region's diversity percentage in underrepresented categories. Eleanor has also provided an opportunity for her staff to get involved in new and unique processes within the region in which the staff had significant input. Several individuals on Eleanor's staff have told me that Eleanor has demonstrated respect and care for them as individuals and acknowledges what they contribute to the workplace which has made a considerable positive impact on them remaining with the Bureau. Eleanor and her staff have developed "Safety Days," which is a forum to increase safety awareness among the staff. Safety Days was adopted regional office-wide.

Rating for Critical Element 1:

[X] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

SAMPLE

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 2:	GPRA/Mission Element: Security of bureau Information Technology (IT) systems and data including applying established IT security requirements and procedures (operational, technical, etc.) when utilizing IT systems or accessing electronic data in accordance with the bureau's IT security plan.
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	See attached benchmark standard—In addition, ensures 98% of IT systems are Certified and Accredited in accordance with DOI regulations/policies.
Superior	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, ensures 90% of IT systems are Certified and Accredited in accordance with DOI regulations/policies.
Fully Successful	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, ensures 85% of IT systems are Certified and Accredited in accordance with DOI regulations/policies.
Minimally Successful	See attached benchmark standard—In addition, only 80-84% of IT systems are Certified and Accredited in accordance with DOI regulations/policies.
Unsatisfactory	See attached benchmark standard--In addition, fewer than 80% of IT systems are Certified and Accredited in accordance with DOI regulations/policies.

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Eleanor's performance met the requirements listed in the benchmark standard at the Superior level and she and her staff ensured certification and accreditation of 90% of all Bureau IT systems which exceeded the DOI standard by 5%. All additional work was accomplished within budget requirements.

Rating for Critical Element 2:

[ ] Exceptional-5 [X] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

SAMPLE

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 3:	Analyzes, operates and maintains all IT systems for the Denver Service Center.
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, completes operation and maintenance activities using less resources (at least 20%) than originally estimated.
Superior	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, completes operation and maintenance activities using less resources (at least 10%) than originally estimated.
Fully Successful	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, completes operation and maintenance activities within planned budget estimates.
Minimally Successful	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, operation and maintenance activities exceed budget estimates by 5-10%.
Unsatisfactory	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, operation and maintenance activities exceed budget estimates by more than 10%.

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Eleanor and her staff completed all of the scheduled operation and maintenance activities on IT systems in the Denver Service Center. They met all timeframes and stayed within budget estimates.

Rating for Critical Element 3:

[ ] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [X] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

SAMPLE

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 4:	Design and Development of New IT Systems.
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, completes design and development activities using less resources (at least 20%) than originally estimated.
Superior	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, completes design and development activities using less resources (at least 10%) than originally estimated.
Fully Successful	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, completes operation and maintenance activities within planned budget estimates
Minimally Successful	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, design and development activities exceed budget estimates by 5-10%.
Unsatisfactory	See attached benchmark standard-- In addition, design and development activities exceed budget estimates by more than 10%.

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

Due to shifting priorities within the Division, Eleanor and I agreed that she should focus resources elsewhere this FY. Therefore, she was not able to perform any activities on this element.

Rating for Critical Element 4: Not Rated

[ ] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

SAMPLE

Part E: Critical Elements and Performance Standards: *List below each of the employee's critical elements (at least one, but no more than 5) and their corresponding performance standards. If Benchmark Standards are used, indicate "Benchmark Standards are attached" in the space below, and ensure they are attached to this form.*

Critical Element 5:	Monitor Contractor Progress
Performance Standards	
Exceptional	See attached benchmark standard
Superior	See attached benchmark standard
Fully Successful	See attached benchmark standard
Minimally Successful	See attached benchmark standard
Unsatisfactory	See attached benchmark standard

Narrative Summary

Describe the employee's performance for each critical element. A narrative summary must be written for each element assigned a rating of Exceptional, Minimally Successful, or Unsatisfactory.

In addition to the myriad contracts which Eleanor was assigned, because of her expertise, she implemented a major change to the way the office traditionally does contract monitoring. This involved development of guidance and performing training for all IT and management employees involved in contract monitoring. Eleanor sought out the managers involved, worked with them to develop the process, devised new ways to do the work, trained the individuals involved, and implemented the process. The managers were reluctant at first, because this involved new and different ways of looking at performing the work, however, Eleanor convinced them that they could gain significant savings, particularly in staff time. Eleanor partnered with 2 other organizational units within the region to accomplish these changes.

Rating for Critical Element 5:

[X] Exceptional-5 [ ] Superior-4 [ ] Fully Successful-3 [ ] Minimally Successful-2 [ ] Unsatisfactory-0

Revised 8/23/04

SAMPLE

Attachment to EPAP – Benchmark Standards

Benchmark Non-Supervisory Performance Standards

Exceptional:
Employee demonstrates particularly excellent performance that is of such high quality that organizational goals have been achieved that would not have been otherwise. The employee demonstrates mastery of technical skills and a thorough understanding of the mission of the organization and has a fundamental impact on the completion of program objectives.

The employee exerts a major positive influence on management practices, operating procedures and/or program implementation, which contributes substantially to organizational growth and recognition. The employee plans for the unexpected and uses alternate ways of reaching goals. Difficult assignments are handled intelligently and effectively. The employee has produced an exceptional quantity of work, often ahead of established schedules and with little supervision.

The employee's oral and written communications are exceptionally clear and effective. He/she improves cooperation among participants in the work and prevents misunderstandings. Complicated or controversial subjects are presented or explained effectively to a variety of audiences so that desired outcomes are achieved.

Superior:

Employee demonstrates unusually good performance that exceeds expectations in critical areas and exhibits a sustained support of organizational goals. The employee shows a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of the job and the procedures for meeting them.

Effective planning by the employee improves the quality of management practices, operating procedures, task assignments and/or program activities. The employee develops and/or implements workable and cost-effective approaches to meeting organizational goals.

The employee demonstrates an ability to get the job done well in more than one way while handling difficult and unpredicted problems. The employee produces a high quantity of work, often ahead of established schedules with less than normal supervision.

The employee writes and speaks clearly on difficult subjects to a wide range of audiences and works effectively with others to accomplish organizational objectives.

Fully Successful:

The employee demonstrates good, sound performance that meets organizational goals. All critical activities are generally completed in a timely manner and supervisor is kept informed of work issues, alterations and status. The employee effectively applies technical skills and organizational knowledge to get the job done. The employee successfully carries out regular duties while also handling any difficult special assignments. The employee plans and performs work according to organizational priorities and schedules. The employee communicates clearly and effectively.

Minimally Successful:

SAMPLE

The employee's performance shows serious deficiencies that require correction. The employee's work frequently needs revision or adjustments to meet a minimally successful level. All assignments are completed, but often require assistance from supervisor and/or peers. Organizational goals and objectives are met only as a result of close supervision. On one or more occasions, important work requires unusually close supervision to meet organizational goals or needs so much revision that deadlines were missed or imperiled.

Employee shows a lack of awareness of policy implications or assignments; inappropriate or incomplete use of programs or services; circumvention of established procedures, resulting in unnecessary expenditure of time or money; reluctance to accept responsibility; disorganization in carrying out assignments; incomplete understanding of one or more important areas of the field of work; unreliable methods for completing assignments; lack of clarity in writing and speaking; and/or failure to promote team spirit.

Unsatisfactory:

The employee's performance is unsatisfactory. The quality and quantity of the employee's work are not adequate for the position. Work products do not meet the minimum requirements expected.

The employee demonstrates little or no contribution to organizational goals; failure to meet work objectives; inattention to organizational priorities and administrative requirements; poor work habits resulting in missed deadlines and/or incomplete work products; strained work relationships; failure to respond to client needs; and/or lack of response to supervisor's corrective efforts.

SAMPLE

Benchmark Supervisory Performance Standards

Exceptional:

Supervisory: The employee demonstrates excellent leadership skills and with only rare exceptions develops effective working relationships with others. The employee immediately handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness, and demonstrates foresight in correcting situations that may cause future problems before they arise. The employee encourages independence and risk-taking among subordinates, yet takes responsibility for their actions. The employee is open to and solicits the views of others, and promotes cooperation among peers and subordinates, while guiding, motivating and stimulating positive responses.

The employee demonstrates a strong commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity and the affirmative action objectives of the organization, and has a significant positive impact on achievement of goals in this area. In addition, the employee demonstrates innovation and specific positive achievements in meeting other management obligations such as safety, internal management controls, merit systems principles, performance management, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

Superior:

Supervisory: The employee demonstrates good leadership skills and establishes sound working relationships. The employee almost always handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness. The employee shows good judgment in dealing with others and considering their views. The employee has a strong sense of mission and seeks out responsibility. The employee demonstrates a commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity and the affirmative action objectives of the organization, and has a positive impact on achievement of goals in this area. In addition, the employee promotes a safe working environment and solutions to problems encountered in meeting other management obligations including internal management controls, merit systems obligations, managing performance, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

Fully Successful:

Supervisory: The employee is a capable leader who works successfully with others and listens to suggestions. The employee generally handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness. The employee also works well as a team member, supporting the group's efforts and showing an ability to handle a variety of interpersonal situations. The employee's work with others shows an understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal opportunity and meets all management commitments related to providing a safe working environment, merit systems obligations, performance management, and internal controls, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

Minimally Successful:

Supervisory: The employee's supervisory performance shows serious deficiencies that require correction. The employee sometimes fails to motivate subordinates and promote team spirit; provide clear assignments and performance requirements or sufficient instructions to subordinates; provide sufficient explanation of organizational goals to subordinates; satisfy customer needs and/or meet customer service objectives; and/or meet production or mission goals in a timely and quality manner. The employee's work with others fails to show a consistent understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal opportunity. The employee does not meet all management obligations related to internal controls, merit system obligations, performance management, and/or management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

SAMPLE

Unsatisfactory:

Supervisory: The employee's supervisory performance is unsatisfactory. The employee usually fails to motivate subordinates and promote team spirit; often provides unclear assignments and performance requirements or insufficient instructions to subordinates; frequently fails to provide sufficient explanation of organizational goals to subordinates; generally fails to satisfy customer needs and/or meet customer service objectives; and/or frequently fails to meet production or mission goals in a timely and quality manner. The employee's work with others consistently fails to show an understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal opportunity. Employee frequently fails to meet other management obligations related to internal controls, merit systems obligations, performance management, and/or management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues.

SAMPLE