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GENERAL INFORMATION

All employee performance appraisals shall be made in writing by the employee's supervisor (the rater) who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The appraisal shall be reviewed by the next higher level supervisor (the reviewer), unless the rater is the agency head, prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee. The reviewer may attach additional comments to the appraisal, and in the attachment may take exception to the rater's appraisal points. In addition, the reviewer has the authority to change the appraisal completed by the rater. If the reviewer elects to change the rating, the change and associated justification should be noted on the appraisal document. Whenever an employee's job responsibilities change significantly, the appraisal document should be revised to reflect that change. The final appraisal

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Coastal Center - Phone: 843/873-5750
Pee Dee Center - Phone: 843/664-2600
Saleeby Center - Phone: 843/332-4104

must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer and the employee, if possible. If any party refuses to sign the appraisal, a notation shall be made on the performance appraisal of this. If possible, a witness should sign an acknowledgement that the party refused to sign the appraisal.

All performance appraisals shall become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file. Upon request, the agency will furnish the employee with a copy of the performance appraisal, with copies of all pertinent attachments, including the form completed at the time of the planning stage and the final appraisal form.

The provisions of this policy address the appraisal process of both probationary and covered employees. Although not mentioned specifically in this policy, employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act may also be given annual performance appraisals.

DEFINITIONS

Covered Employee: A full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of an FTE position, completed the probationary period, has a "successful" or higher overall rating on the employee's performance evaluation, and has grievance rights. This definition does not include employees in positions such as temporary, temporary grant or time-limited employees who do not have grievance rights.

Established Review Date: The employee's review date as established in accordance with State Human Resources Regulations.

Probationary Period: An initial working test period of employment in an FTE position with the State of not more than 12 months' duration. An employee whose performance is "unsuccessful" during the probationary period must be terminated before becoming a covered employee.

Reassignment: The movement within an agency of an employee from one position to another position having the same State salary range, or the movement of a position within an agency which does not require a reclassification.

Review Period (or Rating Period): The period of time over which the performance of the employee is assessed in an Evaluation Document. The review period is typically an annual/universal review date, except in cases of probationary and trial employees.

Short Year Planning Stage: Any EPMS planning stage document covering a period of time less than 12 months. (Exception: for employees in "trial" periods).

Short Year Review: Any performance appraisal that evaluates an employee's performance for a period of time less than 12 months. (Exceptions: "trial" period reviews or a warning period of substandard performance review).

Successful Rating: Equivalent to a "meets" performance rating.

Transfer: The movement to a different agency of an employee from one position to another position having the same State salary range, or the movement of a position from one agency to another agency which does not require a reclassification.

Trial Period: The initial working test period of six (6) months required of a covered employee upon movement to any class or an unclassified State title in which the employee has not held permanent status.

Universal Review Date: The date prior to which performance appraisals are due and a new annual performance review period begins. July 2nd will be the universal review date for the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) (Exception: Employees in a probationary or trial status).

TRAINING

DDSN encourages training about the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) for all employees. EPMS training will be provided by April 1st each year.

UNIVERSAL REVIEW DATE

DDSN has established a Universal Review Date of July 2nd. All covered employees for the agency, except employees in a probationary period or a trial period, shall be given a performance review prior to the annual universal review date of July 2nd.

IMPLEMENTATION

As of the effective date of this policy, an employee, excluding any employees in a probationary period, trial period, or on a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance, will receive a performance review prior to July 2, 2019. After DDSN's first Universal Review Date any employee in a probationary period or trial period will have a performance review prior to the Established Review Date. Once an employee receives a performance appraisal or successful by default on the Established Review Date, the employee will receive a Short Year Planning Stage and Short Year Review in order to move the employee from the Established Review Date to the Universal Review Date.

POSITION DESCRIPTION/EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EPMS) FORM

The Position Description/Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) form is a comprehensive form that is utilized to capture both position description information, as well as the employee planning stage and actual performance information.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Defines qualifications for the position including education, experience, licensure, certification or other requirements for successful performance of job duties; identifies the specific skills,

knowledge and abilities required of the position. Licensure, registration and certification requirements must also be specified. The degree of discretion allowed in performing the job duties and the supervisory responsibilities assigned to the position should be clearly indicated. Where appropriate, the physical and mental requirements necessary for performance of the position should be incorporated into the document for purposes of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

Each job responsibility should be noted, along with the percentage of weight for each duty to be performed. The job function should also be designated as essential or marginal. Essential job functions are defined as major job responsibilities that an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation. Marginal job functions are relatively incidental to the reason the position exists or are occasional requirements of the job. Typically marginal duties correspond to the lowest percentage weights. (See Addendum 2)

LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

There shall be three levels of performance to rate each job function, objective, and to rate overall performance.

1. Exceptional: Work is above the criteria of the job function throughout the rating period.
2. Successful: Work meets the criteria of the job function.
3. Unsuccessful: Work fails to meet the criteria of the job function.

PLANNING STAGE

Each employee shall have a planning stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. The employee's job functions (which include job duties and success criteria), objectives, and performance characteristics for the next rating period will be discussed at this time. The rater and employee should participate in drafting the planning stage document. The reviewing officer and the rater should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage completion.

JOB FUNCTIONS

The rater and the employee shall determine the job functions (which include job duties and success criteria) by reviewing the employee's position description. If the position description is not up-to-date, or if there is no position description, one should be prepared and submitted for approval. In those instances where the rater and employee cannot agree upon the job functions, the rater's decision shall be final. The statement outlining the job function should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each job function shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the

three levels of performance. It shall be mandatory for all raters to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are optional for all employees. An objective should be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included on the employee's position description. The statement outlining the objective(s) should also include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the three levels of performance.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

The Division of State Human Resources will provide agencies with a list of suggested performance characteristics and their definitions. Each performance characteristic shall be defined in the planning stage and rated as "pass" or "fail" in the evaluation stage. The performance characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning document. The performance characteristics section shall not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating.

It shall be mandatory that all managers and supervisors be rated on the performance characteristic of "promoting equal opportunity." (Promoting equal opportunity includes such areas as hiring, promotion, or placement; level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity; progress toward achieving a fully integrated and representative work force; and contribution toward minority programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.) Performance characteristics are listed at the end of this policy.

ONGOING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

A rater should continue to provide performance feedback to employees throughout the review period. An unofficial mid-year review is encouraged to facilitate this communication between raters and employees. In addition, various options are available to the rater in conducting performance management. A rater may gather feedback to prepare the appraisal document and/or conduct unofficial appraisals more frequently than required in this policy.

WEIGHTED EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Planning Stage Appraisal documents must incorporate the weighted evaluation system. In

order to reduce subjectivity in the evaluation, a numerical value will be assigned to each level of performance.

Levels of Performance		
Performance Level	Point Values	Overall Range for Final Score
Exceptional	3	2.5 to 3.0
Successful	2	1.5 to 2.49
Unsuccessful	1	1.49 and below

When completing an employee's Planning Stage document, the rater will determine the importance and time required for each job function and objective (if applicable) by assigning a percentage or weight to each.

1. The percentage of importance for all Job Functions and Objectives (if applicable) must total 100%.
2. Each rating is multiplied by the percentage of importance and time assigned to the task.
3. All sums are added together and divided by 100 to reach a final numerical rating.

Example of Weighted Scoring

Performance Level	Level of Performance	Point Value	Weight	Rating
Job Function 1	Exceptional	3	30%	$3 \times .30 = .90$
Job Function 2	Successful	2	20%	$2 \times .20 = .40$
Job Function 3	Exceptional	3	20%	$3 \times .20 = .60$
Job Function 4	Successful	2	15%	$2 \times .15 = .30$
Objective 1	Exceeds	3	5%	$3 \times .05 = .15$
Objective 2	Successful	2	5%	$2 \times .05 = .10$
Objective 3	Successful	2	5%	$2 \times .05 = .10$
TOTAL	<u>Exceptional</u>		100%	Overall 2.55

*Point Values must be expressed in whole numbers only.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Each new employee in probationary status shall be rated prior to the completion of a 12-month probationary period. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If that employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "successful" rating by default and will obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the class. The probationary period may not be extended. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, an employee may receive a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee to the universal review date. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee shall be terminated before becoming a covered employee. Until an employee has

completed the probationary period and has earned a “successful” or higher overall rating on his/her evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act; and therefore, an agency is not required to follow the “Substandard Performance Process” to terminate a probationary employee. The “successful” rating is the equivalent to the “meets” performance rating referenced in the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

All employees shall be given an annual appraisal no more than 90 calendar days prior to the employee’s performance review date. If an employee is on approved leave with or without pay for more than 30 consecutive workdays, the employee’s performance review date may be advanced up to 90 days. A covered employee who receives a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” may have the performance review date advanced to coincide with the “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” dates.

The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee shall receive a “successful” rating by default. A covered employee may not be issued either an overall “unsuccessful” appraisal or an “unsuccessful” rating on any essential job function or objective that significantly impacts performance without following the “Substandard Performance Process.” Should the review date advance, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review period in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.

TRIAL PERIODS

Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted or reclassified shall be appraised prior to the completion of a six (6) month trial period in the position. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a “successful” rating by default, and obtain permanent status in the new classification. Once an employee has completed a successful trial period and obtained permanent status in a class, the employee retains permanent status in the class throughout the employee’s continuous service. The six (6) month trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee prior to the end of the six (6) month trial period. The employee’s performance review date shall be advanced for the time period such extension is in effect. After satisfactory completion of the trial period, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.

The “Substandard Performance Process” is not required to demote or reclassify downward an employee in trial status to the same class from which she/he was promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The “Substandard Performance Process” is also not required to demote or reclassify downward an employee in trial status to a class in an equal or higher pay band from which she/he was promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The employee in trial status may not grieve such demotion. The employee in trial status may not be terminated or demoted to a class in a lower pay band than that from which promoted for performance reasons without following the “Substandard Performance Process.”

SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE PROCESS FOR COVERED EMPLOYEES

A covered employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving an “unsuccessful” rating and being removed from the position. To ensure this occurs, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. A rater shall issue a written “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” prior to issuing an “unsuccessful” rating to a covered employee. If, during the performance period, an employee is considered “unsuccessful” in any essential job function or objective that significantly impacts performance, the rater shall provide the employee with a written “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance.” The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee’s review date. However, the performance review date may be advanced to coincide with the “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” dates. Should the performance review date be advanced and the employee receives a “successful” or above rating on all essential job functions/objectives that significantly impacts performance noted in the warning notice, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.
2. The rater and employee should participate in drafting a work improvement plan. The work improvement plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations. In those instances where the rater and employee cannot agree upon the content of the work improvement plan, the rater’s decision shall be final.
3. During the warning period, the employee and the rater shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they will discuss the employee’s progress. Documentation is required to verify that these counseling sessions were held. Copies of this documentation shall be placed in the employee’s official personnel file and given to the employee upon request.
4. If the employee’s performance is rated “successful” or above on all essential job functions/objectives that significantly impact performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated “unsuccessful” on any of the essential job functions or objectives that significantly impact performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, the employee shall be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned, or demoted).
5. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written appraisal prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a “successful” rating by default.

6. If an employee has been issued two warning notices within a 365-day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function/objective that significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365-day period, the employee shall be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the “unsuccessful” appraisal. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.

WARNING NOTICE OF SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE

The requirements of a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” are:

1. The notice shall be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” and signed by the employee (witnessed, if employee will not sign).
2. The notice shall list the job function(s) and/or objective(s) included on the employee’s planning document that are considered “unsuccessful performance requirements,” with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.
3. The notice shall include the time period for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., terminated, demotion, reassignment).
4. The notice shall include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.

A copy of the notice shall be given to the employee and placed in the employee’s official personnel file.


Elizabeth Lemmond
Human Resource Director


Mary Poole
State Director

To access the following attachments, please see the agency website page “Current Directives” at: <https://www.ddsn.sc.gov/providers/directives-and-standards/current-directives>

Attachment A: Performance Characteristics
Attachment B: Position Description/Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) Form HR-206D

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