

State Human Resources Policy #E24-106.01

Employee Performance Evaluation System

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DEFINITIONS

Agency – The Military Department of South Carolina/Office of the Adjutant General

Covered Employee - A Full-Time or Part-Time employee who is occupying a part or all of an Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position who has completed the Probationary Period, and has a “Successful” or higher overall rating on the employee’s Employee Performance Evaluation, and who has grievance rights.

Established Review Date – The employee’s review date as established in accordance with State Human Resources Regulations. The Universal Review Date for the Agency is 1 July (Exceptions: “Probationary” employees and “Trial” employees).

Universal Review Date – The date prior to which all employees’ performance reviews are due.

Short Year Review – Any performance evaluation that evaluates an employee’s performance for a period of time less than twelve (12) months (Exceptions: “Trial” period reviews and “Warning Notice” reviews).

Short Year Planning Stage – Any EPES Planning Stage document covering a period of time less than twelve (12) months (Exception: “Trial” period Planning Stages).

POLICY

1. The South Carolina Military Department will utilize the Position Description/Employee Performance Evaluation System (EPES) as a constructive management tool to evaluate Agency positions and the individual work performance of each employee in our workforce.
2. The provisions of this policy address the evaluation process of both Probationary and Covered Employees. Although not mentioned specifically in the policy, employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act may also be given performance evaluations.
3. Forms. Raters and Reviewers will use the Position Description / Employee Performance Evaluation Form (see <https://sctag.org/forms> under the “Human Resources’ section) to conduct and document performance evaluations and Annual Performance Reviews.
4. Annual Performance Reviews
 - a. 01 July is the Universal Review Date for the Agency (Exceptions: “Probationary” employees and “Trial” employees).
 - b. The Performance Review date marks the beginning of a new review period.
 - c. All employees shall receive an Annual Performance Evaluation no more than 90 calendar days prior to the employee’s performance review date.

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) Should the review date advance, an employee may receive a Short Year Planning Stage and a Short Year Review in order to move the employee back to the Universal Review Date.

d. All State employees must have at least one State employee in their rating scheme as their Rater or Reviewer.

e. If a Rater does not provide an employee an evaluation prior to the performance review date, the employee shall receive a "Successful" rating by default.

f. A Rater may not provide a covered employee an overall "Unsuccessful" appraisal or an "Unsuccessful" rating on any essential Job Function or Objective which significantly impacts performance, without following the "Substandard Performance Process".

g. Raters will be evaluated on the timely completion of their employee's performance appraisals.

h. Managers and Supervisors will 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 workforce; and contribution toward minority programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals).

5. Substandard Performance. 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.

6. Probationary Periods

a. Each new employee in probationary status shall be rated prior to the completion of a twelve (12) month probationary period. The probationary period may not be extended.

b. A probationary employee who receives a "Successful" rating on their probationary performance review shall obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the class.

c. If a Rater does not provide a probationary employee a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "Successful" rating by default and obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the class.

d. 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.

e. 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 a "Successful" or higher overall rating on the employee's evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act. Therefore, the Agency is not required to follow the "Substandard Performance Process" to terminate a probationary employee.

f. The "Successful" rating is the equivalent to the "Meets" performance rating referenced in the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

- g. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period.

7. Trial Periods

a. Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted or reclassified shall be given a performance evaluation prior to the completion of a six (6) month Trial Period in the position. The six (6) month Trial Period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee prior to the completion of the Trial Period.

b. 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.

c. If a Rater does not provide an employee a performance evaluation prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "Successful" rating by default and obtain permanent status in the new classification.

d. 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.

- e. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period.

- f. Substandard Performance during a Trial Period.

(1) The "Substandard Performance Process" is not required to demote or reclassify downward an employee in a Trial status to the same class from which promoted or to a class in an equal or higher pay band from which promoted if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the Trial Period. The employee in trial status may not grieve such demotion.

(2) 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."

8. Ongoing Performance Management

a. A Rater should 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.

b. A Rater may gather feedback to prepare the performance evaluation document and/or conduct unofficial evaluations more frequently than required in this Policy.

c. Whenever an employee's job responsibilities change significantly, the Rater should update the evaluation document to reflect that change.

9. All performance evaluations shall become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file. Upon request, the Agency shall furnish the employee with a copy of the performance evaluation with copies of all pertinent attachments including the EPES form completed at the time of the Planning Stage and the final evaluation form.

PROCEDURE

1. Position Description

a. The Position Description portion of the evaluation form is a record of the official duties of the position and is initially established by the Agency. The Rater and the employee are responsible for keeping the Position Description current by verifying the job has not significantly changed each time they complete the Planning Stage.

b. The employee should update the Position Description with the assistance and approval of the Rater. In those instances where the Rater and employee cannot agree upon the job duties, the Rater's decision is final. The Reviewer is responsible for reviewing and approving changes to the Position Description.

c. If there are changes in the Position Description, the Reviewer will forward the updated Position Description to the South Carolina Military Department's State Human Resources Office (State HRO) for final review and approval. Significant changes in job duties may warrant a reclassification request; however, less significant changes in job duties will be considered updates. Once the Position Description changes are approved as appropriate, the employee and the Rater should complete the Planning Stage for the next evaluation period.

2. Planning Stage

a. The Rater will prepare a Planning Stage for each of their rated employees at the beginning of each rating period.

(1) The Rater and the rated employee will discuss the employee's Job Functions (which include job duties and success criteria), Objectives, and Performance Characteristics for the next rating period at this time. The Rater and rated employee should participate in drafting the Planning Stage document.

(2) The Reviewing Officer (the next level supervisor) and the Rater should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the Planning Stage.

(3) The Rater may incorporate a team activity into the Planning Stage document. The team performance being evaluated could constitute a Job Function, an Objective, or one criterion for a particular Job Function or Objective. The Rater may also link the employee's training plan to the Planning Stage document.

(4) Raters will prepare a Planning Stage for each Probationary or Trial employee within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the probationary or trial period.

(5) The Rater will maintain the signed copy of the Planning State at their level until time to conduct the evaluation.

b. Job Functions

(1) 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, the Rater and the employee shall prepare a Position Description and submit it for approval. In those instances where the Rater and employee cannot agree upon the Job Functions, the Rater's decision shall be final.

(2) The statement outlining the Job Functions should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (Success criteria) of the Rater and should specify the expectations of the Rater for the employee to meet performance requirements.

c. Objectives

(1) Objectives shall be optional for all employees.

(a) An Objective should be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or an assignment that is not included on the employee's position description.

(b) The statement outlining the Objective(s) should also include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the Rater and should specify the expectations of the Rater for the employee to meet performance requirements.

(2) Performance Characteristics

(a) The Agency will determine and provide the Performance Characteristics along with their definitions. Each Performance Characteristic shall be defined in the Planning Stage.

(3) The Performance Characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance characteristics that are important to success in performing the Job Functions and Objectives included in the Planning Document.

d. Job Functions/Objective Weights

(1) If objective weights are used, the Rater and the employee will determine a weight for each individual Job Function and Objective. The weight assigned to each Job Function and Objective should correlate with the importance of each Job Function and Objective; not necessarily the amount of time spent on the Job Function and Objective.

(2) The total weights of the criteria (both Job Functions and Objectives) must add up to 100%.

3. Evaluation Stage

a. Evaluation Section

(1) The employee's Rater who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed shall conduct and document all performance evaluations.

(2) The Rater will evaluate the employee's performance in each of the employee's Job Functions and Objectives based on the three (3) Levels of Performance. The three (3) Levels of Performance are:

- Exceptional (E) - Work that is above the criteria of the Job Function or Objective throughout the rating period.
- Successful (S) - Work that meets the criteria of the Job Function or Objective.
- Unsuccessful (U) - Work that fails to meet the criteria of the Job Function or Objective.

b. Performance Characteristics

(1) The Rater will assess the Performance Characteristics using a rating of "Pass" (Meets Requirements) or "Fail" (Fails to meet Requirements).

(2) The Performance Characteristics are not included in the overall performance rating.

c. The next higher-level Supervisor (Reviewer) shall review the evaluation, unless the Rater is the Agency Head, prior to the evaluation being discussed with the employee.

(1) The Reviewer may attach additional comments to the evaluation and, in the attachment, may take exception to any of the Rater's evaluation points.

(2) The Reviewer has the authority to change the evaluation completed by the Rater. If the Reviewer elects to change the rating, the Reviewer will note the change and associated justification on the evaluation document.

d. The final Evaluation must bear the signature of the Rater, the Reviewer and the employee, if possible. If any party refuses to sign the evaluation, a notation of this refusal shall be made on the performance evaluation. If possible, a witness (a State employee) will sign to acknowledge that the party refused to sign the evaluation, or that the employee, Rater or Reviewer is unavailable for signature and why.

e. The Reviewer will forward the completed evaluation to the State HRO.

f. The State HRO will complete the processing of the evaluation and place the completed evaluation in the employee's official personnel file.

4. Overall Performance Rating

a. The State HRO will calculate the Overall Performance Rating

(1) Calculating Total Level of Performance

(a) The three (3) Levels of Performance are assigned the following numerical values:

- Exceptional (E) = 3
- Successful (S) = 2
- Unsuccessful (U) = 1

(b) The Overall Level of Performance is calculated by multiplying the numerical values for each Function or Objective by the weight (if used), totaling the results, and dividing the total number by 100 (use of weighted criteria). See below for example.

b. The values ranges for Overall Level of Performance are:

- Exceptional (E) – 3.00-2.50
- Successful (S) – 2.49-1.50
- Unsuccessful (U) - 1.49-0.0

Example – Use of Weighted Criteria

Criteria	Weight Factor (if used)	Rating	Rating Value	Numerical Score
Function 1	30%	E	3	30 x 3 = 90
Function 2	20%	S	2	20 x 2 = 40
Function 3	25%	E	3	25 x 3 = 75
Function 4	10%	S	2	10 x 2 = 20

Function 5	10%	E	3	10 x 3 = 30
Objective 1	5%	S	2	5 x 2 = 10
TOTAL	100%			265

Divide the total numerical score (265) by the total weight factor (100) which comes to a score of 2.65, which will give the employee an overall performance appraisal rating of "Exceptional".

5. Substandard Performance Process For Covered Employees

a. If at any time during the review period a covered employee is considered "Unsuccessful" in any essential Job Function or Objective which significantly impacts performance, the Rater shall provide the employee with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance". The Rater will issue a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" prior to issuing an "Unsuccessful" rating to a covered employee.

(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 the 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 deficiencies for each Job Function and/or Objective.

(3) The notice shall include the time period for improvement (no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days) and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e. termination, demotion, or reassignment), and a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the Warning Period.

(4) The Rater or Reviewer will provide a copy of the Notice to the employee and forward the notice to the State HRO who will place the notice in the employee's official personnel file.

b. The Rater and employee should participate in drafting a Work Improvement Plan.

(1) The Work Improvement Plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations.

(2) 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.

c. During the Warning Period, the employee and the Rater shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they shall discuss the employee's progress.

(1) The Rater will prepare documentation to verify that these counseling sessions were held.

(2) The Rater will ensure copies of this documentation are placed in the employee's official personnel file and given to the employee upon request.

d. 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.

e. Should the performance review date be advanced and the employee receives a "Successful" or above rating on all essential Job Functions/Objectives 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.

f. If the employee's performance is rated "Successful" or above, on all essential Job Functions/Objectives, which significantly impact performance, noted in the Warning Notice by the end of the Warning Period, employment shall continue.

g. If the employee is rated "Unsuccessful," on any essential Job Function or Objective which significantly impacts 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, demoted).

h. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written performance evaluation at the end of the Warning Period or the employee will receive a "Successful" rating by default.

i. If an employee has been issued two (2) Warning Notices within a 365-day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential Job Function or Objective, which 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.