



# south carolina STATE LIBRARY

## South Carolina State Library Employee Performance Management System Policy

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### General Information

All performance appraisals will be conducted in writing by the employee's immediate supervisor (the evaluator), who has direct experience and knowledge of the work performed. The Division Director will review the appraisal prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee unless the evaluator is the Agency Director. The Division Director and/or Agency Director are acting in the capacity of the reviewer. The reviewer may attach additional comments to the appraisals. In addition, the reviewer has the authority to change the appraisal completed by the evaluator. 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 must bear the signature of the evaluator, the reviewer, and the employee. If an employee refuses to sign an appraisal, a notation shall be made on the performance appraisal and the Agency Director will sign the appraisal. The Agency Director's signature acknowledges and documents the employee's refusal to sign the performance appraisal. An evaluator should provide performance feedback to employees throughout the review period.

All performance appraisals will 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 appraisal with copies of all pertinent attachments.

## Levels of Performance

There are five levels of performance to rate each development plan, performance objective, performance behaviors, and to rate overall performance:

1. **Outstanding** - Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements.  
Work and accomplishments that are exemplary throughout the rating period; a performance that is considerably and consistently above the job function criteria.
2. **Commendable** - Exceeds Performance Requirements  
Work that is above the criteria of the job function throughout the rating period.
3. **Effective** - Meets Performance Requirements  
Work that meets the criteria of the job function.
4. **Needs Improvement** - Does not meet all Performance Requirements  
Specific job functions, performance objectives or performance behaviors fail to meet the criteria of the job function.
5. **Unsatisfactory** - Substantially below the Performance Requirements  
The majority of the work produced consistently falls below the performance requirements and expectations.

## Development Plan

Each employee will have a planning stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. The employee's job functions, objectives, and developmental goals for the next rating period will be discussed at this time. The evaluator and employee should participate in drafting the developmental goals. The reviewer and the evaluator should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage. An evaluator may incorporate a team activity into the planning stage document. Anticipated training could also be set as a development goal. All development goals should be measurable and appropriate for the current direction of the State Library's mission, vision, and values. Goals should follow the "SMART" acronym:

- **Specific** - clear about what, where, when and how.
- **Measurable** - able to quantify the targets and benefits.
- **Achievable** - able to attain the objectives.
- **Realistic** - able to be accomplished.
- **Time bound** - stating the time period in which they will be accomplished.

## Primary Performance Objectives/Job Functions

The evaluator and the employee will determine the primary performance objectives by reviewing the employee's position description. If the position description is not up-to-date or there is no position description, one will be prepared and submitted for approval. The statement outlining the performance objectives or job function should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria). The performance objective statement should specify the expectations of the evaluator for the employee to meet. Each performance objective will be rated in the evaluation stage based on the five levels of performance.

## Performance Behaviors/Skills

The performance characteristics section will be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance behaviors/ skills that are essential to success in performing the job functions and performance objectives. The performance behaviors/skills are weighted and included in the determination of the overall performance rating. Any performance behavior rating of 5 (consistently exceeds expectations) or 1 (unsatisfactory) must have accompanying comments.

The performance behaviors/ skills noted directly tie into the vision, mission and values noted for the South Carolina State Library.

## Probationary Appointments

Each new employee in a probationary status shall be rated prior to completing a twelve-month probationary period. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the probationary performance review date, the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default and obtain permanent status as a State employee and permanent status in the class. The probationary period may not be extended. 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 "meets performance requirements" or higher overall rating on the employee's evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act; therefore, an agency is not required to follow the "Substandard Performance Process" to terminate a probationary employee.

## Trial Periods

Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted, or reclassified will be appraised prior to the completion of a six-month trial period in the position. The trial review date marks the beginning of a new performance period. Once an employee has completed a successful trial period and obtained permanent status classification, the employee retains permanent status in the classification throughout the employee's continuous service. The six-month trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee prior to the end of the six-month trial period.

The "Substandard Performance Process" is not required to demote or downward reclassify a trial employee to the same classification or a classification of equal or higher grade from which promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. A trial employee may not grieve such demotion. The trial employee may not be terminated or demoted to a lower graded class than the one that they were promoted from for performance reasons without following the "Substandard Performance Process."

## 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.

## Annual Performance Reviews

All covered employees will be given an annual appraisal no more than ninety (90) calendar days prior to the employee's annual review date (June 1st). The annual review date marks the beginning of a new performance period. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the annual review date, the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default. A covered employee may not be issued an overall "below performance requirements" appraisal at any time during the annual review period without following the "Substandard Performance Process." Members of management will not receive their annual review until they have completed their employees' performance reviews.

## Universal Review Date

All agency employees shall be reviewed prior to June 1, the Agency universal review date. The Agency will maintain the review dates presently established in accordance with the State Human Resources Regulations, so that they may be reinstated, if necessary.

- **Established Review Date** - The employee's review date as established in accordance with the State Human Resources Regulations.
- **Universal Review Date** - The date prior to which all classified employee's performance reviews are due.
- **Short Year Review** - Any performance appraisal that evaluates an employee's performance for a period of time less than twelve (12) months.
- **Short Year Planning State** - Any EPMS planning stage document covering a period of time less than twelve (12) months.

## Implementation of the Universal Review Date

As of the effective date of this policy, once an employee reaches his/her established review date the employee will receive a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee from the established review date to the universal date.

## Substandard Performance Process for Permanent Employees

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

- a. An evaluator will issue a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" prior to issuing a "below performance requirements" rating to a permanent employee. If during the performance period an employee is considered "below performance requirements", in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, in that case, the evaluator will provide the employee with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice will 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, if the warning notice is issued less than 30 days before the employee's review date, the review date would roll forward a day for each day the warning notice is in effect.

- b. The evaluator and employee will 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.
- c. During the warning period, the employee and the evaluator 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.
- d. If the employee's performance is rated "meets performance requirements" 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 will continue. If the employee is rated "below performance requirements," 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 will be removed from the position immediately (i.e. dismissed, reassigned, demoted).
- e. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must be rated prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default.
- f. 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, which significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365 day period, the employee will be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the "below performance requirements" appraisal. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.

## Warning Notice of Substandard Performance

A copy of the notice will be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file. The requirements of a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" are:

- a. The notice will 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).
- b. The notice will list the job function(s) and/or performance objective(s) that are considered "below performance requirements," with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.
- c. The notice will include the time period for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., dismissal, demotion, reassignment).
- d. The notice will include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.

## Employee Performance Management System Weighted System

The developmental goals, primary performance objectives, and performance behaviors/skills will be evaluated based on the established five-point scale (defined below). Primary performance objectives will be weighted according to the weights noted on the position description. All three sections of the Employee Performance will be weighted similarly. The final rating score will be an average of the developmental goals, performance objectives and performance behaviors.

Range:

- **Outstanding** - Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements (SE) - 4.50 or above
- **Commendable** - Exceeds Performance Requirements (E) - 3.61 to 4.49
- **Effective** - Fulfills Performance Requirements (M) - 2.76 to 3.60
- **Needs Improvement** - Does not meet all Performance Requirements (NI) - 1.76 - 2.75
- **Unsatisfactory** - Substantially Below Performance Requirements (B) - 1.75 and below