



NASA Procedural Requirements

COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

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Subject: NASA Performance Management System for the Senior Executive Service

Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management

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Chapter 3: Performance Appraisal Process

3.1 Planning Performance: Critical Elements

3.1.1 Rating Officials, in consultation with their senior executives, shall establish and communicate performance plans on or before the beginning of the rating period that at a minimum include the required critical elements and performance requirements. The critical elements are:

- a. Leading Change.
- b. Leading People.
- c. Business Acumen.
- d. Building Coalitions.
- e. Results Driven

Note: For additional information and complete definitions and examples, refer to the NASA Performance Management Manual for Senior Executives. This manual can be obtained by contacting OHCM, Executive Resources, or visiting the NASA Human Resources Portal, Supervisors and Leaders, SES Performance Appraisal System (SESPAS) at <https://hr.nasa.gov>.

3.1.2 Rating Officials shall ensure that:

- a. The Results Driven critical element identifies clear, transparent alignment to relevant Agency or organizational goals/objectives and page numbers from the Strategic Plan, Congressional Budget Justification/Annual Performance Plan, or other organizational planning document in the designated section for each performance result specified.
- b. Executive performance plans include the Governmentwide SES performance requirements as written. It may also include Agency-specific performance requirements written as competencies or specific results/commitments associated with the critical element.
- c. Performance plans include additional specific performance requirements for each objective listed under the Results Driven critical element.
- d. Performance requirements for the Results Driven critical element include measures, targets, and timelines.
- e. The performance requirements in the executive performance plan describe performance at the successful level, as established in Level 3, Successful performance standard, as defined in the SES Performance Appraisal Agreement.

3.1.3 Rating Officials shall assign each critical element a weight value, with the total weight adding to 100 points as follows:

- a. The minimum weight that can be assigned to the Results Driven critical element is 20 percent.
- b. The minimum weight that can be assigned to the other four critical elements is 5 percent.

- c. No single performance element can be assigned a greater weight than the Results Driven critical element.
- d. Based on the recommendations of the full PRB, the Chair of the PRB will establish weights on an annual basis for each critical element.
- e. Variable weighting will be permitted based on the responsibilities of each executive.

3.1.4 The gaining organization shall set performance goals and requirements for any detail or temporary assignment of 120 days or longer and appraise the performance in writing. The executive's Rating Official will factor this appraisal into the Initial Summary Rating.

3.2 Planning Performance: Performance Standards for Critical Elements

3.2.1 The performance standards are management-approved expressions of the standard threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that employees must meet to be appraised at particular levels of performance. The Performance Management System establishes the performance standards for Level 5 (Outstanding) through Level 1 (Unsatisfactory). Each critical element must have a Successful or equivalent standard established. Each critical element and performance requirement is appraised against the established performance standards by applying the performance standards individually to each critical element. Each critical element is further defined under the NASA Performance Management Manual for Senior Executives.

3.3 Monitoring Performance

3.3.1 A Rating Official shall monitor senior executive performance in accomplishing elements and requirements and provide feedback, including advice and assistance on improving performance, when needed, and encouragement and positive reinforcement, as appropriate.

3.3.2 Rating Officials shall provide each senior executive at least one progress review during the appraisal period (normally at midpoint of the appraisal period). If at the midpoint in the appraisal period a senior executive has been on a performance plan for less than 90 days, a midterm review may be conducted or delayed until such time in the appraisal period when a progress review would be more advantageous to the executive. At a minimum, the executive will be informed how well he or she is performing against performance requirements.

3.3.2.1 The primary purposes of a progress review are to:

- a. Discuss the senior executive's level of performance to date; provide feedback on his/her progress in accomplishing the performance expectations described in the performance plan; and provide, when necessary, advice and assistance on how to improve his/her performance.
- b. Identify and, if possible, resolve any issues or problems (e.g., resources) that may be an impediment to the achievement of the individual and/or organizational performance expectations identified in the performance plan.
- c. If necessary, revise the performance plan to reflect any new performance expectations or changes to existing performance expectations.

3.4 Rating Critical Elements

3.4.1 Rating Officials shall:

- a. Assess the progress and accomplishments achieved by each executive against applicable standards.
- b. Appraise and determine a rating (Level 5 to 1) for each of the five critical elements established by using the performance standards level definitions for "Critical Elements" as provided in the NASA Performance Management Manual for Senior Executives and on the SES Performance Agreement, NASA Senior Executive Service Performance Appraisal System (SESPAS), along with any other additional specific requirements/standards that may be established for a particular element.
- c. Establish additional requirements under the Results Driven Critical Element which will be established yearly by the PRB.
 - (1) Appraise and determine a rating (Level 5 to 1) by using the performance standards level definitions for "Critical Elements," along with any other additional specific requirements/standards that may be established for a particular element.
 - (2) The following identifies the two-step process for an assessment of the Results Driven Critical Element:
 - (a) Assign individual ratings for each of the sub-elements (e.g., Distinguished, Meritorious, Successful, Minimally Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory).
 - (b) Determine the Critical Element Rating for the Results Driven Critical Element by using NASA's established

criteria as defined under NASA Performance Management Manual for Senior Executives.

3.5 Deriving the Summary Rating

3.5.1 Once the rating for each critical element is determined, the following point values will be assigned to the element ratings:

- a. Level 5 = 5 points
- b. Level 4 = 4 points
- c. Level 3 = 3 points
- d. Level 2 = 2 points
- e. Level 1 = 0 points

3.5.2 The derivation formula is calculated as follows:

- a. If any critical element is rated Level 1 (Unsatisfactory), the overall summary rating is Unsatisfactory. If no critical element is rated Level 1 (Unsatisfactory), continue to the next step.
- b. For each critical element, multiply the point value of the element rating by the weight assigned to that element.
- c. Add the results from the previous step for each of the five critical elements to come to a total score.
- d. Assign the initial summary rating using the ranges below:
 - (1) 475-500 = Level 5
 - (2) 400-474 = Level 4
 - (3) 300-399 = Level 3
 - (4) 200-299 = Level 2
 - (5) Any critical element rated Level 1 = Level 1

Note: Examples of derivation formula with additional information are included in the NASA Performance Management Manual for Senior Executives.

3.5.3 The Rating Official shall develop an Initial Summary Rating, in writing, and share with the senior executive. At that time, the rating official will communicate to the executive that the rating is not final until approved by the Administrator or designee.

3.5.4 When an executive has worked across organizational lines or on programs that interface with more than one Center Director or Associate/Assistant Administrator, EPMs will consult with other managers who are knowledgeable of the executive's performance and consider their input when recommending an Initial Summary Rating.

3.5.5 Center Directors shall review and evaluate executives who lead Center functional offices with input from the counterpart Mission Support Associate Administrator.

3.5.6 The Mission Support Associate Administrator shall provide a written evaluation of the principal Center functional lead, which addresses the elements of the performance plan.

3.5.7 The Chief, Safety and Mission Assurance (S&MA) shall provide a written evaluation of the S&MA functional leaders at the Centers and the S&MA managers, which addresses the elements of the performance plan.

3.5.8 The appropriate Mission Director, with input by the Center Director, shall provide a written evaluation of the program managers for major programs/projects such as International Space Station, Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, Space Launch System, James Webb Space Telescope, and Technology.

3.5.9 The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Information Officer (CIO), respectively, with input by the Center Director, shall rate Center CFOs and Center CIOs.

3.5.10. Rating Officials shall ensure that all evaluations are attached to the individual's Initial Summary Rating, and remain a part of the Annual Summary Rating.

3.5.11 Opportunity for a Written Response

3.5.11.1 A senior executive may respond in writing to the Initial Summary Rating within ten calendar days of receipt.

3.5.12 Opportunity for a Higher Level Review

3.5.12.1 The senior executive is entitled to request a review of their Initial Summary Rating by a higher level official

before that rating is presented to the PRB.

3.5.12.2 Within ten calendar days of receipt of the Initial Summary Rating assigned by the Rating Official, a senior executive may request a higher level review and/or written justification.

3.5.12.3 The higher level reviewer may not change the initial rating but may recommend a different rating to the PRB and the appointing authority.

3.5.13 A forced distribution of rating levels is prohibited.

3.5.14 When a senior executive, who has completed the minimum appraisal period, changes jobs or transfers to another agency, the Rating Official shall appraise the executive's performance in writing before the executive leaves and the appraisal will be forwarded to the gaining agency.

3.5.15 When developing an Initial Summary Rating for an executive who transfers from another agency, a Rating Official shall consider any applicable ratings and appraisals of the executive's performance received from the former agency.

3.5.16 If the Rating Official cannot prepare an executive's rating at the end of the rating period because the executive has not completed the minimum appraisal period or for other reasons, the Rating Official shall extend the executive's rating period and will then prepare the Annual Summary Rating.

3.5.16.1 When an Annual Summary Rating cannot be prepared as of September 30 because the senior executive has not served under a performance plan for the minimum appraisal period (90 days), the Rating Official shall extend the executive's appraisal period to September 30 of the following year.

3.5.16.2 Although the Rating Official may determine a Summary Rating any time after the executive has served 90 days under a performance plan, no performance-based pay adjustments or other personnel actions may be effected based on this rating unless approved by the Administrator or designee.

3.5.17 The Administrator shall assign Annual Summary Ratings (this may not be delegated to an official who does not have authority to make SES appointments) only after considering the recommendations of the PRB.

3.6 Performance Review Boards

3.6.1 The Administrator, or designee, shall establish one or more PRBs.

3.6.2 Each PRB shall select three or more members in a manner that ensures consistency, stability, and objectivity in SES performance appraisal. PRB appointments will be published in the Federal Register before service begins.

3.6.3 More than one-half of the PRB(s) members will be career appointees when considering a career appointee's appraisal or performance award. PRB(s) members may not participate in deliberations involving their own appraisals.

3.6.4 The PRB(s) will not be provided a proposed Initial Summary Rating to which the executive has not been given the opportunity to respond in writing.

3.6.5 The PRB(s) are provided and take into account appropriate assessments of the Agency's/ organization's performance when making recommendations.

3.7 Preparing for the Next Appraisal Period

3.7.1 During the appraisal discussion, the Rating Official and senior executive shall begin performance planning for the next appraisal period. Normally, a written performance plan will be provided to the executive within 30 days after the beginning of the new appraisal period.

3.7.2 If input is required during the rating process in which a NASA career senior executive accepts a Presidential appointment, the same officials will be consulted when establishing performance objectives and requirements.

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