

Critical element means a work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in a determination that an employee's overall performance is unacceptable. Such elements shall be used to measure performance only at the individual level.

Non-critical element means a dimension or aspect of individual, team, or organizational performance, exclusive of a critical element, that is used in assigning a summary level. Such elements may include, but are not limited to, objectives, goals, program plans, work plans, and other means of expressing expected performance.

Performance means accomplishment of work assignments or responsibilities.

Performance appraisal system: See *Appraisal system*.

Performance plan means all of the written, or otherwise recorded, performance elements that set forth expected performance. A plan must include all critical and non-critical elements and their performance standards.

Performance rating means the written, or otherwise recorded, appraisal of performance compared to the performance standard(s) for each critical and non-critical element on which there has been an opportunity to perform for the minimum period. A performance rating may include the assignment of a summary level within a pattern (as specified in § 430.208(d)).

Performance standard means the management-approved expression of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance. A performance standard may include, but is not limited to, quality, quantity, timeliness, and manner of performance.

Progress review means communicating with the employee about performance compared to the performance standards of critical and non-critical elements.

Rating of record means the performance rating prepared at the end of an appraisal period for performance of agency-assigned duties over the entire period and the assignment of a summary level within a pattern (as specified in § 430.208(d)), or (2) in accordance

with § 531.404(a)(1) of this chapter. These constitute official ratings of record referenced in this chapter.

[60 FR 43943, Aug. 23, 1995, as amended at 62 FR 62503, Nov. 24, 1997]

§ 430.204 Agency performance appraisal system(s).

(a) Each agency as defined at section 4301(1) of title 5, United States Code, shall develop one or more performance appraisal systems for employees covered by this subpart.

(b) An agency appraisal system shall establish agencywide policies and parameters for the application and operation of performance appraisal within the agency for the employees covered by the system. At a minimum, an agency system shall—

(1) Provide for—

(i) Establishing employee performance plans, including, but not limited to, critical elements and performance standards;

(ii) Communicating performance plans to employees at the beginning of an appraisal period;

(iii) Evaluating each employee during the appraisal period on the employee's elements and standards;

(iv) Recognizing and rewarding employees whose performance so warrants;

(v) Assisting employees in improving unacceptable performance; and

(vi) Reassigning, reducing in grade, or removing employees who continue to have unacceptable performance, but only after an opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance.

(2) Identify employees covered by the system;

(3) Specify the flexibilities an agency program established under the system has for setting—

(i) The length of the appraisal period (as specified in § 430.206(a));

(ii) The length of the minimum period (as specified in § 430.207(a));

(iii) The number(s) of performance levels at which critical and non-critical elements may be appraised (as specified in § 430.206(b)(7) (i)(A) and (ii)(A)); and

(iv) The pattern of summary levels that may be assigned in a rating of record (as specified in § 430.208(d));

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(4) Include, where applicable, criteria and procedures for establishing separate appraisal programs under an appraisal system; and

(5) Require that an appraisal program shall conform to statute, the regulations of this chapter, and the requirements established by the appraisal system.

(c) Agencies are encouraged to involve employees in developing and implementing their system(s). When agencies involve employees, the method of involvement shall be in accordance with the law.

[60 FR 43943, Aug. 23, 1995; 60 FR 47646, Sept. 13, 1995]

§ 430.205 Agency performance appraisal program(s).

(a) Each agency shall establish at least one appraisal program of specific procedures and requirements to be implemented in accordance with the applicable agency appraisal system. At a minimum, each appraisal program shall specify the employees covered by the program and include the procedures and requirements for planning performance (as specified in § 430.206), monitoring performance (as specified in § 430.207), and rating performance (as specified in § 430.208).

(b) An agency program shall establish criteria and procedures to address employee performance for employees who are on detail, who are transferred, and for other special circumstances as established by the agency.

(c) An agency may permit the development of separate appraisal programs under an appraisal system.

(d) Agencies are encouraged to involve employees in developing and implementing their program(s). When agencies involve employees, the method of involvement shall be in accordance with law.

§ 430.206 Planning performance.

(a) *Appraisal period.* (1) An appraisal program shall designate an official appraisal period for which a performance plan shall be prepared, during which performance shall be monitored, and for which a rating of record shall be prepared.

(2) Each program shall specify a single length of time as its appraisal pe-

riod. The appraisal period generally shall be 12 months so that employees are provided a rating of record on an annual basis. A program's appraisal period may be longer when work assignments and responsibilities so warrant or performance management objectives can be achieved more effectively.

(b) *Performance plan.* (1) Agencies shall encourage employee participation in establishing performance plans.

(2) Performance plans shall be provided to employees at the beginning of each appraisal period (normally within 30 days).

(3) An appraisal program shall require that each employee be covered by an appropriate written, or otherwise recorded, performance plan based on work assignments and responsibilities.

(4) Each performance plan shall include all elements which are used in deriving and assigning a summary level, including at least one critical element and any non-critical element(s).

(5) Each performance plan may include one or more additional performance elements, which—

(i) Are not used in deriving and assigning a summary level, and

(ii) Are used to support performance management processes as described at § 430.102(b).

(6) A performance plan established under an appraisal program that uses only two summary levels (pattern A as specified in § 430.208(d)(1)) shall not include non-critical elements.

(7) An appraisal program shall establish how many and which performance levels may be used to appraise critical and non-critical elements.

(8) Elements and standards shall be established as follows—

(i) For a critical element—
(A) At least two levels for appraisal shall be used with one level being "Fully Successful" or its equivalent and another level being "Unacceptable," and

(B) A performance standard shall be established at the "Fully Successful" level and may be established at other levels.

(ii) For non-critical elements, when established,—

(A) At least two levels for appraisal shall be used, and