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POLICY STATEMENT

Performance management is an ongoing process for achieving University, department and individual objectives through the professional development of employees.¹ Designed to support optimal staff development and performance, the process is a cycle of activities that guides the professional growth of staff members throughout their service at the University. Clemson uses performance management to establish a shared understanding of goals (the what) and the behaviors and competencies necessary to achieve those goals (the how).

Clemson's performance management program has the following objectives:

- To align employee development with the broader institutional context (University strategy and goals)
- To assess actual performance and accomplishments as they compare to established duties and goals
- To encourage open and ongoing communication, coaching and feedback between staff members and supervisors
- To link performance to rewards and compensation
- To provide support for employment and salary actions

In support of this policy, the Office of Human Resources maintains [Staff Performance Management Guidance](#), in which detailed information on how to create effective performance management expectations and documentation is available.

REASON FOR POLICY

- To comply with South Carolina law
- To provide a consistent performance management process for probationary and covered staff
- To provide guidance regarding the performance management process, such that the steps, deadlines, limitations and requirements are clear and actionable

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- This policy applies to all colleges and divisions of the University.

WEB ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY

http://media.clemson.edu/humanres/policies_procedures/Staff_Performance_Management_Policy.pdf

¹ *College and University Business Administration* (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2000).

CONTACTS

Subject Matter	Office	Telephone	E-mail/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	OHR	(864) 656-2000	http://www.clemson.edu/employment/contact_hr/

DEFINITIONS

Established review date – The date, established by the college/division, on which the review period begins each year. All staff performance reviews are due prior to the established review date that marks the beginning of the next review period.

Rater – The employee's supervisor who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed.

Review Period (or Rating Period) –The period over which the performance of the employee is assessed in an evaluation document.

Reviewer – The next higher-level supervisor to whom the rater reports.

Short Year Planning Stage Document –A performance planning stage document for a period of less than twelve (12) months. (Exception: trial period planning stage)

Short Year Review –A performance evaluation that evaluates a staff member's performance for a period of less than twelve (12) months. (Exception: trial period reviews and warning notice reviews)

For more definitions, please see the [OHR Glossary of Terms](#).

PROCEDURES

Scope

1. The performance management process outlined in this policy applies to all probationary and covered staff of Clemson University.
2. While not required, Clemson highly recommends that employees in the following position types be given informal performance evaluations:
 - a. Regular FTE staff positions that are exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act
 - b. Non-FTE staff positions (temporary, time-limited, temporary grant and intermittent)
3. This policy does not apply to faculty. (See the *Faculty Manual*.)

General Information

1. In accordance with South Carolina state regulation, all employees covered by the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act (covered employees) must receive at least one formal performance review (including a performance rating) within any 12-month period.
2. Performance management is the responsibility of the staff member's immediate supervisor (the rater) in conjunction with the next level supervisory position (the reviewer).
3. Raters are expected to complete the required performance management processes in a timely manner as a part of their supervisory responsibilities.
4. Any time a staff member's job responsibilities change significantly, the rater should revise the evaluation document and position description to reflect all changes.
5. Final evaluations must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer and the employee, when possible. Refusal by any party to sign the evaluation is to be noted on the performance evaluation, and, if possible, a witness should sign to acknowledge that the party refused to sign.
6. Unless the substandard performance process has been followed, a covered employee may not be issued either an overall "unsuccessful" evaluation or an "unsuccessful" rating on any essential job duty (as defined in the position description) or any objective that significantly impacts performance.

Established Review Date and Review Period

1. Each college/division elects one of the following performance review periods:
 - a. March 1-February 28/29
 - b. July 1-June 30
 - c. September 1-August 31
2. The established review date is the first day of the elected review period.
3. Performance reviews for all classified and unclassified (non-faculty) staff, except those in probationary or trial status, must be submitted no later than the last day of the review period.
4. Any covered employee who does not receive a rating prior to the review period's established review date will automatically receive a "concedes to successful" rating.
5. Review dates and ratings are recorded within the approved HR people management system.
6. Exceptions to the review periods must be pre-approved by the Office of Human Resources (OHR).

Planning Stage

The planning stage is the initial stage of the performance management process and encompasses the development of a plan for 1) job functions, 2) objectives for the review period, and 3) competencies. Raters are required to conduct a planning stage with each staff member at the beginning of each review period, during which the rater and the staff member discuss the job functions (including job duties and success criteria), goals, and competencies. The reviewer and the rater should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage to establish the goals for the department/unit.

Performance Management Components

1. Job Functions

- The rater and the staff member are responsible for reviewing the staff member's current position description and determining which job duties to include in the planning stage. In instances where the rater and staff member cannot agree upon the job duties to include in the planning stage, the rater's decision shall be final.
- The statement outlining the job functions should include descriptive information about the rater's performance expectations (success criteria).

- If the position description is not current, or if there is no position description, the rater should prepare a current version and submit it to OHR for approval prior to the planning stage discussion. Further, any time a staff member's job responsibilities change significantly, the rater should update the position description to reflect the change and submit it to OHR for approval. The planning stage documentation should likewise be updated.
- The staff member's performance of each job function shall be rated during the performance evaluation.

2. Objectives

- Each staff member should be required to complete at least one performance objective directly related to the University's strategic goals. (A detailed description of the University's goals can be found in the strategic plan, currently ClemsonForward.)
- Additional objectives are optional and should vary based on unit and division goals.
- Further, an objective should be included any time a staff member is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included in the position description.
- The statement outlining the objective(s) should also include descriptive information about the rater's performance expectations (success criteria).
- The staff member's performance as it relates to each objective shall be rated during the performance evaluation.

3. Competencies (*formerly called Performance Characteristics*)

- The competency section shall be used to emphasize those characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning stage.
- Each competency is to be defined in the planning stage, and the staff member's demonstration of each is to be rated as "acceptable" or "unacceptable" in the evaluation stage.
- The competency ratings shall be considered in the determination of the overall performance rating.
- **All** supervisors are to be rated on the competency of "Supervision and Management," defined as follows:
 - Structures and directs the work efforts of others
 - Coaches, develops and evaluates the performance of others
 - Promotes equal opportunity in areas such as hiring, promotion, or placement
 - Demonstrates a level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity

Determining Developmental/Professional Goals (Optional)

Outside the official performance planning and review process, supervisors and employees may discuss the employee's developmental/professional goals and determine ways to achieve or support those goals.

- Developmental goals are optional and should be owned and driven by the staff member with support and coaching from the supervisor.
- Areas in which the staff member might develop and grow may be identified.
- Developmental goals should help the staff member build the skills and competence needed to achieve future University and professional goals.
- These developmental/professional goals should not be evaluated as part of the official performance review process. For more information, see *Staff Performance Management Guidance*.

Evaluation Stage

The performance evaluation occurs toward the end of the performance review period. All performance evaluations shall be made in writing by the employee's immediate supervisor (the rater) who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The evaluation shall be reviewed by the next higher level supervisor (the reviewer), in all cases except where the rater is the University president, prior to the rater discussing the evaluation with the employee. The reviewer may attach additional comments to the evaluation and in the attachment may take exception to the rater's

evaluation. In addition, the reviewer has the authority to change the evaluation completed by the rater. If the reviewer elects to change the rating, the change and associated justification are to be noted on the evaluation document.

Each staff member shall be given an annual evaluation no more than 90 calendar days prior to the performance review date. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If a covered staff member does not receive an evaluation prior to the next review period's performance review date, the staff member's rating will concede to successful by default.

Ongoing Performance Management – Coaching and Feedback

While the rater is expected to provide coaching and performance feedback to staff throughout the review period, the University affords flexibility in ongoing performance management. An unofficial mid-year review is encouraged to facilitate ongoing communication between supervisors and staff. In addition, a rater may gather feedback to prepare the evaluation document and/or conduct unofficial evaluations more frequently than required in this policy.

Performance Rating Scale

Clemson University uses a six-level scale (see Table 1 below) to rate job functions, objectives, and overall performance:

1. Top Performance
2. Exceptional Performance
3. Successful Performance
4. Developing Performance
5. Improvement Needed
6. Unsuccessful Performance

For equivalency purposes, the “successful performance,” “developing performance,” and “improvement needed” ratings equate to or convert to “successful” in the state rating system and are the equivalent to the “meets” rating referenced in the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act. The “exceptional performance” and “top performance” ratings equate to an “exceptional” rating in the state system.

Table 1: Performance Rating Scale—Descriptions and Distributions²

Proposed Rating	Performance Description	Typical Distribution
Top Performance	Significantly exceeded expectations for all job functions, objectives, and competencies; made significant or unique contributions to the University and is considered a role model; is considered to have the highest potential for ongoing development and advancement. This rating is intended to be reserved for the highest level of performance.	2-5%
Exceptional Performance	Consistently demonstrated more than expected results in all job functions and objectives; consistently demonstrated the full range of positive job-related competencies.	10-15%
Successful Performance	Consistently demonstrated full achievement in all job functions and objectives and frequently exceeded expectations; consistently demonstrated positive job-related competencies.	50-60%
Developing Performance	Did not fully meet the stated job functions and objectives for the review period; demonstration of competencies was inconsistent; This rating is appropriate for employees who need to develop skills or receive additional training in order to fully contribute in their role. Consistent performance monitoring, coaching and improvement is necessary.	10-15%
Improvement Needed	Did not consistently meet performance expectations in terms of job functions and objectives and required frequent supervisory direction; achievements, contributions and/or competencies did not meet the requirements for the position; significant improvement is necessary, and a Performance Improvement Plan or Warning Notice for Substandard Performance may be required.	2-5%
Unsuccessful Performance	Actual performance of functions and achievement of objectives and/or competency behaviors did not meet the stated job duties and objectives for the review period; performance negatively affected team or University success. NOTE: This rating only may be used after the substandard performance process has been followed.	2-5%

Substandard Performance Process

A covered staff member is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving an "unsuccessful performance" rating and being removed from the position.

² The distribution scale outlined in Table 1 is intended as a guide to demonstrate a typical distribution of ratings. There is no required or compelled distribution.

To ensure that adequate notice and opportunity occur, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. A rater shall issue a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance prior to issuing an "unsuccessful" rating to a covered staff member. If during the performance period a staff member is considered "unsuccessful" in any essential job function or objective that significantly impacts performance, the rater shall provide the staff member with a written Warning Notice of Substandard Performance. The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 calendar days and no more than 120 calendar days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the improvement period may not extend beyond the staff member's review date. However, the performance review date may be advanced to coincide with the Warning Notice of Substandard Performance dates. Should this occur, and a satisfactory review is completed, a staff member is to receive a short-year planning stage and review (if necessary) to comply with the established review date.
2. The rater and staff member should participate in drafting an improvement plan. The 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 staff member cannot agree upon the content of the improvement plan, the rater's decision shall be final.
3. During the improvement period, the staff member and the rater shall have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the staff member's progress. The rater is required to document the counseling sessions to verify that they were held.
4. By the end of the improvement period, if the staff member's performance is rated "successful" or above on all essential job functions/objectives or competencies that significantly impact performance that are noted in the warning notice, employment shall continue. If, at the end of the improvement period, the staff member is rated "unsuccessful" on any essential job function or rated "unacceptable" on any competency that significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice, the staff member shall be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned, demoted).
5. Once a period for improving substandard performance has been established, the staff member must receive a written evaluation prior to the end of the improvement period or the staff member will receive a "concedes to successful."
6. If a staff member has been issued two warning notices within a 365-day period and, for a third time within the 365-day period, performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function/objective that which significantly impacts performance, the rater shall issue an "unsuccessful performance" evaluation and remove the staff member from the position. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence of substandard performance.

Warning Notice of Substandard Performance

The requirements of a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance are as follows:

1. The notice shall be in writing, addressed to the staff member, labeled as a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance, and signed by the staff member (witnessed, if the staff member will not sign).
2. The notice shall include the following:
 - a. The job duties, objectives, and/or competencies included on the staff member's planning document that are considered to be at an "unsuccessful" or "unacceptable" level
 - b. An explanation of the deficiencies for each job function, objective, and/or competency listed in (a) above
 - c. Actions to take to improve the noted deficiencies
3. The notice shall set the period for improvement and describe the consequences if performance does not improve to an acceptable level (i.e., termination, demotion, reassignment).
4. The notice shall include a plan for meetings to discuss the staff member's progress during the improvement period.
5. Copies of the notice shall be given to the staff member and placed in the staff member's official personnel file.

Special Circumstances

1. Leave

A staff member on approved leave (with or without pay) for more than 30 consecutive workdays may have the performance review date advanced up to 90 days. After the staff member returns from leave, a short-year planning stage and review is to be completed, if necessary, in order to comply with the established review date.

2. Probationary Periods

Each new staff member in a regular FTE position shall be rated prior to the completion of a twelve-month probationary period. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If a staff member does not receive a performance evaluation prior to the performance review date, the staff member will receive a “concedes to successful” and obtain covered status as a state employee. The probationary period may not be extended. If a staff member is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the staff member shall be terminated before becoming a covered employee. Until a staff member has completed the probationary period and has an “improvement needed” or higher overall rating on the evaluation, the staff member has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act; therefore, Clemson University is not required to follow the Substandard Performance Process to terminate a probationary staff member. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, a staff member is to receive a short-year planning stage and review, if necessary, to comply with the established review date. The “successful performance,” “developing performance,” and “improvement needed” ratings are equivalent to the “meets” rating referenced in the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

3. Trial Periods

Each covered staff member who has been demoted, promoted or reclassified shall serve a six-month trial period in the position. However, if an employee's state class title changes to a class in which the employee has previously completed a successful trial period and attained covered status in the class, the employee does not serve another trial period. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If a staff member does not receive a performance evaluation prior to the performance review date, the staff member will receive a “concedes to successful.” Once a staff member has completed a successful trial period, the staff member retains regular covered status in the class throughout continuous service. The six-month trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the staff member prior to the end of the six-month trial period. The staff member’s performance review date shall be advanced for the period such extension is in effect.

The Substandard Performance Process is not required to demote or reclassify downward a staff member in trial status to the same class from which 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 promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The staff member in trial status may not grieve such demotion. The staff member 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. After satisfactory completion of the trial period, a staff member is to receive a short year planning stage and review, if necessary, to comply with the established review date.

Records

Performance evaluations shall become a permanent part of the staff member's official personnel file. Upon request, Clemson University OHR shall furnish the staff member with a copy of the performance evaluation with copies of all pertinent attachments. Note that fees may apply.

RELATED RESOURCES

University Policies and Documents
Grievance Policy Reduction in Force Policy <i>Staff Performance Management Guidance</i>
External Documentation
South Carolina State Employee EPMS Policy South Carolina Code of Laws Section 8-11-230 (6) State Human Resources Regulations Section 19-715