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(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

(B) A performance standard(s) shall be established at whatever level(s) is appropriate.

(iii) The absence of an established performance standard at a level specified in the program shall not preclude a determination that performance is at that level.

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

§ 430.207 Monitoring performance.

(a) *Minimum period.* An appraisal program shall establish a minimum period of performance that must be completed before a performance rating may be prepared.

(b) *Ongoing appraisal.* An appraisal program shall include methods for appraising each critical and non-critical element during the appraisal period. Performance on each critical and non-critical element shall be appraised against its performance standard(s). Ongoing appraisal methods shall include, but not be limited to, conducting one or more progress reviews during each appraisal period.

(c) *Marginal performance.* Appraisal programs should provide assistance whenever performance is determined to

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be below “Fully Successful” or equivalent but above “Unacceptable.”

(d) *Unacceptable performance.* An appraisal program shall provide for—

(1) Assisting employees in improving unacceptable performance at any time during the appraisal period that performance is determined to be unacceptable in one or more critical elements; and

(2) Taking action based on unacceptable performance.

§ 430.208 Rating performance.

(a) As soon as practicable after the end of the appraisal period, a written, or otherwise recorded, rating of record shall be given to each employee.

(1) A rating of record shall be based only on the evaluation of actual job performance for the designated appraisal period.

(2) An agency shall not issue a rating of record that assumes a level of performance by an employee without an actual evaluation of that employee’s performance.

(3) Except as provided in § 430.208(i), a rating of record is final when it is issued to an employee with all appropriate reviews and signatures.

(b) Rating of record procedures for each appraisal program shall include a method for deriving and assigning a summary level as specified in paragraph (d) of this section based on appraisal of performance on critical elements and, as applicable, non-critical elements.

(1) A Level 1 summary (“Unacceptable”) shall be assigned if and only if performance on one or more critical elements is appraised as “Unacceptable.”

(2) Consideration of non-critical elements shall not result in assigning a Level 1 summary (“Unacceptable”).

(c) The method for deriving and assigning a summary level may not limit or require the use of particular summary levels (i.e., establish a forced distribution of summary levels). However, methods used to make distinctions among employees or groups of employees such as comparing, categorizing, and ranking employees or groups on the basis of their performance may be used for purposes other than assigning a summary level including, but not

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limited to, award determinations and promotion decisions.

(d) *Summary levels.* (1) An appraisal program shall use one of the following patterns of summary levels:

Pattern	Summary level				
	1	2	3	4	5
A	X	.....	X	.....	.....
B	X	.....	X	.....	X
C	X	.....	X	X	.....
D	X	X	X	.....	.....
E	X	.....	X	X	X
F	X	X	X	.....	X
G	X	X	X	X	.....
H	X	X	X	X	X

(2) Within any of the patterns shown in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, summary levels shall comply with the following requirements:

- (i) Level 1 through Level 5 are ordered categories, with Level 1 as the lowest and Level 5 as the highest;
 - (ii) Level 1 is “Unacceptable”;
 - (iii) Level 3 is “Fully Successful” or equivalent; and
 - (iv) Level 5 is “Outstanding” or equivalent.
- (3) The term “Outstanding” shall be used only to describe a Level 5 summary.

(4) The designation of a summary level and its pattern shall be used to provide consistency in describing ratings of record and as a reference point for applying other related regulations, including, but not limited to, assigning additional retention service credit under § 351.504 of this chapter.

(5) Under the provisions of § 351.504(e) of this chapter, the number of years of additional retention service credit established for a summary level of a rating of record shall be applied in a uniform and consistent manner within a competitive area in any given reduction in force, but the number of years may vary:

- (i) In different reductions in force;
- (ii) In different competitive areas; and
- (iii) In different summary level patterns within the same competitive area.

(e) A rating of record of “Unacceptable” (Level 1) shall be reviewed and approved by a higher level management official.

(f) The rating of record or performance rating for a disabled veteran shall

not be lowered because the veteran has been absent from work to seek medical treatment as provided in Executive Order 5396.

(g) When a rating of record cannot be prepared at the time specified, the appraisal period shall be extended. Once the conditions necessary to complete a rating of record have been met, a rating of record shall be prepared as soon as practicable.

(h) Each rating of record shall cover a specified appraisal period. Agencies shall not carry over a rating of record prepared for a previous appraisal period as the rating of record for a subsequent appraisal period(s) without an actual evaluation of the employee’s performance during the subsequent appraisal period.

(i) When either a regular appraisal period or an extended appraisal period ends and any agency-established deadline for providing ratings of record passes or a subsequent rating of record is issued, an agency shall not produce or change retroactively a rating of record that covers that earlier appraisal period except that a rating of record may be changed—

- (1) Within 60 days of issuance based upon an informal request by the employee;
- (2) As a result of a grievance, complaint, or other formal proceeding permitted by law or regulation that results in a final determination by appropriate authority that the rating of record must be changed or as part of a *bona fide* settlement of a formal proceeding; or
- (3) Where the agency determines that a rating of record was incorrectly recorded or calculated.

(j) A performance rating may be prepared at such other times as an appraisal program may specify for special circumstances including, but not limited to, transfers and performance on details.

[60 FR 43943, Aug. 23, 1995, as amended at 62 FR 62503, Nov. 24, 1997; 63 FR 53276, Oct. 5, 1998]

§ 430.209 Agency responsibilities.

An agency shall—
 (a) Submit to OPM for approval a description of its appraisal system(s) as specified in § 430.204(b) of this subpart,