

## **APPENDIX B**

### **GENERIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

(For Three-Level Rating System Only)

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

The generic performance standards (GPS) are the primary basis for assigning element ratings in the Department of Commerce. The GPS are to be applied to each critical (and non-critical) element in the performance plan. (Summary ratings are assigned by using a point scale after each element has been rated.)

1. Read carefully each performance standard level beginning with the Meets or Exceeds Expectations. (It is considered the base level standard.)
2. Determine which level best describes the employee's performance on the element. (Each and every criterion in the standards does not have to be met by the employee in absolute terms for the rater to assign a particular rating level. The sum of the employee's performance of the element must, in the rater's judgment, meet the assigned level's criteria.)
3. Provide in writing, on the appraisal form, brief specific examples of accomplishments which support the assigned rating level. (This can be done in the form of strengths and weaknesses.) Occasionally, when rating some elements, a rating official may determine that an employee's performance on an element was not consistent. For example, the employee may have performed at the Meets or Exceeds level on several major activities within a critical element and at the Outstanding level on others. In such a case, the rating official must consider the overall effect of the employee's work on the element and make a judgement as to the appropriate rating level he/she will assign. The rationale for the decision must be documented on the rating form, citing specific accomplishments which support the decision.

Any additional standards that are included in the performance plan must also be considered by the rating official. Such standards are included in performance plans to supplement the GPS, not supplant them. Rating officials should consider such standards within the context of the GPS and rate elements accordingly.

#### **OUTSTANDING**

##### **GENERAL WORK FORCE**

This is a level of rare, high-quality performance. The quality and quantity of the employee's work substantially exceed Meets or Exceeds standards and rarely leaves room for improvement. The impact of the employee's work is of such significance that organizational objectives were accomplished that otherwise would not have been. The accuracy and thoroughness of the employee's work on this element are exceptionally reliable. Application of technical knowledge and skills goes beyond that expected for the position. The employee significantly improves the work processes and products for which he or she is responsible. Thoughtful adherence to procedures and formats, as well as suggestions for improvement in these areas, increase the employee's contributions.

This person plans so that work follows the most logical and practical sequence; inefficient backtracking is avoided. He or she develops contingency plans to handle potential problems and adapts quickly to new priorities and changes in procedures and programs without losing sight of the longer-term purposes of the work. These strengths in planning and adaptability result in early or timely completion of work under all but the most extraordinary circumstances. Exceptions occur only when delays could not have been anticipated. The employee's planning skills result in cost-savings to the government.

The employee handles interpersonal relationships with exceptional skill, anticipating and avoiding potential causes of conflict and actively promoting cooperation with clients, co-workers, and his or her supervisor. The employee seeks additional work or special assignments related to this element at increasing levels of difficulty. The quality of such work is high and is done on time without disrupting regular work. Appropriate problems are brought to the supervisor's attention; most problems are dealt with routinely and with exceptional skill.

The employee's oral and written expression are exceptionally clear and effective. They improve cooperation among participants in the work and prevent misunderstandings. Complicated or controversial subjects are presented or explained effectively to a variety of audiences so that desired outcomes are achieved.

##### **SUPERVISORY\***

The employee is a strong leader who works well with others and handles difficult situations with dignity and effectiveness. The employee encourages independence and risk-taking among subordinates, yet takes responsibility for their actions. Open to the views of others, the employee promotes cooperation among peers and subordinates, while guiding, motivating, and stimulating positive responses. The employee's work performance demonstrates a strong commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity, and the affirmative action objectives of the organization.

#### **MEETS OR EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS**

##### **GENERAL WORK FORCE**

Performance at this level encompasses a wide range of acceptable performance and represents a level of accomplishment that is expected of a great majority of employees. It is the level of performance which falls below that which is described at the Outstanding level and above that which is described as Does Not Meet Expectations. The quality and quantity of work can range from consistently above average, to that which has some problems which are not frequent or significant enough to create serious adverse consequences. The range includes work in which problems are dealt with very effectively with rare assistance from the supervisor to work that at times requires supervisory intervention and/or assistance.

(Quality) Ranges from above-average problem-solving skills and insight into work methods and techniques to work products being of generally useable quality but at times requiring additional work by other personnel. Examples along this range include: thoroughness and accuracy on a reliable basis to mistakes being made but without serious consequences to the organization; from knowledge and skill clearly exceeding expectations to some gaps in knowledge or skills.

(Quantity) Ranges from more work being completed sooner than expected and additional work or special assignments being sought out to a fair amount of work being accomplished but output is not sustained consistently and/or higher levels of output result in decrease in quality.

(Timeliness) Ranges from proceeding in an efficient, orderly manner that rarely requires backtracking and consistently leads to completion of work by established deadlines to work generally, but not always being finished within required time frame; from using contingency planning to anticipate and prevent problems and delays with exceptions occurring outside employee's control to sometimes not foreseeing problems which at times might cause delays in the employee's own or others' work.

(Communication) Oral and written communication range from noteworthy for their clarity and effectiveness leading to improved understanding by employees and clients to communication which usually considers the nature and complexity of subject and intended audience but at times requires the receiver to question employee to secure complete information to avoid misunderstanding.

## **SUPERVISORY\***

For supervisory positions, performance shows good judgment in dealing with subordinates. The employee's work performance shows a commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity, and the affirmative action objectives of the organization.

## **DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS**

### **GENERAL WORK FORCE**

The quantity and quality of the employee's work under this element are not adequate for the position. The employee's work products fall short of requirements of the element. Tasks are not completed with the needed degrees of accuracy and thoroughness. They arrive late or often require major revision because they are incomplete or inaccurate in content. The employee fails to apply adequate technical knowledge to complete the work of this element. Either the knowledge applied cannot produce the needed products or it produces technically inadequate products or results. Lack of adherence to required procedures, instructions, and formats contribute to inadequate work products. Deficiencies cannot be overlooked since they create adverse consequences for the organization or create unacceptable burdens for other personnel.

While the work products may sometimes be of useable quality, too often they require additional work by other personnel. The work products do not consistently and/or fully meet the organization's needs. The questionable quality of work products requires major revisions significant enough to cause problems in meeting deadlines. In some cases, mistakes may be made without immediate serious consequences, but over time they are detrimental to the organization. When needed as input into other employee work products, the work may not be finished with such quality, quantity and timeliness that other work can proceed as planned.

Ineffective work planning leads to missed deadlines. Lack of attention to priorities causes delays or inadequacies in essential work; the employee has concentrated on incidental matters. The employee's lack of cooperation with clients, supervisor, and/or co-workers, or loss of credibility due to irresponsible speech or work activity, interferes with the successful completion of the work. In dealing with special projects, the employee either sacrifices essential regular work or fails to complete the projects. The employee fails to adapt to changes in priorities, procedures, or program direction and, therefore, cannot operate adequately in relation to changing requirements.

The oral and written expression the employee uses in accomplishing the work of this element lacks the necessary clarity for successful completion of required tasks. Communication failures interfere with completion of work. Too often the communication is not focused, contains too much or too little information, and/or is conveyed in a manner that hinders achievement of the purpose of the communication.

## **SUPERVISORY\***

Inadequacies surface in performing supervisory duties. Deficiencies in areas of supervision adversely affect employee productivity or morale, or do not provide in a timely manner sufficient direction to subordinates on how to carry out programs. He or she too often fails to make decisions or fulfill supervisory responsibilities in a timely manner, to provide sufficient direction to subordinates on how to carry out programs, to give clear assignments and/or performance requirements, and/or provide an understanding of the goals of the organization or their subordinates' roles in meeting those goals.

Overall, the employee's work products do not meet the minimum requirements of the critical element. Typically the following deficiencies are characteristic of the employee's work: little or no contribution to organizational goals, failure to meet work objectives, inattention to organizational priorities and administrative requirements, poor work habits resulting in missed deadlines, incomplete work products, strained work relationships, inadequate guidance to subordinates, inattention to work progress, failure to stimulate subordinates to meet goals, failure to respond to client needs, and/or lack of response to supervisor's corrective efforts.

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**\* Supervisory standards must be applied to General Work Force supervisors.**