

# QUICK GUIDE TO WRITING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

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**STEP 1:** Determine which job responsibilities to write a standard for, by identifying the most critical components of the job.

- Gather the organization's goals and strategies and work down from there. Which of those goals can your work group affect? Which goals does your work align most with? Identify what you can accomplish to help the organization meet those goals.
- If you manage a division or work group or supervise others, what are your work group's goals? Pick a goal and work up from there. If your group is accountable for providing a product or service, what is your role in that?
- Identify your customers. Who receives your products or services? What do those stakeholders expect from you or your work group? What do you need to accomplish to meet your customers' expectations?

**STEP 2:** Identify General Measures for each performance element

Ask yourself how someone would know that you are performing well at your job. What would they look for?

- Quantity?
- Quality?
- Timeliness?
- Cost-Effectiveness?

**STEP 3:** Assign Specific Measures to General Measures in each element

- How can (quantity, quality, timeliness, or cost-effectiveness) be measured?
- Choose Specific Measures for parts of the job that align with organizational goals and values
- Is there a number or percent that could be tracked?
- Who can judge that the element was done well?
- What are the factors that person would look for?

**STEP 4:** Write standards to express Specific Measures in each element

- Each measure identified in Step 3 will have a corresponding standard.
- For numeric measures: include what is being tracked and the exact number or range of numbers that meet the "Achieved Expectations" level.
- For descriptive measures: include who/what would be the judge of performance, what the judge would need to observe and report to verify that the employee met the "Achieved Expectations" level.

**STEP 5:** Check your standards against SMART-Q framework. For each standard ask yourself:

- Is it specific?
- Is it measurable?
- Is it aligned with organizational goals and priorities? (Site the specific document in your plan)
- Is it a realistic goal to accomplish during the performance cycle?
- Is it bound to an accurate timeframe?
- Does it express the quality of work that is needed to be successful?
- Does it describe an accomplishment or outcome of the work rather than an activity?

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Still need help? Think of high-performing and low-performing Senior Executives that you know. What makes them high-performers or low-performers? How do you know? Use this information to think of measures you could use to write standards for your job.