

NIH POLICY MANUAL

2300-430-1 - NIH Performance Appraisal Program Plan

Issuing Office: OD/OHR/DERT,435-6757

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1. **Explanation of Material Transmitted:** This Instruction outlines NIH procedures to be used in establishing and reviewing employee performance plans.
2. **Filing Instructions:**

Remove: NIH Manual 2300-430-1 dated 1/24/92.

Insert: NIH Manual 2300-430-1 dated 4/11/96.

PLEASE NOTE: For information on:

- Content of this chapter, contact the issuing office listed above.
- NIH Manual System, contact the Division of Management Services, OMA on 496-2832, or enter this URL: <http://www3.od.nih.gov/oma/manualchapters>.

A. Purpose and Authority:

This plan implements 5 USC Chapter 43, 5 CFR Part 430, and the provisions of the Department of Health and Human Services' Performance Appraisal System (HHS Instruction 430-7, dated November 9, 1995). Definitions of terms may be found in that document.

B. Coverage:

The NIH Performance appraisal Program Plan applies to all GS/GM, FWS, and ST/SL employees and is effective upon signature.

C. Policy:

Performance appraisal at the National Institutes of Health is the process by which individual and organizational goals are communicated to employees; individual and team accountability for accomplishing organizational goals is identified; individuals and organizational performance is evaluated, discussed with employees and as needed improvements proposed; and the results are used as a basis for appropriate personnel actions.

Performance management is also the shared responsibility of employees and managers. Therefore, it is also the policy of the NIH that employees be involved in the establishment of the new performance appraisal programs for their ICs and that all employees be trained and educated on the importance of performance development, feedback and communication. The NIH will evaluate the development and implementation of performance management plans across the ICs to ensure equity among the employee population.

D. Responsibilities:

1. Employees are responsible for:
 - a. participating with their rating official in determining goals, defining performance elements and standards and revising them as necessary during the rating periods;
 - b. assuring they have a clear understanding of their rating official's expectations and requesting clarification if necessary;
 - c. managing their performance to achieve identified goals and bringing to their rating official's attention any circumstances that may affect the achievement of goals;
 - d. seeking feedback from their rating official; and
 - e. taking action to improve aspects of performance identified as not meeting expectations.
2. Rating officials are responsible for:
 - a. determining goals, defining performance elements and standards with employee input and documenting them on the performance plan;
 - b. monitoring employee performance during the rating period and communicating on an on-going basis, as appropriate, with employees about their performance;
 - c. providing feedback to and conducting formal progress reviews with all employees;
 - d. assisting all employees in improving aspects of performance and working more closely with those employees whose performance is identified as not meeting expectations;
 - e. appraising employees' performance at the end of the rating period or when an employee changes positions, and as necessary, meeting with employees to discuss the performance rating and employee developmental needs; and

- f. taking appropriate action for employees who do not meet expectations and recognizing employees as appropriate for successful performance.
3. Reviewing officials are responsible for reviewing and approving ratings of employees not meeting expectations. They may also review and approve ratings of all other employees as determined by the IC.
4. IC Directors are responsible for establishing organizational performance appraisal programs that comply with the parameters set forth in the NIH Performance Appraisal Program Plan and for monitoring the implementation of those plans to ensure equity across the IC.
5. The Director, Office of Human Resource Management, NIH, is responsible for developing performance appraisal policy, approving and certifying the regulatory adequacy of individual IC performance appraisal programs, and as necessary, evaluating performance appraisal programs at the NIH.

E. Eligibility for Rating:

To be eligible for a rating, an employee must have worked under a performance plan for at least 120 days.

F. Rating Cycle/Period:

Employees will be rated annually on a calendar year basis.

G. Performance Plans:

1. Employee performance plans must contain one or more critical elements that address individual performance that the employee will be expected to achieve during the rating period. Employee performance plans may also include if appropriate, an element addressing individual contributions to team goals.
2. Two distinctly different levels (Acceptable and Unacceptable) will be used for rating performance on each critical element. A written performance standard will be established at the Acceptable level for each performance element. An Acceptable level will be equivalent to Level 3 and an Unacceptable level equivalent to Level 1. (An optional form for developing and documenting performance plans is attached as [Appendix 1](#)).
3. The NIH requires only the two performance levels for each critical element and will have only two summary ratings as described in (2) above. However, there are two methods that ICs may use to further communicate performance results/expectations. ICs may include additional performance elements in their plan that address dimensions or aspects of individual, team, or organizational performance. If used, additional performance elements cannot be used in deriving the summary rating. Another option open to ICs is to allow each critical element to be rated at a level above Acceptable; however, the only summary ratings allowed would be those at Acceptable and Unacceptable.

H. Performance Appraisal:

1. Only performance under critical elements will be used to determine final summary ratings. An employee must receive a rating of Acceptable on all critical elements in order to be assigned an Acceptable rating. An employee who receives an Unacceptable rating on one or more critical element will receive an unacceptable rating. This applies even if the IC chooses to use rating levels for elements above Acceptable.
2. Performance in all positions for which an employee has served for 120 days (e.g., performance of employees who are detailed or temporarily promoted during the appraisal period) will be considered in final ratings.
3. For employees receiving an Unacceptable rating, the rating official must provide a written explanation describing the specific areas in which the employee did not meet the performance standard(s). Unacceptable ratings will be reviewed and signed by reviewing officials.
4. For an employee who did not work under a performance plan for the specified minimum appraisal period, the rating period will be extended until that specified time has been completed. The rating official will rate the employee's performance at the end of this extension.
5. Results of external reviews (e.g. Board of Scientific Counselors reviews) can be considered by supervisors in preparing appraisals as appropriate. However, they cannot substitute for the supervisor's review and decision.

I. Progress Reviews:

Feedback on performance is an important component of performance management. Feedback should be given continuously, not just at specified periods of time or at a specified point in a cycle. Feedback should also be provided on those aspects of performance that are done well as well as those that may need improvement. At least one progress review is required during the rating period for all employees. However, ICs are encouraged to build in feedback mechanisms throughout the performance cycle for all employees.

J. Performance Problems:

(NOTE: Administrative or performance-based actions that were initiated under the Department's Performance Management Plan dated 4/26/93 continue to be governed by the policies and procedures of the 4/26/93 Plan.)

1. If at any time during the rating period, an employee's performance is deemed to be Unacceptable in one or more critical elements, the employee will be given a performance improvement plan and an opportunity to demonstrate Acceptable performance.
2. The requirements for performance improvement plans are included in the

Reviewer's Name and Title

Reviewer's Signature Date

Employee's Signature

Date

Part III – Summary Rating

Acceptable

Unacceptable

Were all critical elements acceptable Yes No

Rater's Name and Title

Rater's Signature

Date

Reviewer's Name and Title

Reviewer's Signature

Date

Employee's Signature

Date

Part IV – Job Description Summary

Daily Duties

Areas of Emphasis

Feedback Sessions

Initial

Later

Midpoint

Final

Part V: Element Ratings

Responsibilities

Provide examples of fully
successful/unsuccessful performance

Element I:

Acceptable Unacceptable

Critical Element

Element II:

Acceptable Unacceptable

Critical Element

Element III:

Acceptable Unacceptable

Critical Element

Element IV:

Acceptable Unacceptable

Critical Element

Element V:

Acceptable Unacceptable

Critical Element

Overall Performance (Rater)

Summary Rating

Acceptable Unacceptable

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