

NUMBER: HR 1.36
SECTION: Human Resources

SUBJECT: Performance Appraisal for Classified Employees

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Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: All Campuses
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I. Policy

A. This document sets forth the policy and procedures by which the job performance of classified employees of the University of South Carolina is appraised, pursuant to regulations of the South Carolina Office of Human Resources.

B. The performance appraisal policy is designed to:

1. increase efficiency through the annual planning of job duties, objectives and performance characteristics thereby helping employees improve their performance through prior knowledge of the expectations of their supervisors;
2. provide information to employees, supervisors and managers for use in work-related decisions such as recommendations for salary increases, promotions, transfers, demotions and dismissals;
3. provide assistance to management in assigning work and delegating responsibility based on a mutual understanding of the employee's skills and abilities;
4. encourage the continued growth and development of all classified employees;
5. identify training needs;
6. maintain a documented history of employee performance.

C. The University will provide training in the application of the Performance Appraisal Policy to supervisors and employees.

D. Levels of Performance

The Performance Appraisal Policy provides for four levels of performance.

1. Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements

A rating of "Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements" is given for job performance characterized by exceptional accomplishments throughout the rating period or by performance that is considerably and consistently at a higher level than that of the success criteria of the position.

2. Exceeds Performance Requirements

A rating of "Exceeds Performance Requirements" is given for performance that, for a majority of the rating period, is of a higher level than that of the success criteria of the position.

3. Meets Performance Requirements

A rating of "Meets Performance Requirements" is given for performance that satisfies the success criteria of the position throughout the rating period.

4. Fails to Meet Performance Requirements

A rating of "Fails to Meet Performance Requirements" is given for substandard job performance that does not satisfy the success criteria of the position.

E. Performance Characteristics

The extent to which employees meet performance characteristics is evaluated using the ratings of "acceptable" or "unacceptable". "Acceptable" means the employee's performance meets the performance characteristic, and "unacceptable" means the employee's performance fails to meet the performance characteristic.

II. Procedure

A. Performance Planning Stage

1. At the beginning of each rating period and after conferring with the department chair, the supervisor and the employee will determine the duties, characteristics, objectives and success criteria on which the employee will be evaluated at the end of the review period.

2. The job duties will be determined by a review of the employee's position description. The supervisor and the employee will select duties which represent approximately 80% of the employee's time, and will develop success criteria for each job duty. The job duties and success criteria will be listed in Section 1 of the performance appraisal form.

NOTE: If the position description is not accurate, or if there is no position description, the supervisor and the employee must prepare one and send it to the USC Division of Human Resources, Office of Salary Administration. Supervisors on the regional and four year campuses should send the job description to the campus Human Resources Officer who will forward it to the Division of Human Resources.

3. Performance characteristics on which the employee will be rated may be selected from lists provided with the appraisal forms or may be developed by the supervisor and the employee. All supervisors and managers must be rated on "Promoting Equal Opportunity" if their responsibilities include hiring, promoting, placing, supervising, purchasing, or contracting.

4. Performance objectives on which the employee will be rated will be chosen by the supervisor and employee and will represent specific objectives the employee is expected to accomplish during the rating period. Success criteria must be developed for each objective.

NOTE: Performance objectives are required for supervisory and management employees and optional for non-supervisory employees.

5. Success criteria should specify the expected level of performance necessary to receive a rating of "Meets Performance Requirements". The success criteria must be incorporated into each employee's performance appraisal for each job duty and objective. Success criteria are not required for performance characteristics.

6. In the event the supervisor and employee cannot agree on the duties, objectives, performance characteristics, or success criteria, the supervisor may unilaterally determine that which will be included in the performance planning stage.

7. At the conclusion of the planning stage, the job duties, performance characteristics, and objectives are written on the performance appraisal form and signed by the department chair, supervisor, and the employee. The original appraisal should be retained by the supervisor for use at the time of the actual rating, with a copy given to the employee for reference during the rating period.

8. It is recommended that the supervisor and the employee review performance at the midpoint of the rating period to assess progress, to correct misunderstandings about expectations, if any, and to foster open communications between supervisors and employees.

B. Probationary Period Performance Appraisal

1. The performance of each classified employee in an original appointment will be appraised prior to the completion of the initial year of service in the position. The initial year is known as the probationary period.

2. The performance of each classified employee in a reinstatement, promotion, demotion, reassignment, or reclassified position will be appraised prior to the completion of the initial six months of trial service in the position. The trial period may be extended for a maximum of ninety calendar days, provided there is written notice to the employee of substandard performance which documents the need for an extension.

3. A permanent employee who is in a trial period will be appraised prior to the completion of the six month trial period. The trial period may be extended for a maximum of ninety calendar days, provided there is written notice to the employee of substandard performance which documents the need for an extension.

4. Employees serving in a probationary or trial period will attain permanent status upon completion of the probationary or trial period. Such employees will be considered to have satisfactory service unless the employee has been officially appraised as "Fails to Meet Performance Requirements" prior to the end of the probationary or trial period.

C. Annual Performance Appraisal

1. The performance of each classified employee who has met performance requirements during the one year probationary period will thereafter be appraised annually.

2. The performance of each classified employee who has met performance requirements during the six month trial period following a reinstatement, reclassification, promotion, transfer, reassignment or demotion will thereafter be appraised annually.

3. Performance appraisals will be conducted by the employee's supervisor who has first-hand knowledge of the work being performed; however, prior to the review being given to the employee, the review will be discussed with the next highest level supervisor (reviewing official).

4. The reviewing official may not change the appraisal completed by the supervisor, but may attach additional comments to the appraisal.

5. The appraisal must be signed by the reviewing officer, the supervisor, and the employee.

6. If an employee refuses to sign an appraisal, a notation of the refusal will be made on the appraisal. If possible, the refusal will be witnessed by one other employee as attested by his or her signature.

7. The performance appraisal may not be completed more than ninety days in advance of the review date except in the case of a review of substandard performance.

8. Performance appraisals will become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file.

D. Substandard Performance

1. Employees whose performance is substandard will be given adequate notice and the opportunity to improve prior to dismissal and prior to the annual performance appraisal.

2. If the performance of an employee becomes substandard, the supervisor or department chair will provide the employee with a written warning notice of substandard performance. The Warning Notice of Substandard Performance form may be used or some other form of written notice may be sent to the employee, provided the notice:

a. is addressed to the employee and labeled as a warning notice of substandard performance; and

b. the notice contains the employee's performance deficiencies, ways the employee should seek to overcome the deficiencies, the period of time the employee will be given to improve (minimum of 30, maximum 120 calendar days) and the possible consequences if improvement is not satisfactory, i.e. transfer, demotion, or dismissal; and

c. the notice is signed by the supervisor and employee and a copy sent to the employee's official personnel file. Copies should be retained by the supervisor and the employee. NOTE: If an employee refuses to sign a warning notice of substandard performance, a notation of the refusal will be made on the warning notice. If possible the refusal should be witnessed by one other employee as attested by his or here signature.

3. During the warning period it is expected that the employee and the supervisor will meet periodically to discuss the employee's progress. These meetings should be documented and included in the employee's official personnel file.

4. At the end of the warning period, if the employee's performance has improved to a satisfactory level, notice of the improvement must be made on the Warning Notice of Substandard Performance form, or appended to the warning notice depending upon which format was used in Section II. D. 2. above. If the employee's overall performance has not improved to a satisfactory level, the employee will be given a special performance appraisal using the appraisal form, and will be rated "Fails to Meet Performance Requirements." After receiving a rating of "Fails to Meet Performance Requirements," the employee will be removed from the position immediately through demotion, transfer or dismissal.

5. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must be rated by the specified time or the employee will receive a "Meets Performance Requirements" rating by default. The time frame for improving substandard performance may be extended provided the extension does not allow the total warning period to exceed the maximum of 120 calendar days and notice of the extension is provided on or before the original time frame for improvement expires.

6. If a rating of "Fails to Meet Performance Requirements" is contemplated prior to the annual performance appraisal, the written warning notice of substandard performance will be given no fewer than 30 calendar days prior to the review date and no more than 120 calendar days prior to the review date.

7. Any employee whose performance requires more than two substandard warning processes within 365 calendar days will be terminated upon receipt of the third warning notice of substandard performance.