

INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTIVE 6-17

November 27, 2006

PURSUANT TO SECTION 41-1-110 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SC, AS AMENDED, THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE COLLEGE.

Title: Employee Performance Management System (EPMS)

I. Purpose

This directive provides guidance for administering the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) for employees in positions that are not designated as Faculty positions.

II. General Information

A. The primary purpose of the EPMS is to increase the overall efficiency of the college by helping each employee to improve his/her own performance. Other important purposes include:

1. To encourage continued growth and development of all employees;
2. To identify employees who have potential for promotions.
3. To provide information to employees, supervisors, and managers to use in making work-related decisions.
4. To assist management in assigning work and delegating responsibility based on a mutual understanding of the employee's skills and abilities;
5. To enhance other Human Resource Management administration components such as selection and classification;
6. To provide an accurate and objective method for evaluating employees;
7. To provide documentation to support recommendations for salary increases, promotions, reassignments, demotions, and terminations;
8. To maintain a documented history of the employee's performance; and
9. To identify training needs.

B. Employees to be Appraised

All classified employees, unclassified non-teaching personnel, excluding librarians, and institutional officers who occupy FTE positions shall have their performance evaluated in accordance with the EPMS program.

Office of Responsibility: President

C. Orientation and Training

Orientation on the Performance Management System for all employees of the State Tech System is encouraged. Supervisory employees should also receive training that will concentrate on the criteria for evaluating their individual staff members.

D. Retention and Dissemination

All performance appraisal documents shall become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel record. The supervisor is encouraged to give the employee a copy of both the approved planning and appraisal documents at the time of discussion. Upon request, however, the employee shall be furnished a copy of the performance appraisal document along with copies of the permanent attachments including the planning document and the final appraisal document.

E. Documentation

Only the standard state of South Carolina form or other approved document format shall be used for EPMS purposes.

F. Definitions

Universal Performance Appraisal (UPA) Date - this procedure allows locations (that elect to do so) to implement a UPA date for planning for and appraising employee performance annually. Each location that elects to do so must document a UPA date in writing. A list of locations using the UPA date option will be submitted in writing to OHR. The date of the UPA will be used every year until rescinded in writing and all annual performance appraisals will be completed by that date. The college will ensure that the previously established performance review date will be maintained.

Short Year Appraisal - any performance appraisal that evaluates an employee's performance for a period of time less than twelve (12) months. (Exceptions: "trial" period appraisals and "warning notice" appraisals.)

Short Year Planning Document - Any EPMS planning document covering a period of time less than twelve (12) months. (Exception: "trial" period planning documents.)

G. Special UPA Date Provisions

1. The following provisions only apply to short year planning documents and appraisals that occur ninety (90) days prior to a location's UPA date.
 - a. If job functions have not substantially changed the planning stage from the performance period may apply as the planning stage for the 'short year' performance period.
 - b. If job functions have changed from the previous planning stage, then the employee should receive an updated planning stage document.
 - c. An abbreviated (i.e. checklist-type) document may be used to evaluate the employee's performance prior to the end of the 'short year' performance period. This abbreviated document should contain an overall appraisal rating for the 'short year' performance period and the levels of performance ratings used on the abbreviated document, should correspond to the type levels of performance rating outlined in this procedure as approved by.
 - d. An employee who does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the end of the 'short year' performance period (prior to UPA date) will receive a Satisfactory (formerly Meets) rating by default.

- e. An employee granted leave of absence without pay for more than thirty (30) consecutive work days shall have his or her UPA date advanced in accordance with State Human Resource regulations. Should it advance, the employee may require a Short Planning document and short year appraisal to transition the employee to the UPA date advanced in accordance with State Human Resource regulations.

III. Assignment of Responsibilities

A. Rating Officer

The Rating Officer is the employee's immediate supervisor. All planning documents and performance appraisals shall be written by the employee's supervisor who has first-hand experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The supervisor is responsible for the overall performance evaluation and for providing the employee with day-to-day feedback on the performance of his/her duties and responsibilities. It is mandatory for all Rating Officers to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal. Before the Rating Officer reviews either the planning document or final appraisal with the employee, he/she must review the document with the Reviewing Officer (see Section III). The Rating Officer will then schedule a conference for discussion of the document with the employee. Both the planning and appraisal document must bear the signature of the Rating Officer, the Reviewing Officer, and the employee (if possible). If an employee refuses to sign, notation should be made on the document of this fact. If possible, the notation shall be witnessed by one signature of the reviewing officer or an employee of equal or higher band than the rating officer. The rating officer may use informal multiple sources of feedback to assist in evaluating the employee. These sources should be identified to the employee in the employee's planning document.

B. Reviewing Officer

The Reviewing Officer shall be the supervisor of the Rating Officer. The President may designate additional levels of concurrences. The Reviewing Officer is responsible for reviewing the planning document and performance appraisal developed by the Rating Officer. The Reviewing Officer may provide comment on the criteria selected and the overall rating. If agreement cannot be reached between the Rating Officer and Reviewing Officer, the Reviewing Officer may not change the overall rating, except with approval of the President.

IV. Types of Performance Appraisals

A. Probationary Performance Appraisal

The performance of each employee who has been given an original appointment shall be appraised prior to the completion of his/her initial twelve (12) month probationary period of state service. The probationary period may not be extended. The probationary review date marks the beginning of a new review period. Failure to complete a performance appraisal at the end of the twelve (12) months probationary period will automatically give the employee a "Satisfactory Performance" rating with all rights and privileges of a covered employee. Until an employee has successfully completed the probationary period, an employee has no right of appeal to the State Employee Grievance Committee; therefore, a supervisor is not required to follow the "Substandard Performance Process" to terminate a probationary employee. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee must be terminated before becoming a covered employee. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, an employee may receive a Short Year Planning Document and a Short Year Appraisal to transition the employee to the UPA date.

B. Trial Period Appraisals

Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted, or reclassified shall be appraised prior to completion of six a (6) month trial period in the position. The trial review date marks the beginning of a new performance period. If an employee does not receive a “Satisfactory Performance” rating prior to the six (6) month trial review date, the employee will receive a “Satisfactory Performance” rating by default and obtain full-time equivalent (FTE) status in the new classification. The six (6) month trial period may be extended up to ninety (90) calendar days upon written notice of the extension to the employee prior to the end of the initial six (6) month period. An employee who is promoted may be demoted to the class from which promoted, if the demotion occurs within the trial period, without having appeal rights to the State Employee Grievance Committee. After satisfactory completion of the trial period, the employee may require a Short Year Planning Document and a Short Year Appraisal in order to transition the employee to the UPA date.

C. Regular (Annual) Performance Appraisal

All covered employees shall have a regular (annual) performance appraisal no more than ninety (90) calendar days prior to his/her UPA date. The appraisal must be reviewed and discussed with the Reviewing Officer prior to discussion with the employee. The completed document must be forwarded to the Human Resources office at least twenty (20) calendar days prior to the employee’s UPA date. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to his/her UPA date, the employee shall be rated “Satisfactory Performance” by default. Each location that chooses to implement the UPA date must notify the System Office’s Human Resource Services (HRS) of the UPA date to be used. HRS will notify OHR of any changes to UPA date used.

D. Interim Performance Appraisals

An interim performance appraisal is one conducted during the rating period other than a probationary, trial, regular (annual), or short year (if applicable) appraisal. Interim appraisals may be used periodically to call attention to commendable items or problem areas, to identify serious errors in an employee’s overall performance or to simply give the employee feedback. For addressing substandard performance, see Section V.C. below. Interim performance appraisals must not be used to calculate retention points for reduction in force purposes.

E. Other Options

1. A team evaluation may be substituted for individual performance appraisals. For this to occur, policy and procedures must be developed to incorporate the team evaluation into the locations’ EPMS Policy and Procedure.
2. The System Office may establish a numerical weighting system for evaluating employees.
3. The System Office may link the employee’s performance evaluation to the appropriate work unit’s mission, objectives, or training plans. When used, written statements of such mission, objectives, and/or training plans should be provided to the employee.
4. Before implementation, items 1, 2, or 3 above must have an implementation plan and policy reviewed by the System Office HRS and approved by OHR to ensure compliance with state regulations.

V. Levels of Performance

- A. Job Functions (duties plus success criteria), Objectives and the Overall Rating will be evaluated as follows:

BELOW PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (B) - Substandard work performance that is below the job requirements and expectations as evaluated according to the success criteria. Before this rating is given, a review process must take place that includes a warning notice of substandard performance and meetings with the employee. (See Substandard Performance, Section V.C.). Any employee who receives an overall rating of “Below Performance Requirements” must be removed from the position (demoted, terminated, or reassigned).

SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE (M) - Work that meets the expectations and requirements of the assigned position throughout the rating period as evaluated according to the success criteria (see Section VI); performance may fluctuate during the rating period to include exceeding the job requirements and expectations in some areas.

EXCEEDS PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (E) - Work that is consistently above the expectations and requirements of the job as evaluated according to the success criteria throughout the rating period. For the Overall Rating, a detailed explanation is required to support a rating of “Below Performance Requirements,” “Exceeds Performance Requirements.”

- B. Performance Characteristics

The performance characteristic - ‘Promoting Equal Opportunity’ is required for supervisors and managers. Other performance characteristics, if used, should be evaluated as either “Acceptable” (meets satisfactory requirements) or “Unacceptable” (fails to meet satisfactory requirements). Performance characteristics may be alternatively included as success criteria in job duties or objectives.

- C. Substandard Performance

Substandard performance is performance that is less than minimum performance requirements and will result in an employee receiving a formal rating of “Below Performance Requirements” unless improvement is shown. If during the performance period an employee is considered “Below Performance Requirements” in any essential job function and/or objective significantly impacting performance, the rater, with approval of the reviewing official, shall provide the employee with a written “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance.” In order to ensure that covered employees are given adequate notice of his/her substandard performance and are allowed the opportunity to improve such performance prior to the formal appraisal, the following procedures shall be observed:

1. The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than thirty (30) days and no more than one hundred twenty (120) days.
2. The rater must develop a work improvement plan for approval by the Reviewing Officer. The rater should include the employee in drafting a work improvement plan. The work improvement plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations. In those instances where the employee does not agree upon the timing and content of the work improvement plan, the

Rater with the approval of the Reviewing Officer, will make the final determination of the content and time period.

3. Warning notices of substandard performance shall:
 - a. Be in writing and labeled as a “Warning of Substandard Performance.”
 - b. Be addressed to the employee whose performance is in question.
 - c. List job functions/objectives where performance is deficient. Explain the deficiencies and list ways to improve such deficiencies.
 - d. Specify time periods for improvement and possible consequences (termination, demotion, reassignment).
 - e. Be presented to the employee for signature of acknowledgment and placed in the employee’s personnel record. If the employee refuses to sign, the rater should have an appropriate witness attest to such.
 - f. Include that a rating of “Below Performance Requirements” shall result if performance is not brought up to standard in the time period specified.
 - g. Include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during warning period.
4. During the warning period, the employee and the Rating Officer shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they discuss the employee’s progress. Documentation is required to verify that these counseling sessions were held. Copies of this documentation shall be placed in the employee’s official personnel record and given to the employee upon request.
5. If the employee’s performance is rated “Satisfactory Performance” or above on all essential job functions and/or objectives significantly impacting performance as noted in the warning notice of substandard performance, by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated “Below Performance Requirements,” on any essential job function and/or objective significantly impacting performance as noted in the written warning of substandard performance, by the end of the warning period, the employee shall be removed from the position immediately (demoted, terminated, or reassigned).
6. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must be rated within that specified time or the employee will receive a “Satisfactory Performance” rating by default.
7. If an employee has been issued two warning notices within a 365 day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function(s) and/or objective(s) significantly impacting performance for a third time within a 365 day period, the employee shall be removed from the position upon the third occurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the “Below Performance Requirements” appraisal and letter of termination, demotion, or reassignment. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence within a 365 day period. After the end of the second warning period, the employee should be provided with notice of the possible consequences should performance again deteriorate.
8. Normally, a written warning for substandard performance may not extend beyond the employee’s UPA date. If the warning notice is issued less than 30 days before the employee’s UPA date, the UPA date would roll forward one day for each day the warning notice of substandard performance is in effect. Should the UPA date roll, and the employee receives a “Satisfactory Performance” or above rating on all essential job functions and/or objectives significantly impacting performance as noted in the warning notice, the employee may require a Short Year Planning Document and a Short Year Appraisal to move the employee back to the UPA date.

9. The substandard performance process is not required to demote an employee in a trial period to the same class or a class in an equal band from which promoted, if the demotion occurs within the trial period. An employee in his/her trial period may not appeal such demotion through the grievance process. The employee in a trial period, however, may not be terminated or demoted to a lower banded class than that from which promoted for performance reasons, without following the substandard performance process.
10. The substandard performance process above is not required to terminate the employment of a probationary employee.

VI. SUCCESS CRITERIA

Success criteria statements are required and must be defined for each job duty and objective on which an employee is evaluated. Success criteria are statements/explanations of factors that specify the level of performance necessary to obtain a “Satisfactory Performance” rating. Performance characteristics may be alternatively reflected through success criteria.

VII. EPMS DOCUMENT

A. Planning Document

Within six (6) weeks of the beginning of the rating period the Rating Officer and the employee should have a planning conference. The conference will include a review of job functions, objectives (optional) and performance characteristics. Additionally, success criteria should be reviewed for each job function and optional objective if used. Job functions and objectives should be updated as necessary for only major changes in position requirements. The Rating Officer should initially meet with the employee to discuss the planning document and how it relates to the employee’s job functions (and objectives, if used) for the upcoming year. After this discussion, the Rating Officer shall approve the planning document. Prior to discussing the completed planning document with the employee, the Rating Officer will meet with the Reviewing Officer to discuss the planning document. Once the planning document is approved by the Rating Officer and Reviewing Officer, the Rating Officer will meet with the employee to review the planning document. It shall be mandatory for all raters to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee’s performance appraisal. Each employee will certify that he/she has reviewed the planning document. In those instances where the Rating Officer and employee cannot agree upon the items in the planning document, the rater’s decision will be final. The employee should receive a copy from the Rating Officer so that he/she can reference the criteria during the rating period. Should significant changes occur to the employee’s job during the rating period, the planning document should be modified to incorporate such changes.

B. Job Functions

Job functions are those overall job responsibilities that are unique to a particular position. Job functions relate specifically to an employee’s position, but generally not at a detailed level. The development of job functions is the most critical aspect of developing criteria to evaluate the employee because it is job specific. Therefore, it is imperative that the employee’s planning document be current and accurately reflects the duties and responsibilities of the position. Success criteria must be defined for each job duty. A job function is defined as a job duty plus related success criteria. The Rating Officer will be responsible for developing job functions from the employee’s position description, in discussion with the employee. During the review of the planning document the Rating Officer and employee will have the opportunity to discuss the accuracy of the job functions as they relate to the work performed

by the employee. Should the Rating Officer decide to change the job functions to be evaluated, the Rating Officer will in turn modify the employee's planning document to reflect the change. However, should the Rating Officer feel that the job functions accurately reflect the areas of responsibility desired in a particular position, no change will be made. In those instances where the supervisor and employee cannot agree upon the job functions, the supervisor's decision will be final. It shall be mandatory for all raters to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal. It is suggested that, for the purpose of the planning document and performance appraisal, no job function should consist of less than ten percent (10%) of the employee's specific job duties. Items of less than ten percent (10%) may be evaluated together with other items. When rating officers are having difficulty developing job functions, they should consult their Human Resources Officer for assistance.

C. Objectives (Optional)

Objectives are those specific projects, programs or other nonrecurring issues that should be focused upon by the employee during the rating period. These projects or program items may be at the direction of the Rating Officer or jointly determined by the employee and Rating Officer. Assignment of objectives to employees is optional; however, if used, success criteria must be developed for each objective. Objectives may be added or deleted during the rating period. Objectives should only be replaced or deleted if the objectives are no longer important or not a priority to the department. Objectives may be added if their completion date is within the rating period. Objectives if used, must be a factor in determining the overall employee performance rating.

D. Performance Characteristics

Performance characteristics may be used to clarify the expectation of the supervisor. If used, the performance characteristics selected may only be used as a communication tool to emphasize those items that are important to success in performing the job functions (and objectives, if used) in the planning document. Performance characteristics shall be given no weight in the determination of the overall performance rating. Ratings given on the performance characteristics should be either "Acceptable" or "Unacceptable". Comments should be made for any ratings of "Unacceptable". In addition to general Performance Characteristic, Management Characteristics for supervisors and managers have been developed. The only required characteristic to be rated for supervisors and managers is "Promote Equal Opportunity". Selected management characteristics designed to evaluate supervisors and managers on their ability to plan, organize, control, motivate, develop, promote equal opportunity (required), and complete planning document, and appraisals. All supervisors will be rated on each management characteristic listed above as either "Acceptable" or "Unacceptable". Additional management characteristics may be added if they relate specifically to the job. When completing the performance appraisal stage, comments should be made for any ratings of "Unacceptable."

E. Overall Summary

In the overall summary, the overall rating is made and space is provided for any supervisory comments. Narrative comments should be made by the supervisor on the employee's overall accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses related to the employee's performance over the rating period. The Rating Officer is encouraged to complete a narrative recommendation regarding what action the employee or college should undertake to improve or maintain the employee's performance or potential. A written justification/rationale is required for an overall rating of "Exceeds Performance Requirements," or "Below Performance Requirements." While a justification is not required for a "Satisfactory Performance" rating,

written comments are encouraged. A separate narrative response may be made by the employee if he/she wishes to express an opinion (agreement or disagreement) regarding the performance appraisal, employee's overall accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses related to the employee's performance over the rating period. The Rating Officer is encouraged to complete a narrative recommendation regarding what action the employee or college should undertake to improve or maintain the employee's performance or potential. A written justification/rationale is required for an overall rating of "Exceeds Performance Requirements," or "Below Performance Requirements." While a justification is not required for a "Satisfactory Performance" rating, written comments are encouraged. A separate narrative response may be made by the employee if he/she wishes to express an opinion (agreement or disagreement) regarding the performance appraisal.

Original on File	11/27/06
Approved for Publication	Date