

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

HRM 9430.5
December 16, 2020

GSA ORDER

SUBJECT: GSA Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Management and Appraisal System

1. Purpose.

a. This Order transmits policy updates to the General Services Administration (GSA) Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Management and Appraisal System provisions that apply only to the SES. GSA retains the discretion to issue additional agency-specific internal performance guidance annually and throughout the performance year.

b. In Fiscal Year 2013, GSA adopted the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Governmentwide Performance Management model for its Senior Executive Performance Management System. Under the OPM-approved System Description, GSA Senior Executives develop executive performance plans that are evaluated based on the new system, which also allows additional agency-specific internal performance guidance to be issued by GSA.

2. Scope and Applicability.

a. This Order applies to all GSA SES members covered by the provisions of subchapter II of Chapter 43 of Title 5, United States Code regardless of the type of SES appointment (i.e., career, non-career, limited term and limited emergency appointments) with the exception of: SES employees in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

b. The OIG has independent personnel authority. See Section 6 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, (5 U.S.C. App. 3), as amended (Inspector General is authorized “to select, appoint, and employ such officers and employees as may be necessary for carrying out the functions, powers, and duties of the Office of Inspector General”) and GSA Order [ADM 5450.39D CHGE 1](#), GSA Delegations of Authority Manual (Delegations Manual), Chapter 2, Part 1 (“the Inspector General has independent authority to formulate policies and make determinations concerning human capital issues within the [OIG] and GSA determinations/delegations do not limit that authority). Similarly, GSA specifically recognizes that the Inspector General has independent authority to formulate policies and make determinations concerning training, employee development, and career management.

3. Cancellation. This Order cancels and supersedes [HRM IL-14-01, GSA Senior Executive Service Performance Plan and Appraisal System](#), dated October 3, 2014 (Extended February 12, 2020). It also cancels and supersedes GSA Order [CPO P 9430.1, GSA Associate Performance Plan and Appraisal System \(Applies to SES Employees\)](#), dated December 31, 2003.

4. Policy. This Order incorporates policy changes resulting from GSA's adoption of the Governmentwide SES Appraisal System in FY2013, including policy updates contained in [HRM IL-14-01](#). This Order assists GSA executives in achieving organizational and individual performance goals by outlining a method to effectively develop, document, and communicate individual performance goals, measures and expectations. This SES Performance Plan and Appraisal system is a critical component of GSA's overall Performance Management Process.

a. Rating officials must establish performance plans for senior executives in consultation with senior executives in their area of responsibility (i.e., organizational unit, SES direct reports, etc.) and communicate the plans to them at the beginning of each appraisal period (normally within 30 days). These performance plans must contain performance goals, measures, and expectations that cascade down from and link directly to the performance goals and measures in GSA's Strategic Plan, and to the executives' organizational unit performance plans.

b. Additionally, rating officials must monitor progress and provide feedback to employees regarding their performance achievements. SES annual summary ratings will be linked to performance-based pay adjustments and performance awards and other forms of recognition.

c. All rating officials are required to participate actively and collaboratively in this process to ensure that the capabilities of GSA's executives are fully utilized and recognized; that there is a common understanding of performance goals, measures and expectations; and that there is a strong commitment to providing best value services to customer agencies and taxpayers while, at the same time, enhancing the likelihood for success at the executive level.

5. Accountability. Rating officials will be held accountable for the effective and timely execution of their performance planning and appraisal responsibilities. Rating officials must ensure that performance plans for senior executives are properly developed and communicated, that performance reviews and feedback sessions are held, that performance appraisals and ratings are completed, and other performance plan and appraisal system actions are completed as prescribed.

6. Forms. This Order provides for the use of the following GSA form:

- SES Performance Management System Executive Performance Plan template will be included in annual guidance from the CHCO for each annual appraisal period.

7. Signature.

/S/
Traci DiMartini
Chief Human Capital Officer
Office of Human Resources Management

GSA SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE (SES) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL SYSTEM

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GSA SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE (SES) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL SYSTEM

1. Purpose. The SES Performance Management and Appraisal System is a critical component of GSA's overall Performance Management Process and its purpose is to improve GSA's performance results, achieve its mission, and enhance opportunities for the career success of GSA's senior executives. The SES Performance Management and Appraisal System is consistent with the governing provisions of the law and the Office of Personnel Management's rules and regulations. It is designed to achieve performance improvements and to enhance executive's career success by:

- a. Effectively communicating to all executives the purpose and procedures for senior executive performance planning;
- b. Developing senior executive performance plans with linkage to organizational plans by cascading the performance goals and measures from GSA's Strategic Plan to the relevant organizational unit performance plan(s), and other sources into the individual plans;
- c. Assessing individual executive performance with a systematic approach of regular reviews in order to provide feedback to executives regarding their progress and to make timely determinations that expected performance results are being achieved or assistance/corrective action is needed;
- d. Assigning performance appraisal ratings to individual executive performance that makes meaningful distinctions based on relative performance. Ratings are to be based upon the comparison of actual results to performance expectations after taking into account other factors and circumstances affecting the results; and
- e. Linking annual summary ratings with performance awards and performance-based pay adjustments, and other forms of recognition.

2. Legal Authorities. This Order complies with:

- a. Title 5 USC Chapters 31, 35, 41, 43, 53, and 75, which authorizes agencies to establish senior executive performance plan and appraisal systems, and provides the statutory basis for Federal pay and performance awards for senior executives.
- b. 5 CFR Parts 293, 317, 359, 410, 412, 430, 530, 534 and 752, which govern personnel records and files, employment in the SES, removal from the SES including reduction-in-force and guaranteed placement in other personnel systems, SES performance management and appraisal system certification, training and executive development, aggregate limitation on pay, SES pay and performance awards, and adverse actions.

3. Responsibilities.

a. The Administrator has responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the SES Performance Management and Appraisal System for employees in the SES, including:

- (1) Establishing GSA policy and procedures;
- (2) Appointing SES to the Performance Review Board, as required by 5 CFR Sec 430.311, to make recommendations on the performance of GSA's senior executives;
- (3) Establishing agency-wide management goals in collaboration with senior leadership officials internal or external to GSA;
- (4) Integrating the performance plan and appraisal system with other agency management systems to ensure accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity in achieving GSA's mission;
- (5) Using performance results as a basis for managerial decisions, especially human resource related decisions; and
- (6) Making final decisions on executives' annual summary ratings, performance-based pay adjustments, performance awards or other cash awards after consideration of the Performance Review Board's written recommendations.

b. Heads of Services and Staff Offices (HSSOs) are responsible for:

- (1) Communicating performance goals and measures to all SES within their respective organizations;
- (2) Setting expectations for SES to effectively use the performance plan and appraisal system;
- (3) Ensuring performance plans are properly developed and that performance reviews, performance appraisals, and other performance plan and appraisal actions are completed as prescribed;
- (4) Ensuring the opportunity exists for SES to receive feedback regarding their performance;
- (5) Ensuring performance appraisal results are used to make various personnel decisions;
- (6) Maintaining appropriate records, submit required data and reports on the operation and effectiveness of the program, and take corrective action(s) as warranted;

(7) Ensuring a consistent application of the performance plan and appraisal system within their area of responsibility; and

(8) Taking action consistent with this Order to resolve special/unique problems or situations not specifically identified in this Order.

c. The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) is responsible for establishing and maintaining a GSA-wide SES Performance Management and Appraisal System to evaluate executive performance. CHCO is also responsible for obtaining OPM approval of the system and significant modifications and changes.

d. The Office of Human Resources (OHRM), Director of Human Resources Services is responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of the SES Performance Management and Appraisal System.

e. The OHRM Director of Executive Resources is responsible for:

(1) Providing support and establishing administrative controls to manage the SES Performance Management and Appraisal System;

(2) Providing information on the minimum training required for senior executives and rating officials on the system;

(3) Developing guidance on pay actions related to performance and on removing executives from the SES based on performance reasons;

(4) Ensuring summary appraisal data and supporting documents, such as initial summary ratings, and Performance Review Board (PRB) records are maintained for at least five years from the date they are issued;

(5) Supporting the PRB in evaluating SES performance appraisal process periodically to determine its effectiveness and to make improvements, as needed;

(6) Providing guidance to rating officials relative to their duties and responsibilities for administering the GSA SES Performance Management and Appraisal System; and

(7) Participating in monitoring and evaluating the program to gauge the effectiveness of the system.

f. Rating officials are responsible for:

(1) Creating a work culture and environment that promotes a high-performance organization;

- (2) Reviewing the senior executive's position description with the senior executive and ensure that it describes present duties and responsibilities;
- (3) Consulting with the executive to develop a performance plan that includes written critical elements with appropriate weights, performance requirements, and other performance elements as necessary;
- (4) Providing executives with a written performance plan that identifies the critical elements and performance expectations based on organizational performance goals;
- (5) Consulting with the executive to establish the overall importance or weight of each critical element;
- (6) Conducting at least one formal progress review during the appraisal period in addition to monitoring performance and providing advice and assistance to senior executives on how to improve their performance. Documenting adjustments in critical elements and their assigned weight, performance requirements, or priorities on the performance plans, based on formal progress reviews;
- (7) Assessing the executive's performance at the end of the appraisal period and using the performance appraisal to document the executive's achievements (rating officials who leave to begin a new assignment or leave the Federal service prior to the end of the appraisal period must prepare a summary performance appraisal of their subordinates);
- (8) Providing advice and assistance to an executive to improve his/her performance at any time during the appraisal period.
- (9) Ending the appraisal period at any time after the minimum appraisal period is completed, but only if the rating official determines there is an adequate basis on which to appraise and rate the senior executive's performance and the shortened appraisal period promotes effectiveness;
- (10) Making recommendations to the next higher-level executive or the PRB regarding initial summary ratings, or other recommended actions;
- (11) Establishing executives' Individual Development Plans (IDP) in consultation with executives. An executive's IDP should identify the types of development, e.g. job assignments, rotations, or training, to be undertaken in the coming year;
- (12) Recommending and taking appropriate personnel action based on the executives' performance appraisals, including recognition, reassignments, details, training, developmental assignments, reductions in grade, or removal; and

(13) Ensuring each senior executive receives a signed copy of their performance appraisal documentation.

g. Higher level reviewing officials will review documentation submitted by an executive who has requested a higher level review of their initial summary rating (ISR) given by the rating official. The executive must make the request within three business days after receiving the ISR. The higher level reviewing official must review the performance appraisal and any written comments provided by the executive, and then provide written comments within three business days of receipt of the documentation from Executive Resources. Comments made by the higher level reviewing official must be provided to the PRB, the Administrator, the executive and the rating official. Higher level reviews for executives whose rating officials are the Deputy Administrator or the Administrator will be completed by an executive from another federal agency. Under no circumstances will a member of the PRB serve as a higher level reviewer.

h. Senior executives are responsible for:

- (1) Reviewing their position descriptions for accuracy;
- (2) Assisting in the development of critical elements and performance requirements, understanding their importance and actions required;
- (3) Discussing (with rating official) needed resources and managerial support to meet performance requirements;
- (4) Assisting in the establishment of their IDPs and accomplishing planned developmental activities;
- (5) Participating in progress reviews as needed, including the required formal progress review at least once during the appraisal period; and
- (6) Accomplishing critical elements, using an approach that balances individual and organizational results.

i. The Performance Review Board is responsible for:

(1) Monitors the results of implementation of the SES Performance Management and Appraisal System for employees in the SES and for serving in an advisory role to recommend policies and procedures to the Administrator. Reviews initial summary ratings proposed by the rating officials to provide timely advice from an agency-wide perspective on whether:

(a) Initial summary ratings accurately reflect individual performance and contributions to agency performance and take into account, as appropriate, assessment of the agency's performance against program performance measures and other relevant considerations; and

(b) Proposed performance-based pay adjustments and performance award actions conform to law, regulations, and agency policy and guidelines while also appropriately corresponding to proposed ratings.

(2) Provides a written recommendation to the Oversight Official about each senior executive's annual summary rating, performance-based pay adjustment, and performance award.

(3) When appraising a career appointee's performance or recommending a career appointee for a performance-based pay adjustment or performance award, more than one-half of the PRB's members must be SES career appointees.

4. Performance Plans.

a. GSA's Senior Executive Service Performance Management and Appraisal System provides a mechanism for making meaningful distinctions between ratings for executives with significantly different levels of performance. Each critical element will be assessed and rated using the performance level definitions below:

- Level 5 Exceptional (Outstanding)
- Level 4 Commendable (Exceeds Fully Successful)
- Level 3 Fully Successful (Fully Successful)
- Level 2 Needs Improvement (Minimally Satisfactory)
- Level 1 Unacceptable (Unsatisfactory)

b. Rating timeframes.

(1) Appraisal Period. The annual performance appraisal period will be on a fiscal year basis from October 1 through September 30.

(2) Minimum Rating Period. The minimum period of performance that must be completed before a performance rating can be given is 90 days.

(3) Extending the Rating Period. If the rating official agency cannot prepare an executive's rating at the end of the appraisal period because the executive has not completed the minimum appraisal period or for other reasons, the executive's appraisal period must be extended. After the minimum appraisal period is completed, the rating official will then prepare the initial summary rating. Service for meeting the minimum rating period need not be continuous or under the same supervisor.

(4) Effective Date of Rating. Performance appraisals are effective the day that the appraisal is signed or approved by the highest-level official required by the Administrator.

c. Performance plans must be established:

(1) Annually in consultation with the executive:

(a) On or before the beginning of the appraisal period;

(b) Upon appointment or reassignment for executives assigned after the beginning of the performance appraisal period, and any detail or temporary assignment of 120 calendar days or longer; or

(c) Whenever there is a change in mission, workload, or performance requirement.

(2) Performance plans must be signed by the rating official and the executive. By signing his or her performance plan, the executive acknowledges receipt and consultation on its development.

d. Content of executive performance plans will be developed by rating officials, in consultation with executives, as outlined below:

(1) Alignment to Organizational Goals. Annually, the Administrator establishes agency-wide goals for GSA. Each major organizational component translates the agency-wide goals into organizational goals and measures that cascade throughout each organization. HSSOs should further refine the organizational goals to ensure performance expectations are understood. The Administrator's yearly assessment of organizational effectiveness is based primarily upon the degree to which each organization reaches its organizational goals in support of GSA's strategic goals.

(2) Critical Elements. Each senior executive plan shall include, as a minimum, the following critical elements and performance requirements. The performance requirements in critical elements 1 through 4 are mandatory, as written, and may include additional Agency-Specific Performance Requirements written as competencies or specific results/commitments/measurable activities associated with the critical element.

(a) Critical Element 1 - Leading Change. Develops and implements an organizational vision that integrates key organizational and program goals, priorities, values, and other factors. Assesses and adjusts to changing situations, implementing innovative solutions to make organizational improvements, ranging from incremental improvements to major shifts in direction or approach, as appropriate. Balances change and continuity; continually strives to improve service and program performance; creates a work environment that encourages creative thinking, collaboration, and transparency; and maintains program focus, even under adversity.

(b) Critical Element 2 - Leading People. Designs and implements strategies that maximize employee potential, connects the organization horizontally and vertically,

and fosters high ethical standards in meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Provides an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others to their full potential; allows for full participation by all employees; facilitates collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts. Ensures employee performance plans are aligned with the organization's mission and goals, that employees receive constructive feedback, and that employees are realistically appraised against clearly defined and communicated performance standards. Holds employees accountable for appropriate levels of performance and conduct. Seeks and considers employee input. Recruits, retains, and develops the talent needed to achieve a high quality, diverse workforce that reflects the nation, with the skills needed to accomplish organizational performance objectives while supporting workforce diversity, workplace inclusion, and equal employment policies and programs.

(c) Critical Element 3 - Business Acumen. Assesses, analyzes, acquires, and administers human, financial, material, and information resources in a manner that instills public trust and accomplishes the organization's mission. Uses technology to enhance processes and decision making. Executes the operating budget; prepares budget requests with justifications; and manages resources.

(d) Critical Element 4 - Building Coalitions. Solicits and considers feedback from internal and external stakeholders or customers. Coordinates with appropriate parties to maximize input from the widest range of appropriate stakeholders to facilitate an open exchange of opinion from diverse groups and strengthen internal and external support. Explains, advocates, and expresses facts and ideas in a convincing manner and negotiates with individuals and groups internally and externally, as appropriate. Develops a professional network with other organizations and identifies the internal and external politics that affect the work of the organization.

(e) Critical Element 5 - Results Driven. This critical element includes specific performance results expected from the executive during the appraisal period, focusing on measurable outcomes from the strategic plan or other measurable outputs and outcomes clearly aligned to organizational goals and objectives. At a minimum, the performance plan will include performance requirements that contain measurable results and their quality indicators describing the range of performance at Level 3 for each result specified. Additional levels of performance requirements may be described, in accordance with annual guidance. Indicators for each level described must reflect the same level of performance as the respective performance standard contained on page 2 of the Executive Performance Plan template or in Appendix B of this policy. In addition to the quality indicators, applicable measures of quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness may be included to describe the appropriate level of outcome(s) expected.

The Results-Driven critical element must also identify clear, transparent alignment to agency strategic planning initiatives (e.g., relevant agency or organizational goals/objectives with cited page numbers from the Strategic Plan, Congressional Budget Justification/Annual Performance Plan, or other organizational planning

document) in the designated section for each performance requirement in the Results Driven critical element.

(3) Critical Element Weights. Each critical element must be assigned a weight, with the total weights adding to 100 points. The minimum weight that can be assigned to any of the Critical Elements 1-4 is 5 points. The minimum weight that can be assigned to the Results Driven element is 20 points; however, no single performance element can be assigned a greater weight than the Results Driven element. Critical element weights may vary from year to year, as outlined in the annual CHCO guidance, and will generally be consistent for all executives. Adjustments to Critical Element weights must be approved by the Administrator, with input and recommendations from GSA's PRB.

5. Progress Reviews.

a. All rating officials will conduct at least one progress review of their subordinate senior executives' performance against the established performance plans and inform the executive of the executive's level of performance by comparison with the performance elements and requirements established for the position no later than 90 days before the end of the appraisal period. Each rating official must certify to the PRB that such a progress review has been completed. As necessary, the PRB will advise the Administrator of problem areas related to the completion of progress reviews.

b. Progress reviews are an opportunity to discuss progress towards achieving goals and objectives; and provide interim assessments of performance. Any challenges experienced or expected should be discussed. If circumstances beyond the control of the rating official or the executive prevent achieving the objectives, the rating official is responsible for making appropriate changes to the performance plan in collaboration with the executive at least 90 days before the end of the appraisal period.

c. Should a progress review identify performance below "Level 3", the rating official must assist the executive in improving performance. Such assistance may include but is not limited to formal training, on-the-job training, executive coaching, counseling, and/or closer supervision. Additional progress reviews should be held as appropriate to evaluate improvement.

6. Performance Appraisals and Ratings.

a. When an annual summary rating cannot be prepared as of the end of the scheduled appraisal period because the executive has not served in the position of record for the minimum period of 90 days, the executive's appraisal period shall be extended for the amount of time necessary to meet the minimum period at which time an annual summary rating will be given. However, that executive may not be included in the SES performance awards plan for the fiscal year covered by the scheduled appraisal period.

b. If the executive is reassigned during the final 90 days of the scheduled appraisal period and if the executive has been on a performance plans for the minimum period of 90 days, the performance appraisal period is terminated for that executive on the effective date of the reassignment and an initial summary rating prepared in accordance with paragraph c below.

c. Initial Summary Rating:

(1) At the end of the rating period, the executive's rating official shall complete a written initial summary rating of the executive's performance. The rater must appraise the executive on each critical element in the executive's performance plans unless there has been insufficient opportunity to demonstrate performance on that element. The rating official bases the executive's performance appraisal on the rating official's assessment of both individual and organizational performance, taking into account such factors as:

- (a) Results achieved in accordance with organizational goals;
- (b) Customer satisfaction;
- (c) Employee input;
- (d) Effectiveness, productivity, and quality of performance of the employee for whom the executive is responsible;
- (e) Success in meeting affirmative action, equal opportunity, and diversity goals; and
- (f) Complying with merit principles in 5 U.S.C. 2301.

(2) In the initial summary rating, the rater must take into consideration any prior ratings or appraisals of performance while on detail or other temporary assignments during the appraisal period.

(3) Performance levels. GSA's SES Performance Management and Appraisal System provides a mechanism for making meaningful distinctions between ratings for executives with significantly different levels of performance. At a minimum, performance expectations must be described for the rating of Level 3. GSA also permits the inclusion of performance expectations for additional levels of performance. The rating official should provide a narrative description of performance in terms of results achieved against the requirements to support the critical element rating level.

(4) Deriving the Summary Rating. After assessing each critical element and assigning the appropriate rating level to each critical element a summary rating should be derived using the following guidance:

(a) Deriving the Summary Rating Critical Element Point Values. Once the rating for each critical element is determined, the following point values will be assigned to the element ratings:

- Level 5 = 5 points
- Level 4 = 4 points
- Level 3 = 3 points
- Level 2 = 2 points
- Level 1 = 0 points

(b) Derivation Formula. The derivation formula is calculated as follows:

- If any critical element is rated Level 1 (Unsatisfactory), the overall summary rating is Unsatisfactory. If no critical element is rated Level 1 (Unsatisfactory), continue to the next step.
- For each critical element, multiply the element rating level point value by the weight assigned to that element.
- Add the results from the previous step for each of the five critical elements to come to a total score.
- Assign the initial summary rating using the ranges below:
 - 475-500 = Level 5
 - 400-474 = Level 4
 - 300-399 = Level 3
 - 200-299 = Level 2

Note: Any critical element rated Level 1 = Level 1.

Example: With the initial summary rating determined to be Level 4 Commendable

Critical Element	Rating Level Initial Element Score	Weight	Score Initial Point Score	Summary Level Range
1 Leading Change	4	10	4 X 10 = 40	475 - 500 = Level 5

2 Leading People	5	15	$5 \times 15 = 75$	400 - 474 = Level 4 300 - 399 = Level 3 200 - 299 = Level 2 Any CE rated Level 1 = Level 1
3 Business Acumen	3	5	$3 \times 5 = 15$	
4 Building Coalitions	4	10	$4 \times 10 = 40$	
5 Results Driven	4	60	$4 \times 60 = 240$	
TOTAL		100%	410	

(5) Completing the Rating.

(a) The rating official assesses each critical element, determines an initial summary rating, documents that rating on the form provided in the annual guidance shared by the CHCO, as appropriate.

(b) The rating official then discusses the performance appraisal with the executive. Upon receiving the performance appraisal, the executive is requested to acknowledge receipt by signing the form, and indicates whether the executive wants to make a written response and/or request a review by a higher-level official. Requests and written responses must be completed within three business days of the receipt of the appraisal.

(c) The initial summary ratings are forwarded to the Director of Executive Resources, Office of Human Resources Management within 45 days after the end of the appraisal period. The Administrator or PRB Chair may approve one extension up to 45-days to this period for organizations in the midst of reorganization or other comparable situations.

(d) The performance appraisal of a career SES may not be completed within 120 days after the beginning of a new Presidential administration. When the new President is inaugurated on January 20, appraisal actions may not be taken until May 20.

(6) The executive's rating official shall provide a copy of the initial summary rating to the executive and follow appropriate procedures as prescribed by the OHRM Director of Executive Resources. The executive will have an opportunity to respond in writing to the initial summary and to request a higher-level review of the initial summary rating by an executive at a higher level than the rating official. A higher level reviewer will have three business days from the receipt of the appraisal and documentation from the Director, Executive Resources to complete the review. The Higher Level Reviewer may make written recommendations which would be provided to the executive, the rating official, and PRB. The reviewing official (higher level reviewer) may not change a rating official's initial summary rating.

7. Performance Review Board.

a. Membership. More than one-half of the members must be career SES members in order to review the performance of other career SES. PRB members may not take part in any PRB deliberations involving their own performance appraisals. The PRB develops its recommendations by a simple majority vote of the quorum. In case of a tie, the Chairperson makes the final decision. The PRB meets at least yearly but is subject to call by the Chairperson. The membership of the PRB must be published in the *Federal Register*. The Deputy Administrator serves as the Chairperson.

b. Performance Review Board Operations.

(1) The PRB reviews and evaluates the initial summary ratings, and when required by a higher-level review an executive's written response and the written comments by the higher-level reviewer. The PRB may conduct further reviews as necessary to make its recommendation(s).

(2) The PRB makes a written recommendation to the Administrator concerning each executive's annual summary rating. If the PRB does not agree with the initial summary rating, or the record shows an executive or reviewing official disagrees with the rating official, the board may review the matter before recommending an annual summary rating, which should be supported by a written justification. The PRB may make a recommendation different from that of the rating official if:

(a) The executive or the higher-level reviewing official disagrees in writing with the initial summary rating, or when the PRB finds there is an error in the initial summary rating, or

(b) The recommendation of the rating official would be inconsistent with the initial summary rating of executives in other organizational units. In making its recommendations to the Administrator, the PRB should set forth in writing any reasons (including the accuracy, fairness, and consistency with other initial summary ratings of executives) differing from the views of the rating official.

(3) The PRB reviews proposed performance awards to ensure they are fairly and consistently distributed. The PRB makes recommendations to the Administrator on granting individual performance awards to executives rated at Level 3 or above.

(4) The PRB maintains the confidentiality of PRB proceedings and may not disclose any information regarding its work to persons who do not have a need to know. Each PRB member must sign a Pledge of Confidentiality.

8. Linking Appraisals to Performance Awards and Performance-Based Pay Adjustments.

- a. The Administrator and HSSOs must submit their initial summary ratings, and recommendations for performance awards and recognition to the PRB through the OHRM Director of Executive Resources.
- b. Career SES members are eligible to receive a performance award if their most recent annual summary rating is at least Level 3. This rating does not necessarily mean that a performance award will be granted.
- c. Upon completing the review of performance ratings, the PRB summarizes the distribution of ratings and recommends career SES members for performance award. The Administrator is the deciding official on these recommendations.

9. Interim Appraisal Period Activity.

a. Revised performance plans may be required as a result of changes in organizational priorities or changes in assignments. If a revised performance plan is required, the revised plan is subject to all requirements pertaining to the establishment of performance plans.

(1) Reassignments. If an executive changes positions within GSA and has completed the minimum appraisal period, the supervisor must appraise the executive's performance by completing an initial summary rating.

(2) Transfers. If an executive transfers to another agency and has completed the minimum appraisal period, the supervisor must appraise the executive's performance by completing an initial summary rating. The appraisal must be given to the executive and forwarded to the gaining agency along with the annual summary ratings covering the past 5 years (if available/applicable). When developing an initial summary rating for an executive who transfers to GSA from another agency, the supervisor must consider any applicable ratings and appraisals of the executive's performance received from the former agency.

b. Details and Temporary Reassignments.

(1) Within GSA. When a senior executive is detailed or temporarily reassigned within GSA for a period expected to last 120 days or longer, the detail supervisor must develop written critical elements and performance requirements at the beginning of the new assignment. Ratings on the critical elements must be prepared and considered in deriving the executive's next initial summary rating.

(2) Outside GSA. When an executive is detailed outside GSA, a reasonable effort must be made by the rating official to obtain performance appraisal information from the outside organization. This information shall be used in deriving the executive's next initial summary rating. If the detailed executive has served in GSA for the minimum rating period, the executive must be rated, taking into consideration the information obtained from the outside organization. If the detailed executive has not served in GSA

for the minimum rating period but has served in the outside organization for the minimum period, every effort must be made to prepare a performance appraisal using information obtained from the outside agency.

10. Removals of Non-Probationary Career Executives.

a. An executive may (or must) be removed from the SES for the following performance reasons:

(1) An executive who receives an unsatisfactory annual summary rating (e.g. Level 1 Unacceptable) *must* be reassigned, transferred within the SES, or removed from the SES;

(2) An executive who receives two Level 1 annual performance appraisals in any 5-year period *must* be removed from the SES; and

(3) An executive who receives less than a Level 3 annual performance appraisal twice in any 3-year period *must* be removed from the SES.

b. Procedures:

(1) The rating official shall propose removal from the SES to the Administrator, through the PRB, identifying the position to which the executive will be assigned. Rating officials must provide assistance in improving performance for executives retained in the SES.

(2) When an employee is removed from the SES, the Administrator will provide at least 30 days advance written notice advising the executive of the basis for the action, the placement rights and the position to which the employee will be assigned, the right to request an informal hearing from the Merit Systems Protection Board, the effective date of the action, and eligibility for immediate retirement, if appropriate.

c. Restrictions. No removal action may be made effective within 120 days after the appointment of a new Administrator, or a new non-career supervisor.

d. Placement Rights.

(1) The executive is entitled to placement in a continuing position at the GS-15 level for which the executive meets the qualifications requirements.

(2) If the executive was appointed to the SES from a career or career-conditional appointment, the executive is entitled to a position of equivalent tenure unless the executive indicates a willingness to accept a position of different tenure.

(3) Placement cannot cause the separation or reduction in grade of any other employee.

(4) Basic pay will be set at the highest of:

(a) The rate of basic pay in effect for the position in which the executive is being placed;

(b) The rate of basic pay currently in effect for the position held immediately prior to appointment in the SES, or

(c) The rate of basic pay in effect immediately prior to removal from the SES.

Appendix A. Definitions

Annual Summary Rating. Overall rating level that an appointing authority assigns at the end of the appraisal period after considering (1) the initial summary rating, (2) any input from the executive or a higher level review, and (3) the applicable Performance Review Board's (PRB) recommendations. This rating is the official final rating for the appraisal period.

Appointing Authority. Department or agency head, or other official with authority to make appointments in the SES.

Appraisal Period. Established period of time for which a senior executive's performance will be appraised and rated.

Critical Element. Key component of an executive's work that contributes to organizational goals and results. The unsatisfactory/unacceptable performance of an element will make the executive's overall job performance rating unsatisfactory/unacceptable. Critical elements may include the possession and demonstration of competencies critical to success in the position. Such elements shall be used to measure performance only at the individual level.

Days. Refers to calendar days unless otherwise specified.

Initial Summary Rating. An overall rating level the rating official derives from appraising the senior executive's performance during the appraisal period in relation to the critical elements, performance standards, and requirements and is forwarded to the PRB.

Performance. Accomplishment of the work described in the senior executive's performance plan.

Performance Appraisal. Review and evaluation of a senior executive's performance against critical elements, and performance standards and requirements.

Performance Management System. Framework of policies and practices that an agency establishes under subchapter II of chapter 43 of title 5, United States Code, for planning, monitoring, developing, evaluating, and rewarding both individual and organizational performance and for using resulting performance information in making personnel decisions.

Performance Requirement. Description of what a senior executive must accomplish, or the competencies to be demonstrated and rated at a specific level of performance. Performance requirements must include quality indicators and generally include other performance measures such as quantity, timeliness, cost savings, manner of performance, or other factors.

Performance Standard. Normative description of a single level of performance. Provides the benchmark for developing performance requirements against which actual performance will be assessed. (See Appendix B for the performance standard for each critical element.)

Progress Review. Review of the senior executive's progress in meeting the performance requirements. A progress review is not a performance rating.

Quality Indicator. Descriptive language that explains how the rating official will determine the work product is acceptable. These indicators often are expressed as smaller, verifiable accomplishments that must be completed successfully to produce the principal result identified in the performance objective.

Rating Official. The immediate supervisor of an executive who appraises the executive's performance in relation to the critical elements and performance standards outlined in the performance plan.

Senior Executive Performance Plan. Written critical elements and performance requirements against which performance will be evaluated during the appraisal period by applying the established performance standards. The plan includes all critical elements, performance standards, and performance requirements, including any specific goals, targets, or other measures established for the senior executive. The performance plan template, included in this performance management system, is the senior executive performance plan.

Appendix B. Performance Standards for Critical Elements

The performance standard for each critical element is specified below.

Level 5: The executive demonstrates exceptional performance, fostering a climate that sustains excellence and optimizes results in the executive's organization, agency, department, or Governmentwide. This represents the highest level of executive performance, as evidenced by the extraordinary impact on the achievement of the organization's mission. The executive is an inspirational leader and is considered a role model by agency leadership, peers, and employees. The executive continually contributes materially to or spearheads agency efforts that address or accomplish important agency goals, consistently achieves expectations at the highest level of quality possible, and consistently handles challenges, exceeds targets, and completes assignments ahead of schedule at every step along the way.

Performance at this level may be demonstrated in such ways as the following examples:

- Overcomes unanticipated barriers or intractable problems by developing creative solutions that address program concerns that could adversely affect the organization, agency, or Government.
- Through leadership by example, creates a work environment that fosters creative thinking and innovation; fosters core process re-engineering; and accomplishment of established organizational performance targets.
- Takes the initiative to identify new opportunities for program and policy development and implementation or seeks more opportunities to contribute to optimizing results; takes calculated risks to accomplish organizational objectives with positive results.
- Accomplishes objectives even under demands and time pressure beyond those typically found in the executive environment.
- Achieves results of significant value to the organization, agency, or Government.
- Achieves significant efficiencies or cost-savings in program delivery or in daily operational costs of the organization.

Level 4: The executive demonstrates a very high level of performance beyond that required for successful performance in the executive's position and scope of responsibilities. The executive is a proven, highly effective leader who builds trust and instills confidence in agency leadership, peers, and employees. The executive consistently exceeds established performance expectations, timelines, or targets, as applicable.

Performance at this level may be demonstrated in such ways as the following:

- Advances progress significantly toward achieving one or more strategic goals.
- Demonstrates unusual resourcefulness in dealing with program operations or policy challenges.
- Achieves unexpected results that advance the goals and objectives of the organization, agency, or Government.

Level 3: The executive demonstrates the high level of performance expected and the executive's actions and leadership contribute positively toward the achievement of strategic goals and meaningful results. The executive is an effective, solid, and dependable leader who delivers high-quality results based on measures of quality, quantity, efficiency, and/or effectiveness, within agreed upon timelines. The executive meets and sometimes exceeds challenging performance expectations established for the position.

Performance at this level may be demonstrated in such ways as the following:

- Seizes opportunities to address issues and effects change when needed.
- Finds solutions to serious problems and champions their adoption.
- Designs strategies leading to improvements.

Level 2: The executive's contributions to the organization are acceptable in the short term but do not appreciably advance the organization towards achievement of its goals and objectives. While the executive generally meets established performance expectations, timelines and targets, there are occasional lapses that impair operations and/or cause concern from management. While showing basic ability to accomplish work through others, the executive may demonstrate limited ability to inspire subordinates to give their best efforts or to marshal those efforts effectively to address problems characteristic of the organization and its work.

Level 1: In repeated instances, the executive demonstrates performance deficiencies that detract from mission goals and objectives. The executive generally is viewed as ineffectual by agency leadership, peers, or employees. The executive routinely does not meet established performance expectations/timelines/targets and fails to produce – or produces unacceptable – work products, services, or outcomes.