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REQUIRED ACTION:

- Employees are responsible for reading and following this policy.
- Managers are required to have every employee and new hire read and acknowledge this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Covered Employee – A full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position who has completed the probationary period and has a “successful” or higher overall rating on the employee’s performance evaluation and who has grievance rights. If an employee does not receive an evaluation before the performance review date, the employee must be considered to have performed in a satisfactory manner and be a covered employee. This definition does not include employees in positions such as temporary, temporary grant or time-limited employees who do not have grievance rights.

Established Review Date – The employee’s review date as established in accordance with State Human Resources Regulations.

Probationary Period – An initial working test period of employment in an FTE position with the State of not more than 12 months’ duration. An employee whose performance is “unsuccessful” during the probationary period must be terminated before becoming a covered employee.

Reassignment – The movement within an agency of an employee from one position to another position having the same State salary range, or the movement of a position within an agency which does not require a reclassification

Review Period (or Rating Period) – The period of time over which the performance of the employee is assessed in an Evaluation Document.

Short-Year Planning Stage Document – An EPMS Planning Stage document covering a period of less than twelve (12) months.

Short-Year Review – A performance appraisal that evaluates an employee’s performance for less than twelve (12) months. (Exception: Warning period of substandard performance review).

Successful Rating – Equivalent to a “meets” performance rating.

Transfer - The movement to a different agency of an employee from one position to another position having the same State salary range, or the movement of a position from one agency to another agency which does not require a reclassification.



Universal Review Date – The date prior to which performance appraisals are due and a new annual performance review period begins. August 1st will be the universal review date for the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (Exception: Employees in a probationary status).

GUIDELINES

I. General Information

- A. All performance appraisals will be made in writing by the employee's supervisor (the rater) who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The appraisal will be reviewed by the next higher-level supervisor (the reviewer) prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee (unless the rater is the agency head). The reviewer may attach additional comments to the appraisal, and in the attachment may take exception to the rater's appraisal. In addition, the reviewer has the authority to change the appraisal completed by the rater. If the reviewer elects to change the rating, the change and associated justification should be noted on the appraisal document.
- B. Whenever an employee's job responsibilities change significantly, the position description and appraisal document(s) should be revised to reflect that change. The final appraisal must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer and the employee. If any party refuses to sign the appraisal, a notation shall be made on the performance appraisal document and a witness should sign to acknowledge the party's refusal to sign.
- C. All performance appraisals will become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file. Upon request, the agency will furnish the employee with a copy of the performance appraisal with copies of all pertinent attachments.
- D. The provisions of this policy address the appraisal process of both probationary and covered employees. Although not mentioned specifically in this policy, employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act, with the exception of Temporary State employees, may also be given annual performance appraisals.

II. Training

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) employees receive introduction to the Employee Performance Management System through new employee orientation, general information sessions and/or communication from the office or division.

III. Components of Performance Management

- A. **Planning:** A discussion at the beginning of the review period between the supervisor (rater) and employee to identify performance expectations for the upcoming review period, which is documented in the *Planning Stage Document*.



- B. **Coaching/Ongoing Performance Management:** The process of on-going or periodic communication between employees and supervisors to constructively address work performance adjustments and strategically coach to meet performance goals and expectations during the review period.

A rater should continue to provide performance feedback to employees throughout the review period. An unofficial mid-year review is encouraged to facilitate this communication between raters and employees. In addition, various options are available to the rater in conducting performance management. A rater may gather feedback to prepare the appraisal/evaluation document and/or conduct unofficial appraisals more frequently than required in this policy.

- C. **Evaluation:** The final review and appraisal of employee performance in relation to established performance expectations for the review period.

IV. **Position Description/Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) Form**

The Position Description/Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) form is a comprehensive form that is utilized to capture both position description information, as well as the employee planning stage and actual performance information.

Please see description below of each area of the form:

A. **Position Description**

Defines qualifications for the position including education, experience, licensure, certification or other requirements for successful performance of job duties; identifies the specific skills, knowledge and abilities required of the position. Licensure, registration and certification requirements must also be specified. The degree of discretion allowed in performing the job duties and the supervisory responsibilities assigned to the position should be clearly indicated. Where appropriate, the physical and mental requirements necessary for performance of the position should be incorporated into the document for purposes of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

Each job responsibility should be noted, along with the percentage of time normally devoted to each duty to be performed (i.e. weight factor). The job function should also be designated as essential or marginal. Essential job functions are defined as major job responsibilities that an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation. Marginal job functions are relatively incidental to the reason the position exists or are occasional requirements of the job. Typically marginal duties correspond to the lowest percentage weights.

Employees in the Executive Compensation System are required to complete [Form HR-206G Managerial Position Description](#) instead of the combined *Position Description/EPMS Form*. However, the Position Description/EPMS form is utilized for planning stage and evaluation purposes.



CHE utilizes two (2) types of Planning Stage and Evaluation Documents: [HR-206C Position Description/EPMS Form for Supervisors](#) and [HR-206D Position Description/EPMS Form for Non-Supervisors](#). The difference between the two forms is that the Supervisor's form has a mandatory job function for timely completion of EPMS documents.

B. Planning Stage

Each employee shall have a Planning Stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. The employee's job functions (which include job duties and success criteria), objectives (if applicable), and performance characteristics for the next rating period will be discussed at this time. These items, as included in the Planning Stage, are described below.

The rater and employee should participate in the Planning Stage. The reviewing officer and the rater should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the Planning Stage. In those instances where the rater and employee cannot agree upon any items in the Planning Stage, the rater's decision shall be final.

Planning Stages should be completed no later than six weeks after the beginning of an employee's review period. Copies of Planning Stages should be sent to CHE Human Resources or designee.

1. **Job Functions:** The rater shall determine the job functions (which include job duties and success criteria) by reviewing the employee's position description. If the position description is not up-to-date, or if there is no position description, one should be prepared and submitted for approval to CHE Human Resources or designee. The statement outlining the job function should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to be successful. Each job function shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the three levels of performance.

It shall be mandatory for all supervisors to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal.

2. **Objectives:** Objectives shall be optional and should be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included on the employee's position description. The statement outlining the objective(s) should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to be successful. Each objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the three levels of performance.
3. **Success Criteria:** Success criteria are the set standards, by which an employee's performance will be evaluated, expressed as outcome-based, measurable goals and/or objectives. The success criteria should be defined for each job function and objective (if applicable) and should describe in clear and concise terms how a job function is to be successfully performed. The



success criteria should also be measurable and quantitative (i.e. “within three (3) business days and not “in a timely fashion”).

4. **Performance Characteristics:** Performance characteristics are qualities, traits, or individual characteristics that are required for satisfactory performance in a particular job, role or team. Performance characteristics and their definitions should be directly related to the employee’s job and may be selected by the supervisor.

The performance characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning stage. A listing of general and management performance characteristics and definitions are available by clicking [here](#).

Each performance characteristic shall be defined in the Planning Stage document and rated as “pass” or “fail” in the evaluation stage.

V. Levels of Performance

There shall be three (3) levels of performance to rate each job function, objective (if applicable), and overall performance:

A. **Exceptional**

Work that is consistently above the success criteria of the job function or objective throughout the rating period.

B. **Successful**

Work that meets the success criteria of the job function or objective.

C. **Unsuccessful**

Work that fails to meet the success criteria of the job function or objective.

Performance characteristics/competencies shall not be rated by the three levels of performance, but shall be given a rating of pass or fail.

1. **Pass** – Meets requirements
2. **Fail** – Fails to meet requirements

The Planning Stage document must incorporate the weighted evaluation system. In order to reduce subjectivity in the evaluation, a numerical value will be assigned to each level of performance.



LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE		
Performance Level	Point Values	Overall Range for Final Score
Exceptional	3	2.5 to 3.0
Successful	2	1.5 to 2.49
Unsuccessful	1	1.49 & below

When completing an employee's Planning Stage document, the rater will determine the time normally devoted to each job function and objective (if applicable) by assigning a percentage or weight to each.

1. The percentage of time for all Job Functions and Objectives (if applicable) must total **100%**.
2. Each rating is multiplied by the percentage of time assigned to the task.
3. All sums are added together and divided by 100 to reach a final numerical rating.

EXAMPLE OF WEIGHTED SCORING				
Performance	Level of Performance	Point Value*	Weight	Rating
Job Function 1	Exceptional	3	30%	$3 \times .30 = .90$
Job Function 2	Successful	2	20%	$2 \times .20 = .40$
Job Function 3	Exceptional	3	20%	$3 \times .20 = .60$
Job Function 4	Successful	2	15%	$2 \times .15 = .30$
Objective 1	Exceptional	3	5%	$3 \times .05 = .15$
Objective 2	Successful	2	5%	$2 \times .05 = .10$
Objective 3	Successful	2	5%	$2 \times .05 = .10$
TOTAL	EXCEPTIONAL		100%	Overall 2.55

*Point Values must be expressed in whole numbers only.

VI. Evaluation

- A. The Evaluation Document should be completed prior to the end of the review period and may be conducted up to ninety (90) calendar days before the review date.
 1. The rater should indicate the appropriate rating levels for Job Functions and Objectives (if applicable).
 2. Written comments should be made in the designated area(s) of the form to summarize the actual performance relative to job functions, objective (if applicable), and the success criteria.
 3. Performance Characteristics will not receive a numerical rating; however, a rating of "pass" or "fail" will be given.
 4. The summary section is used to identify major accomplishments, comment on performance strengths and opportunities for growth or improvement, and to recommend steps to prepare for an improved performance in the future.



5. The appraisal/evaluation document should be reviewed by the next higher-level manager/supervisor (reviewer) prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee. The reviewer may change the appraisal rating completed by the rater.
- B. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the annual universal performance review date or other established review date (probationary period), the employee shall receive a "Successful" rating by default.
- C. In instances where the supervisor and employee cannot agree upon the contents of the Evaluation Document, the supervisor's decision shall be final.
- D. It is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor to engage in dialogue regarding the evaluation. The approved evaluation will be reviewed with the employee and the employee shall be given the opportunity to sign.
- E. If the employee refuses to sign, the supervisor should get a peer supervisor to sign as a witness to the evaluation being administered and the employee refusing to sign. The supervisor should write "Refused to Sign" on the signature acknowledgement page.
- F. The employee and reviewer may include comments in the *Employee and Reviewer Comments* section of the signature acknowledgment page.
- G. After all signatures are obtained on the final Evaluation Document, the signed document must be submitted to CHE Human Resources or designee. Upon completion, a copy of the new Planning Stage document for the next review period must also be submitted to CHE Human Resources or designee.
- H. A copy of the employee's Evaluation Document is considered official documentation of the EPMS and will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

VII. Establishing and Maintaining Review Dates

It is the policy of CHE to appraise the performance of covered employees annually for the review period August 1st – July 31st, probationary employees prior to the end of the one-year probationary period.

CHE has established a Universal Review Date of August 1st. All covered employees of CHE, except probationary employees, shall be given a performance review on or before the annual universal review date of August 1st.

All covered employees shall be given a performance appraisal no more than ninety (90) calendar days prior to the employee's performance review date.



An Employee's Review Date Shall Change for the Following Reasons:

- A. Leave of Absence – If an employee is on approved leave with or without pay for more than thirty (30) consecutive workdays, the employee's performance review date may be advanced up to ninety (90) days. A "Short Year" Planning Stage and performance appraisal may need to be done to bring the employee back to the Universal Review Date of August 1st.
- B. Warning Notice of Substandard Performance – An employee who receives a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" may have the performance review date advanced to coincide with the "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" dates. If the review date is advanced, it may be necessary to complete a "Short Year" review to bring the employee back to the Universal Review Date of August 1st.
- C. Changes in Personnel Status – An employee's performance review date may be adjusted due to promotions, demotions, reclassifications, reassignments, transfers or unclassified State title changes as provided in State Human Resources Regulation 19-715.
 - 1. For example, an employee who is promoted or reclassified upward and prior to attaining permanent status in a class with a higher State salary range, or unclassified State title with a higher State salary range or level of responsibilities, and is subsequently demoted to the same class or unclassified State title from which promoted or reclassified, shall revert back to the original performance review date established with the position from which promoted or reclassified.
 - 2. A covered employee who is reassigned to a position in the same class and agency or transfers to a position in the same class from another agency within six months or less of the review date will have the annual performance review date advanced six months from the date of the transfer or reassignment.

An Employee's Review Date Shall NOT Change for the Following Reasons:

- A. An employee who is reassigned to a position in the same class and agency or transfers to a position in the same class from another agency and is more than six months from his/her review date shall not have the review date reestablished, but instead shall retain the current review date.
- B. An employee who receives any in-band increase or decrease within the current class will maintain the annual performance review date.

The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "successful" rating by default.

An employee whose performance review date is advanced in accordance with the State Human Resources Regulations may receive a Short Year Planning Stage and Review. Should the review date advance, the employee will have his/her performance review date established as the universal review date according to the "Short Year" provisions provided for herein.



A list of the performance review dates presently established in accordance with the State Human Resource Regulations will be maintained so that they may be reinstated, if necessary. Any personnel action that requires the establishment of an employee's review date will follow the provisions of this policy.

VIII. "Short Year" Appraisal Form

An abbreviated Planning Stage and performance appraisal process for "Short Year" review periods that occur within three months (May 1st to July 31st) of the Universal Review Date will be used.

- A. If job functions or objectives have not changed, the Planning Stage document from the just completed review period will be used as the Planning Stage document for the "Short Year" performance review period.
- B. If the job functions or objectives have changed from the previous Planning Stage, the employee should receive an updated Planning Stage document for the "Short Year" review period.
- C. [HR-206E Short Year Performance Appraisal Form](#) will be used to evaluate the employee's performance prior to the end of the "Short Year" review period.

For performance appraisals with review periods of more than three and less than twelve months, a regular performance appraisal form will be used to evaluate the employee's performance prior to the end of the shortened performance review period.

IX. Probationary Period

Each new employee in probationary status will be rated prior to the completion of a twelve-month probationary period. If that employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "successful" rating by default and obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the job classification. The probationary period may not be extended.

A probationary employee who receives a promotion, demotion, reclassification, transfer or is reassigned to a position in a different class is given a new original appointment in the new class and the twelve-month probationary period begins again from the date of the promotion, demotion, reclassification, transfer or reassignment to a position in a different class.

A probationary employee who transfers from another state agency to a position in a different class will be required to serve twelve (12) months with CHE prior to attaining covered status. Such employee who is reassigned or transferred to a position in the same class or who receives any in-band increase or decrease within the current class will not have the review date re-established.

If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee will be terminated before becoming a covered employee. CHE Human Resources or designee should be notified at the first instance of a probationary employee not performing successfully.



Until an employee has completed the probationary period and has a “successful” or higher rating on the employee’s evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act; therefore, an agency is not required to follow the “Substandard Performance Process” to terminate a probationary employee. The “successful” rating is the equivalent to the “meets” performance rating referenced in the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

After the probationary period has been completed, the employee may need to have his/her performance review date established as the Universal Review Date according to the “Short Year” provisions.

X. Substandard Performance Process for Covered Employees

A covered employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving either an overall “unsuccessful” rating on an appraisal or an “unsuccessful” rating on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance and being removed from the position. To ensure this occurs, the following procedures will be followed:

- A. A rater will issue a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” prior to issuing an “unsuccessful” rating to a covered employee. If during the performance period an employee is considered “unsuccessful” in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the rater will provide the employee with a written “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance”. The warning notice will provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee’s review date. However, an employee who receives a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” may have the performance review date advanced to coincide with the “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” dates. Should the review date advance and the employee receives a “successful” or above rating, the employee may require a “Short Year” review in order to bring the employee back to the Universal Review Date of August 1st.
- B. The rater will prepare a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance, which will include a work improvement plan. The plan should include a list of ways to improve deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations. In those instances where the rater and employee do not agree upon the content of the work improvement plan, the rater’s decision shall be final.
- C. During the warning period, the employee and the rater will have regularly scheduled meetings during which they will discuss the employee's progress. Documentation is required to verify that these meetings were held. Copies of this documentation will be placed in the employee's official personnel file. The employee may receive a copy of these documents from CHE Human Resources or designee upon request.
- D. If the employee’s performance is rated “successful” or above, on all essential job functions/objectives, which significantly impact performance, noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment will continue. If the employee is rated “unsuccessful,” on



any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, the employee will be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned, demoted).

- E. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written appraisal prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a "successful" rating by default.
- F. 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/objective, which significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365-day period, the employee will be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the "unsuccessful" rating. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.

XI. Warning Notice of Substandard Performance (Consult with CHE Human Resources or designee prior to proceeding)

The requirements of a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" are:

- A. The notice **must be in writing**, labeled as a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance," and signed by the employee (witnessed, if employee will not sign). Contact CHE Human Resources or designee for an approved Warning of Substandard Performance template.
- B. The notice must list the job function(s) and/or objectives included on the employee's Planning Stage document that are considered "unsuccessful," with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.
- C. The notice must include the time period (no less than 30 days and no greater than 120 days) for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., terminated, demotion, reassignment).
- D. The notice must include a plan for regularly scheduled meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.
- E. The notice must be approved by CHE Human Resources or designee.
- F. A copy of the notice must be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file.



CONTACT/TELEPHONE: Human Resources 803-737-4272.

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Boney", written over a horizontal line.

6/1/25

SC Commission on Higher Education President and Executive Director

ATTACHMENTS: [HR-206A EPMS Performance Characteristics](#), [HR-206C Supervisory Position Description/Employee Performance Management System \(EPMS\)](#), [HR-206D Non-Supervisory Position Description/Employee Performance Management System \(EPMS\)](#), [HR-206E Short Year Performance Appraisal/Review Form](#), [HR-206F EPMS Weighted Calculation Form](#), [HR-206G Managerial Position Description](#)