

**AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE
PROCEDURE**

Procedure Title:	EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EPMS)	Procedure Number: 3-3-115.1
Institutional Authority:	Vice President of Administrative Services	
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Approved:


President


Vice President of Administrative Services

Date

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Date

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DISCLAIMER

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 AGENCY.

These procedures are in accordance with the policies and procedures of the South Carolina State Office of Human Resources, for establishment and administration of the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS).

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Purpose

The primary purpose of the EPMS is to increase the overall efficiency of the agency by helping each employee to improve their 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 employees, unclassified non-teaching personnel (UNTP), excluding librarians, and the President, who occupy FTE positions, shall have their performance evaluated in accordance with the EPMS program.

C. Orientation and Training

Orientation on the Performance Management System for all employees of Aiken Technical College 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 Human Resource Management file. 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. An employee granted leave of absence without pay for more than thirty (30) consecutive work days shall have his or her established review date advanced in accordance with State Human Resource Regulations.

II. 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 firsthand 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 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, the employee 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 Office, 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.

III. REVIEWING OFFICER

The Reviewing Officer shall be the supervisor of the Rating Officer. The President may designate additional levels of concurrence. 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 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 completion of their initial twelve (12) month probationary period of State service. The probationary period may not be extended. The twelve month period will include only those months worked. 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.

B. Trial Period Appraisals

Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted, or reclassified shall be appraised prior to completion of a six (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 permanent 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 and performance deficiencies 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.

C. Regular (Annual) Performance Appraisal

All covered employees shall have a regular (annual) performance appraisal no more than ninety (90) calendar days prior to their established review 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 Resource Office at least twenty (20) calendar days prior to the employee's review date. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to their performance review date, the employee shall be rated "Satisfactory Performance" by default. Review dates for UNTP and institutional officers will generally be July 1.

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.**

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 IV); 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,” or “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/objective significantly impacting performance, the Rating Officer, 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 their 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 Rating Officer must develop a work improvement plan for approval by the Reviewing Officer. The Rating Officer 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 Rating Officer 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 acknowledgement and placed in the employee’s Human Resource Management file. If the employee refuses to sign, the Rating Officer should have an appropriate witness attest to such;
 - f. Include the proviso 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 the 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 Human Resource Management file and given to the employee upon request.
5. If the employee's performance is rated "Satisfactory Performance" or above on all essential job functions/objectives which significantly impact performance by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated "Below Performance Requirements," on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts 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 review date. If the warning notice is issued less than 30 days before the employee's review date, the review date would roll forward one day for each day the warning notice of substandard performance is in effect.
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 their 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 a new 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 objective 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 document is approved by the Rating Officer and Review Officer, the Rating Officer will meet with the employee to review the planning document. It shall be mandatory for all Rating Officers to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal.

Each employee will certify that they have reviewed the planning document. In those instances where the Rating Officer and employee cannot agree upon the items in the planning document, the Rating Officer's decision will be final. The employee may request a copy from the Rating Officer so that they 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 reflect 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 through 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 Rating Officer and employee cannot agree upon the job functions, the Rating Officer's decision will be final. It shall be mandatory for all Rating Officers to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal.

Generally, for the purpose of the performance appraisal, no job function should consist of less than ten percent (10%) of the employee's specific job duties on the position description. In most cases, items of less than ten percent (10%) can be evaluated together with other items. When Rating Officers are having difficulty developing job functions, they should consult their Human Resource Management Officer for assistance.

C. Objectives (Optional)

Objectives are those specific projects, programs, or other non-recurring issues that should be focused upon by the employee during the rating period. These projects, programs, or other non-recurring 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. If objectives are identified, success criteria must be developed for each objective. If used, objectives may be added or deleted during the rating period. Objectives should only be deleted if the objectives are no longer important or not a priority to the respective work area. 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. The 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 Characteristics, Management Characteristics for Supervisors and Managers have been developed. **The only required characteristic to be assigned and rated for supervisors and managers is "Promote Equal Opportunity".**

Selected management characteristics designed to evaluate supervisors and managers on their abilities to plan, organize, control, motivate, develop, promote equal opportunity (required), and complete planning documents and performance appraisals. (For definitions, see Addendum #2). All supervisors and managers will be rated on each management characteristic 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 determined and space is provided for the Rating Officer to include written comments.

Written comments are required to be made by the Rating Officer on any employee whose overall performance is either "Exceeds Performance Requirements" or "Below Performance Requirements". Written comments are encouraged, but not required for a "Satisfactory Performance" rating.

Written comments should address the employee's overall accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses related to the employee's performance over the rating period.

The Rating Officer is encouraged to provide comments recommending actions the employee should undertake to improve or maintain the employee's performance or potential.

A separate written response may be made by the employee to express an opinion (agreement or disagreement) regarding the performance appraisal.

ADDENDUM #1

GENERAL PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

This addendum provides supervisors and employees with a list of general performance characteristics and definitions if they are used in the process of defining or clarifying supervisory expectations.

FUNCTIONAL QUALITIES

1. Technical Competence – Possesses necessary knowledge and skill to effectively perform duties and applies this knowledge appropriately.
2. Self-Management – Works with minimal supervision, manages own time effectively, maintains control on all current projects/responsibilities and follows up on all relevant issues.
3. Job Knowledge – Possesses necessary familiarity with assigned position and follows appropriate procedures.
4. Quantity of Work – The extent to which the employee produces an amount of acceptable work in order to meet schedules over which the employee has control.
5. Quality of Work – The extent to which the employee neatly, thoroughly, and accurately completes job assignments according to established quality standards. Continuously improves quality of work.
6. Problem Analysis – Able to identify problems and relevant issues and breaks problems into components. Sees relationships and alternative solutions and arrives at sound conclusions through logical process.
7. Accuracy of Work – The degree to which the employee makes minimum mistakes or errors that require correction.
8. Time Management – Employee reports for work promptly and effectively and efficiently uses time to accomplish job tasks.
9. Safety – Follows established safety practices and corrects unsafe work practices.
10. Responsibility – Asks for work after completing assignments and does not make excuses but addresses problems squarely. Offers action plans to resolve problems.

11. Concentration – Able to put aside distractions and stays with a job until complete. Able to stick to assignments and gets results in spite of difficulties.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

12. Judgment – Reasons, compares, understands, and thinks rationally on the job. Makes quality work related decisions based on sound conclusions and separates facts from opinions.
13. Leadership – Reliable in guiding others to the accomplishment of objectives/responsibilities, development of teamwork, and the resolution of conflict/problems.
14. Initiative – Starts assignments without prompting and independently contributes ideas and projects. Sees and acts upon new opportunities. Thinks and acts independently and promptly addresses problems.
15. Dependability – Meets work schedules and fulfills job responsibilities and commitments. Consistently meets deadlines and follows instructions.

INTERPERSONAL QUALITIES

16. Acceptance – Gains confidence of others and earns respect of subordinates, peers, and superiors. Values diversity and respects opposing opinions.
17. Teamwork – Degree to which employee works effectively and cooperatively with others to achieve organizational goals. Degree of responsiveness to organizational needs.
18. Adaptability – Adapts to job or organizational changes. Readily accepts new responsibilities and assignments.
19. Communication Ability – Presents clear and accurate information (both verbally and written) to other employees, peers, and superiors.
20. Client Service – Effectively and efficiently meets the needs of those served by continually assessing performance based on customer feedback.
21. Listening Skills – Asks meaningful questions and listens closely and respectfully before offering comments.

ADDENDUM #2

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS FOR MANAGERS

This addendum provides a list of required additional performance characteristics (with definitions) for those persons in managerial and supervisory positions. These required additional managerial performance characteristics should be included on the planning document.

1. Planning and Organizing

Establishes a course of action for meeting an objective and allocates resources and personnel for best effect within budget limits. Develops schedules for activities and projects. Sets and observes priorities in order to avoid backlogged work. Effectively matches short term goals to contribute toward longer range plans.

2. Controlling

Monitors and facilitates employees' activities; establishes and maintains effective procedures to monitor and control activities within the employees' responsibilities; monitors the progress and results of delegated assignments and keeps informed of developments in area of responsibility.

3. Delegating

Allocates responsibilities to employees to help develop their career potential and uses staff members effectively by delegating decision making and other responsibilities to the appropriate employee(s). Provides clear instructions and leadership so delegated tasks are properly completed. Where appropriate, establishes and empowers teams to improve work systems and processes.

4. Motivating

Creates an organizational environment or climate in which employees can perform to the best of their abilities. Establishes employee motivation by giving employees timely and regular recognition and feedback for work performed, and insures that employees are aware of the possibility of advancement and growth while developing a sense of trust and responsibility.

5. Developing

Managers and supervisors should develop positive learning environments for both self and employees by identifying and providing continuing education and training opportunities to stay abreast of the current state of the art in one's field.

6. Promoting Equal Opportunity*

Assists in meeting agency affirmative action goals in hiring, promotion, or placement; demonstrates personal and organization unit commitment to equal opportunity; shows progress toward achieving an integrated/representative work force; and contributions toward minority/female programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.

7. Planning and Appraising Employee Performance

Managers and supervisors should administer EPMS program for subordinate employees on a timely basis.

*This characteristic is required for all supervisors and managers.

Procedure Review		
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07/01/2007		
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