



SENIOR-LEVEL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROGRAM

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Purpose

This chapter establishes the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the performance appraisal of senior-level (SL) federal employees (supervisors and non-supervisors).

The purpose of the SL performance appraisal program is to:

1. Ensure the activity of employees is aligned to the mission, goals, and performance metrics of the Smithsonian organization.
2. Promote a culture of continuous improvement.
3. Encourage employees to develop professionally.

Policy

The Smithsonian’s performance appraisal policy supports a results-oriented performance culture through the planning, communication, monitoring, and evaluation of employee performance as it relates to organizational performance.

This culture must begin with the leadership and cascade throughout the organization. Therefore, to ensure clear alignment of the organization’s goals from senior- to non-senior-level employees, SL performance

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appraisals must be implemented at the same time as the corresponding performance appraisals for non-senior-level employees (refer to Chapter 430, Smithsonian Directives 212 and 213). The Smithsonian's senior-level and non-senior-level performance appraisal policies both encompass principles and procedures that support the following goals:

1. Employee performance plans:
 - a) Align with the Smithsonian's mission and goals.
 - b) Hold employees responsible for results appropriate for their position.
 - c) Include credible, balanced, and fair performance standards.
 - d) Distinguish clearly between levels of performance.
2. Employee performance appraisals are used as a basis for identifying developmental needs, recognizing and rewarding top performers, and identifying and addressing deficiencies in performance.
3. Employees are involved in the development of their performance plans.
4. The performance appraisal process provides for formal and informal communication between employees and Rating Officials throughout the year.
5. Employees and Rating Officials receive regular and recurring training on the performance appraisal program.
6. Unit performance expectations are communicated through performance plans, and employee ratings reflect overall unit performance.

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7. Management exercises accountability and oversight for individual and organizational performance.

References: (a) Title 5, *United States Code* (U.S.C.), Chapter 43 (Performance Appraisal) and (b) Title 5, *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR): Part 430 (Performance Management).

Coverage

The provisions of this policy apply to all senior-level Smithsonian federal employees (supervisors and non-supervisors), unless specifically excluded.

Exclusions

The following federal senior-level employees are excluded from the provisions of this policy:

- Employees in SL positions for which employment in a pay status is not reasonably expected to exceed 120 calendar days in a consecutive 12-month period; and
 - SL federal employees on intermittent appointments.
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Definitions

A. **Acceptable**

The performance rating assigned when an employee meets or exceeds the minimum threshold of "Successful" performance.

B. **Advisory (Interim) Rating**

A rating an employee receives for work performed outside of the normal rating cycle or outside of his or her position of record for a period of 120 days or more. This is appropriate when a Rating Official leaves or an employee is placed on a detail. The advisory rating does not become part of the personnel file, but should be considered when the annual rating of record is prepared. This may also be called an interim rating.

C. **Appraisal**

The evaluation of an employee's performance against the described elements and standards.

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D. Appraisal Period (or Performance Period or Rating Period)

The period of time during which an employee's performance is reviewed and evaluated. The appraisal period is generally one year. The Smithsonian appraisal period begins October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year. All employees must be on a performance plan for a minimum of 120 calendar days to warrant an evaluation. The Rating Official of employees newly appointed or assigned to a position initiate a performance plan within 60 calendar days of their appointment or placement.

E. Element

A work task or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance would result in a summary performance rating of "Unacceptable." As such, all elements are by definition critical. Several performance standards typically comprise an element.

F. Levels of Accomplishment

The level of performance assigned to the summary rating, each element, and each standard in employee performance plans. The Smithsonian's performance appraisal program for SL employees and other employees both have four levels of accomplishment; one level of "Unacceptable" performance and three levels of acceptable performance (i.e., "Outstanding," "Highly Successful," and "Successful"). Each level is assigned a weight by this policy. The average weighting of all standards within an element becomes the rating for the element, and the average rating of the elements becomes the summary rating.

G. Performance Award

A one-time, lump-sum cash award based on the employee's performance, typically awarded at the end of the rating cycle.

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H. Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

A plan given to an employee that identifies performance deficiencies and describes the actions necessary to reach and sustain performance at the “Successful” level or above. If at any time during the performance cycle, it is determined that an employee’s performance is unacceptable for any element, a PIP must be prepared and communicated to the employee. The PIP must allow a minimum of 30 days for the employee to demonstrate acceptable performance. **(Note:** Rating Officials are not required to place employees who are serving an initial probationary period on a PIP. For further information, contact the Labor and Employee Relations Branch in the Office of Human Resources [OHR].)

I. Performance Plan

The document developed at the beginning of the appraisal period that defines the elements and standards by which an employee’s performance is appraised.

J. Performance Rating

The recorded summary appraisal of performance based on comparison of accomplishments to performance standards (expectations) for each element.

K. Progress Review

A structured meeting between the Rating Official and employee at which time the employee’s progress toward meeting the elements and standards in his or her performance plan is discussed. One progress review is required during the appraisal period. Optional progress reviews may also be useful. At least one progress review must occur in an In-Year Rating.

L. Rating Official

The person responsible for establishing elements and standards of an employee’s performance plan, discussing the plan with the employee, monitoring the employee’s progress toward meeting the standards in the performance plan, appraising the

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employee's performance, and determining tentative ratings and appropriate recognition or remedial actions. Normally, this is the employee's immediate supervisor.

M. Rating of Record

The summary performance rating and summary evaluation prepared at the end of the performance period. A rating of record cannot be considered for personnel actions until the evaluation has been discussed with the employee and the properly completed and signed appraisal has been recorded by OHR.

N. Reviewing Official

The person in an organization one level above the Rating Official responsible for reviewing and approving the employee plans and appraisals. Normally, this is the second-level supervisor.

O. Standard (or Performance Standard)

A threshold, requirement, or expectation that identifies the measures that will be used to evaluate performance. Standards reflect the primary duties that are described in the employee's position description and must meet or support Smithsonian and/or unit goals. Standards are usually components of a position where the consequence of error is significant, or there is an immediate impact on the achievement of organizational goals. Typically, several standards comprise an element. Performance standards must be outcome-oriented, objective, and clearly describe and communicate the results that must be achieved in order to meet the expectations. A performance plan should include the number of standards necessary to reflect all essential functions of an employee's position. Standards should be as objective, observable, quantitative, and measurable as possible, and should be items over which the employee has control or substantial influence. Measurable standards include quantity, quality, and timeliness but may also include observable or demonstrable competencies and behaviors. It is

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important to be as clear and unambiguous as possible when describing quality of work products or competency and behavioral goals.

P. Supervisor

An employee who spends 25 percent or more of his or her time in activities related to the supervision of employees or programs, or is deemed to have supervisory responsibilities by his or her supervisor.

Q. Unacceptable

The performance rating assigned when an employee fails to meet the minimum threshold of "Successful" performance. If one or more elements is rated "Unacceptable," then the Summary Rating must also be "Unacceptable." When the Summary Rating is "Unacceptable," the Rating Official must take corrective action by placing the employee on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Failure to improve performance to the acceptable level following the performance improvement period may result in reassignment, reduction in grade, or removal.

Responsibilities

A. The Secretary, Under Secretaries, and other direct reports to the Secretary are responsible for defining the Smithsonian's mission and strategic plan by identifying organizational goals and leading or directing senior-level leadership and staff to fulfill these goals. They are responsible for achieving this challenge assisted by a meaningful performance appraisal program that consistently and equitably recognizes and rewards performance or addresses remedial personnel actions as necessary.

B. The Chief of Staff to the Secretary, in conjunction with the Secretary, is responsible for aligning the Smithsonian's strategic goals with the annual organizational performance goals. The Chief of Staff to the Secretary is further responsible for communicating the final annual results to senior management to ensure that they consider organizational performance in the development of

Responsibilities
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performance plans and the assessment of individual performance, where appropriate.

- C. Unit directors are responsible for ensuring that all employees in their organization covered by this program receive performance plans and appraisals within the time frames specified in this policy, and that performance plans, appraisals, and recommendations for recognition are completed in a fair and equitable manner.

Unit directors will hold subordinate supervisors and Rating Officials with performance appraisal responsibilities accountable for standards for leadership and supervisory responsibilities, will require that performance appraisal training will be completed by all employees in their unit, and will lead by example.

- D. Reviewing Officials approve performance plans prior to their transmittal to employees, approve performance ratings prior to their transmittal to employees, approve award nominations for employee performance, and evaluate Rating Officials on their responsibilities for managing the performance expectations and accomplishments of the employees under their supervision.
- E. Rating Officials are responsible for developing performance plans, communicating expectations to employees, coaching, monitoring employee progress, and evaluating performance. Rating Officials recommend ratings of record and appropriate rewards or remedial actions.
- F. OHR is responsible for: (1) providing advice, guidance, and training on the interpretation and application of this policy; (2) conducting regular reviews and revisions to the policy; (3) monitoring and evaluating the application and effectiveness of the performance appraisal program; (4) managing the Performance Review Board process; (5) keeping Smithsonian management informed of unit compliance with performance appraisal

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requirements; (6) recording and filing official ratings of record in the payroll personnel database and the Official Personnel Folder (OPF); and (7) providing guidance to Rating and Reviewing Officials when employees perform at an “Unacceptable” level.

- G. Employees are responsible for striving to meet performance expectations to the best of their ability and for making their Rating Official aware of their training needs and other issues that affect the performance of their assignments and responsibilities.

Performance
Appraisal Process

The performance appraisal process at the Smithsonian includes the following components: Performance Planning, Performance Monitoring, and Performance Appraisal.

- A. **PERFORMANCE PLANNING:** Employees must work with their supervisors to initiate a performance plan no later than 60 days after the beginning of the rating period or within 60 days of initial employment or placement in a position. Performance plans are recorded on the Performance Plan and Appraisal Form. Employees must be given the opportunity to participate in the development of their individual performance plans. In the case of senior-level employees, the standards and associated targets of these performance plans must reflect the annual organizational performance planning process. The Office of Human Resources will issue plan formats annually and also post those formats on the executive resources section of the OHR website.

At least 60 percent of standards must have quantitative targets, and at least 60 percent are to be defined by the Rating Official at “Outstanding” and “Successful” levels in the planning process. The “Outstanding” performance level description will enable employees and Rating Officials to clearly understand the type and quality of performance required for rating at this unusual level.

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Guidance: While management has the right to make the final determination on the work assignment and the performance expectations, it is important to consider employee input so that standards are as meaningful and clear as possible. The Rating Official may promote participation by encouraging the employee to draft the performance plan and then discussing the performance plan with the employee. Employee and supervisor discussion and finalizing of performance plans should be in conjunction with the performance evaluation interview.

Senior-level performance appraisals must be informed but not wholly determined by the annual organizational assessment process. Since senior-level performance plans must track annual changes in the Smithsonian's organizational goals and targets, it is important that the Rating Official and employee discuss the goals and any changes for the new performance year, and document the discussion and any changes on the performance plan and appraisal form. At the end-of-the-year communication about the employee's rating, the Rating Official should discuss with the senior-level employee the planning portion of the upcoming year's appraisal.

1. **Performance Plans.** Senior-level performance plans have two to four elements, depending on whether or not the employee is a supervisor and involved in research. Each element will align with at least one strategic goal of the Smithsonian Institution. A detailed description of each element follows:
 - a) **Element 1 — MISSION: Increase and Diffuse Knowledge.** Standards should detail performance in the increase and/or the diffusion of knowledge. This element applies to senior-level employees who are responsible for contributions toward either one or both of these components of element 1: Increase Knowledge and Diffuse Knowledge. Components may be listed separately, or combined, and employees are

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only responsible for meeting the standards that, in the opinion of the Rating Official, relate to the employee's position.

(1) **Component 1: Increase Knowledge:**

Applies to senior-level employees whose position involves scholarly research. Standards for assessing the quality of research will be developed by the Rating Official in consultation with the employee. Such standards may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Research scope, complexity, and originality;
- (b) Impact of research on field of inquiry or on internal and external stakeholders;
- (c) Recognition of the work among peers in the profession; or
- (d) Professional Accomplishments Evaluation Committee (PAEC) if the employee's unit participates in this process and the Rating Official believes it contains information relevant to the current year's performance;
- (e) Stewardship of collections;
- (f) Demonstrated adherence to research ethical standards and procedures

(2) **Component 2: Diffuse Knowledge:**

Applies to senior-level employees whose position involves the diffusion of scholarly information. Standards for assessing the diffusion of research will be developed by the Rating Official in consultation with the employee. Such standards may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Development or presentation of articles, books, speeches, catalogues, websites, computer-based products or other similar written descriptions of

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- research and analysis for consumption by the public;
- (b) Development of or participation in public educational materials or outreach programming;
- (c) Development of exhibits and related text and supporting materials;
- (d) Academic instruction;
- (e) Service to the professional community, including mentoring.

b) **Element 2 — MISSION LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT: Professional Competency.**

Applies to employees in senior-level professional, management, or administrative positions who are not primarily involved in scholarly activities and whose work enables the Smithsonian's mission. Standards will be determined by the employee's individual responsibilities but could include standards that address the following types of skills:

- (1) Strategic Planning
- (2) Program Management
- (3) Business Acumen
- (4) Revenue and Fund Generation
- (5) Management of Resources (e.g., human, financial, facilities, technology, collections)
- (6) Service to the Professional Community, including Mentoring

- c) **Element 3 — Smithsonian Values and Supervision:** The Smithsonian expects senior-level employees to conduct their work in a manner that is compatible with the Institution's status as a public trust, and complies with applicable Smithsonian policies, rules, and professional standards. The following standards must be referenced in every senior-level performance plan in a manner that reflects the employee's role in upholding these values. OHR will provide the mandatory language for this element when issuing the annual format to units and will

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place this format on the executive resources section of the OHR website.

- (1) Integrity and Ethics (e.g., demonstrates respectful conduct, collaborates effectively with others, exhibits prudent use or management of financial and other resources, including appropriate use of internal controls).
- (2) Diversity (e.g., treats everyone with respect; embraces diverse opinions, reaches diverse audiences or involves a diverse array of individuals in job-related activities, demonstrates leadership for equal employment opportunity [EEO] and supplier diversity).
- (3) Adherence to Safety Policies (e.g., conducts activities in a manner designed to avoid harm to individuals, buildings, or collections in adherence with established security and safety policies).
- (4) Supervisory Function. If an employee spends 25 percent or more of his or her time in activities related to the supervision of employees or programs, *or* is deemed to have supervisory responsibilities by his or her supervisor, then standards addressing the following competencies should apply:
 - (a) Communications, Public Outreach, Political Savvy
 - (b) Leading People, Influencing and Negotiating
 - (c) Pan-Institutional Teamwork and Building Coalitions
 - (d) Leading Change, Vision, Resourcefulness, Creativity and Innovation
 - (e) Results Driven

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(f) Customer and Subordinate Feedback (to the extent there is information from the Smithsonian's annual all-employee survey that deals with the part of the Smithsonian managed by the supervisor, then information from that survey should be included in standards for this element).

(5) Performance of Subordinate Employees (is accountable for defining and documenting expectations, developing, coaching, appraising, and rewarding subordinates)

(6) Recruiting, hiring, and transitioning new employees (improve efforts to find best available talent, shorten length of time for filling vacancies, retain employees who possess needed skills and experience, and measure success of efforts)

d) **ELEMENT 4 — ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES:** Element 4 addresses the annual organizational priorities of the Secretary, Under Secretary, and unit director that do not fit more appropriately into any of the other elements. Items addressed within this element tend to be shorter duration tasks or projects than the longer term activities more typically addressed in the Smithsonian strategic plan. The standards for this element may change on an annual basis depending on what needs to be emphasized in a particular year. Standards for this element may be communicated in the Secretary's annual communication on the organization's priorities, or in OHR's annual announcement of the performance planning process.

2. **Communication of Elements and Standards:** Individual performance plans should be finalized, communicated, and issued to the employee by Rating Officials within 60 days from the

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beginning of the performance period or assignment to the position. Rating Officials should give employees the opportunity and sufficient time to review the plan and provide comments or discuss their views with the Rating Official. The Rating Official should consider the employee's comments before finalizing the elements and standards.

The final performance plan must be reviewed and signed by both the Rating and Reviewing Official *before* it is discussed with the employee. Once signed, the Rating Official must discuss the plan and expectations with the employee. The plan is not effective and in place until it has been discussed with the employee and signed. If an employee chooses not to sign a performance plan, the Rating Official should note on the plan that the employee chose not to sign and a brief explanation of why, if applicable. The plan is then considered to be final, effective, and in place. The employee may attach comments to the final written elements and standards.

3. **Changes in Standards:** Performance plans may be changed at any time. If it is necessary to do so, it must occur at least 120 days before the employee can be rated. Substantial changes that are made during the appraisal period must be recorded and discussed with the employee, both orally and in writing, as soon as possible.

Guidance: Changes in duties, organizational priorities, or available resources may necessitate changes in performance plans. If there are substantial changes in the employee's performance plan during the performance year, it is important that the Rating Official discuss these changes with the employee and note the changes in the employee's performance plan.

- B. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING:** At the close of the rating cycle, senior-level employee performance is assessed against the elements and standards in the performance plan after reviewing relevant

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sections of the Smithsonian's Organizational Assessment resulting from the end-of-year external reporting on the achievements of the Institution. The assessment of a senior-level employee's performance should follow that employee's assessment of the performance of any subordinates of the senior-level employee.

1. In-Year Review: Employee performance must be monitored throughout the appraisal period. As part of the performance monitoring process, employees must receive at least one progress review during the performance appraisal period. Typically, in an annual rating cycle, the review is done between the fourth and eighth month in the performance year. If the employee has been on a performance plan for less than a year but more than 120 days, the Rating Official must hold a progress review with the employee at the mid-point of the employee's rating period. During the review, Rating Officials should provide a specific assessment of the employee's performance on each element in the employee's plan.
2. Employees should sign and date the Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal Form, SI-5000A, acknowledging the progress review and discussion.

Guidance: Progress reviews provide for structured communication between the Rating Officials and employees about performance progress. The purpose of the In-Year review is to assess the employee's progress toward achieving performance objectives and meeting performance requirements; to identify new or previously unnoticed problems affecting the employee's performance and developing ways to resolve them; and to make necessary adjustments in the elements and standards. Preparing for and scheduling the review meeting are essential to its success. In advance of the In-Year review, the Rating Official should review the elements and standards and relevant documents to share with the employee.

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3. **Documenting Declining Performance:** If at any time during the rating cycle an employee's performance on any element is in danger of becoming "Unacceptable," the Rating Official must take remedial actions to assist the employee in improving his or her performance. The concerns should be discussed between the Rating Official and employee. The Rating Official should also contact the OHR for guidance.

Guidance: In-Year reviews and/or communications regarding deficient performance should not be the only occasion when or on which the Rating Official and employee discuss the employee's performance. Informal progress reviews can occur more often. The objective is to maintain an open line of communication between the employee and the Rating Official so that information about performance expectations and the employee's progress is frequently shared and discussed.

C. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL:

1. **Length of Performance Appraisal Period:** Employees must be on a performance plan for a minimum of 120 days before their performance can be rated. If circumstances warrant, the performance period may be extended to meet the 120-day requirement.
2. **Schedule for Evaluating Performance:** Senior-level employee performance must be appraised and the evaluation completed within 60 days following the end of the performance appraisal period. The senior-level employee to be appraised must first have appraised any subordinates, and the Rating Official for a senior-level employee must also have had an opportunity to review the annual Organizational Assessment.
3. **Ratings of Record Outside the Normal Schedule:** On occasion, a rating or record must be prepared at times other than at the end of the

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performance appraisal period. Circumstances appropriate for ratings outside of the regular cycle include:

- a) When an employee leaves his or her position before the end of the performance appraisal period and has been on a performance plan for at least 120 days.
- b) When an employee has been placed on a written PIP as a result of unacceptable performance and has completed the opportunity period to improve his or her performance. If the employee's performance is rated "Successful" or above, the improved rating becomes the official rating of record. If the performance remains unacceptable, that rating is used to take appropriate action against the employee. Appropriate actions may be reassignment, reduction in grade, or removal from employment.

4. **Advisory Ratings:** In addition to the scheduled annual rating of record, it may be necessary to complete an advisory rating for an employee. Advisory ratings must be considered by the Rating and Reviewing Officials when preparing a rating of record at the end of the performance appraisal period.

The circumstances appropriate for an advisory rating include:

- a) When an employee is **detailed or temporarily promoted**, either within or outside of his or her unit, an advisory rating is required upon conclusion of an employee's temporary assignment of 120 days or more.

This advisory rating is made by the Rating Official to whom the detailed or temporarily promoted employee reported, and will be shared with the employee's supervisor of

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record. The supervisor of record considers the advisory rating as part of the official rating of record at the end of the rating period.

- b) When the **employee transfers to another agency or moves to another position within the Smithsonian** during the performance appraisal period, the Rating Official should complete an advisory rating for the employee if the employee has been on the performance plan for at least 120 days. The advisory rating should be shared with the employee's new supervisor for consideration at the close of the Smithsonian's rating cycle.
- c) When the **Rating Official leaves his or her own position** during the performance appraisal period, the departing Rating Official should prepare an advisory rating for the employees who have been on performance plans for at least 120 days. These interim or advisory ratings are considered when the employee's annual rating of record is completed by the new Rating Official.

Guidance: In some instances, input for a rating of record will be required prior to the conclusion of the detail or temporary promotion. In order to provide appropriate consideration of all performance during the appraisal period, it may be necessary for the temporary Rating Official to prepare an advisory rating prior to the conclusion of the temporary assignment if the employee has completed at least 120 days in the assignment.

5. Assigning Ratings:

- a) **Standard Rating:** Each standard is rated according to the same four-level regime applied to elements and the summary rating. Employees should be given the opportunity to provide material to support their performance, such as work examples or lists

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of accomplishments they achieved during the rating year, for the Rating Official's consideration. The employee's actual performance during the rating period is compared to the specified rating level(s) for each standard, and the appropriate level is assigned to each standard.

- b) **Element Rating:** Each element is rated according to the same four-level regime applied to standards and the summary rating. While all standards within an element should normally be weighed equally, the Rating Official has the ability to apply different weights, but the rationale for doing so must be explained in the performance appraisal document. The average rating of the standards, reflecting any special weighting among the standards, constitutes the rating level of the element.
- c) **Summary Rating:** The summary rating is the weighted average of the ratings of the elements. The Rating Official has the ability to apply appropriate weights, but the rationale for doing so must be explained in the performance plan document at the beginning of the performance cycle. For each employee, the Values component of Element 3 can be weighted no less than 20 percent of the overall Final Summary Rating.
- d) **Exceptions on Including Element Ratings:** A Rating Official is allowed to not rate an element if an employee did not perform in that element. For instance, if an employee's position description of record states that the employee is a supervisor, but during the particular year the employee did not complete supervisory responsibilities because of being assigned to a special project, then in this instance, a Rating Official is allowed to make that component of the

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element “Not Applicable.” If a standard, element component, or an element is made “Not Applicable,” it will not factor into the summary rating for that employee and the formula to find the average element rating will be adjusted appropriately.

6. Rating Levels and Assigned Weights Are as Follows:

- a) **Outstanding Level** (3 points) — Performance dramatically exceeds expectations. Performance standards are consistently surpassed and completed in advance of time frames. Due to the individual’s leadership, initiative, and/or creativity, accomplishments consistently extend beyond expected outcomes and results to such extent that they have a direct and significant impact on enabling the Smithsonian to exceed its organizational performance metrics and goals, and establish new directions, priorities, or work processes. In any given year, a relatively few Smithsonian senior-level employees are expected to receive this unusually high rating because of their exceptional accomplishments.
- b) **Highly Successful Level** (2 points) — Performance frequently exceeds expectations. Tasks and accomplishments often exceed expectations in terms of quality and are often completed in advance of time frames. Due to the individual’s initiative and foresight, accomplishments regularly extend beyond the described performance standards or assignment and enable the Smithsonian to exceed some of its organizational performance metrics.
- c) **Successful Level** (1 point) — Performance meets expectations. Tasks and accomplishments are completed in a high-

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quality and timely manner reflecting considerable skill. Time frames are met or occasionally exceeded. Accomplishments directly contribute to meeting organizational goals.

- d) **Unacceptable Level** (0 points) —
Performance does not meet expectations.

The elements will be weighted based upon the number of elements required of a particular employee, as depicted in the table below. Since not all employees will be responsible for every element, the weightings for each element will vary. Each of the two components of Element 1 will be evaluated separately and each component will be given equal weight. If an employee is only responsible for one component, then the results for that component will comprise the results for the element as a whole. Ratings Officials, in consultation with the employee, may adjust the weights for each element during the performance planning stage but in all cases the Values component of Element 3, Smithsonian Values and Supervision, shall be weighted so that it represents at least 20 percent of the overall summary rating.

Guidance: When rating senior-level employees, particularly when rating supervisors, Ratings Officials should consider the performance of the senior-level employee's unit as a whole. If the unit exceeded its goals, then that may help justify a rating above the "Successful" level for the senior-level employee on the standards relating to these goals. On the other hand, if a unit does not meet its goals in one or more area(s) related to a goal, the burden of proof would be borne by the Rating Official to justify rating an element above the "Successful" level for the senior-level employee.

7. **Summary Rating:** After each element is rated, a numerical summary is derived by calculating the weighted average of the scores of the elements.

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The final numerical weighted average is matched to the corresponding rating in the Summary Conversion Table. This becomes the employee's performance rating for the appraisal period. However, if any element is rated at "Unacceptable," then the employee's summary rating must be "Unacceptable" regardless of the ratings on other individual elements and their numeric average.

Summary Conversion Table

3.0 – 2.6 = Outstanding
2.5 – 1.6 = Highly Successful
1.5 – 1.0 = Successful

Guidance: Below is an example of determining a summary rating. A non-supervisory senior-level employee has a performance plan with the three (3) specified elements and receives the following individual ratings:

- *Element 1 — Successful (1 point) weight: 70 percent*
- *Element 3 — Highly Successful (2 points) weight: 20 percent*
- *Element 4 — Outstanding (3 points) weight: 10 percent*

The total weighted average numeric score is 1.4: (1X.7) + (2X.2) + (3X.1) = 1.4. The summary rating is therefore "Successful" because, based on the Summary Conversion Table, 1.4 falls within the range for a rating of "Successful."

As part of the performance summary, Rating Officials are encouraged to include constructive suggestions or strategies to assist the employee in enhancing current performance or reaching new goals. This can include identifying goals for individual development or milestones for potential career growth.

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8. Communicating the Rating of Record:

- a) Ratings of record must be completed by the employee's Rating Official, and approved and signed by the Reviewing Official. Rating Officials must take care to inform employees that their summary rating is not official until the Reviewing Official has approved the appraisal.
- b) The Rating Official will discuss the rating of record with the employee, going over each element individually. At the employee's request, documentation used to support the rating will be made available.
- c) The employee will be requested to sign the appraisal form. The employee's signature indicates only that he or she has seen the performance rating and was given the opportunity to discuss the appraisal with the Rating Official. The date that the rating of record is communicated to the employee is the date of the issuance of the rating.

Guidance: Performance ratings are valid even when the employee refuses to sign the form. When applicable, the Rating Official should indicate in writing that the employee declined to sign the Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal Form. Supporting documentation, notes, or written comments not included on the performance appraisal form but used as part of the performance interview are usually not appropriate for filing with the performance rating record. If the employee requests that the Rating Official's written communication(s) be included as part of the employee rating of record, the Rating Official should agree; the employee should indicate his or her wishes on the document to be inserted. Likewise, written comments from the employee may also be attached at the employee's request.

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- d) The employee may comment on the performance rating, and written comments may be attached and filed with the Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal Form. Upon completion of the performance evaluation, the employee will receive a copy of the completed performance appraisal with all signatures.
- e) The original signed performance appraisal is to be forwarded to the OHR for recording and filing in the employee's OPF. Performance evaluations cannot be used as official ratings of record to support personnel actions until copies are received in the OHR. The OHR prepares regular reports and analyses on the completion and distribution of ratings throughout the Institution.
- f) Rating Supervisory Positions: As previously stated, supervisors receive their ratings after they have completed their subordinate staff ratings. Supervisors who do not complete the evaluation of their employees within 60 days following the close of the performance cycle may not themselves receive a rating of "Highly Successful" or above in the supervisory component of Element three.

**Impact
of Performance
Ratings**

Performance ratings are taken into consideration or are required for various personnel actions. Among these actions are:

1. A cash award based on performance requires that the most recent rating of record be "Highly Successful" or "Outstanding;" and
2. An employee's retention status during a Reduction in Force (RIF) is determined in part by the employee's past performance ratings.

**Record-keeping
Requirements**

OHR will retain and manage the official performance plans and appraisals and other performance-related

**Record-keeping
Requirements**
(continued)

records in accordance with the established record-keeping requirements and the applicable records inventory and disposition schedules.

CANCELLATION:
INQUIRIES:
RETENTION:

Not Applicable.
Office of Human Resources (OHR).
Indefinite. Subject to review for currency 24 months from date of issue.