

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20502

Dear Sir -

7/19/2010

We recently learned that
this document was sent to
the wrong address in error.

We apologize for this inconvenience.

Thank you.

David Hodge.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20502

October 20, 2009

Mr. John Greenewald, Jr.
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

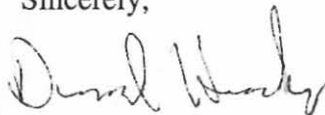
Re: 09-29 FOIA

Dear Mr. Greenewald,

On October 20, 2009, you sent to the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) a request under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, requesting the Executive Office of the President Employee Manual or Handbook or, if such a document does not exist, the closest entitled publication that may exist that is given to employees. OSTP received your request on October 20, 2009.

OSTP conducted a search of its records and is providing the attached document, which is responsive to your request. If you consider this to be an inappropriate denial of your request, you may appeal in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter to Acting General Counsel Rachael Leonard at ostpfoia@ostp.eop.gov or via FAX at (202) 395-1224. The email should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

Sincerely,



Dave Hodge

Executive Office of the President



Office of Science and Technology Policy

Performance Management Guide

Rev. March 2008

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Office of Science and Technology Policy Performance Management Guide

Purpose:

This document provides information to Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) staff on the performance management system. It defines the parameters for the application of performance standards and also for the completion of performance appraisals. In addition, the document outlines agency policy on within-grade and quality step increases, and individual and group recognition.

OSTP Policy:

Performance management in the Office of Science and Technology Policy is aimed at improving individual and organizational effectiveness by relating pay and recognition to individual and organizational performance. Performance ratings are the end result of identifying and communicating goals and objectives formulated in job elements and standards, and evaluating individual and organizational performance relative to those goals and objectives. The performance management and recognition processes described in this document are used by each supervisor in managing the organization and directing his/her staff. Ratings and awards are granted commensurate with an individual's performance and achievements in order to reward performance and to help motivate individuals toward increased productivity, creativity, and support for agency values. In addition, these processes also enhance agency and national goals, and obtain maximum benefit for the government.

The OSTP performance management system is designed to provide a systematic means to evaluate, reward and, when appropriate, improve OSTP employee performance over the course of each annual performance review period. The performance system explained in this manual does not supersede or substitute for other disciplinary actions available to the office and to supervisors in cases of misconduct, such as Adverse Actions under Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 75 and associated regulations.

Definitions:

- **Performance Management System:** An organizational performance management system that includes performance plans, performance goals, measurement systems and performance assessment. The system is the set of processes, policies, and operating procedures which identify, measure, evaluate, and document job performance.
- **Job Elements:** Duties or responsibilities that contribute to accomplishing OSTP's goals and objectives. These include:
 - **Critical Elements:** There should be three to seven critical elements in a performance plan and the element must address individual performance and cannot measure performance as a group. All supervisors must have a critical element covering supervisory responsibilities to include requiring supervisors to promote, value and demonstrate respect for diversity in the workplace.

- **Non-Critical Elements:** These include, but are not limited to objectives, goals, program plans, work plans and other means of expressing expected performance. A non-critical element can be used to assign a rating level for individual, team or organizational performance that is exclusive of a critical element.
- **Performance Standards:** The written benchmarks against which performance is evaluated and given a rating level.
- **Acceptable Level of Competence:** Performance by an employee of the duties and responsibilities of his /her assigned position at or above the "meets expectations " level in all critical elements, which warrants advancement of the employee's rate of basic pay to the next step of the General Schedule (GS) grade of his /her position.
- **Less Than Fully Successful Performance:** Performance of an employee that fails to meet established performance standards in one or more critical elements of the employee's performance plan.
- **Waiting Period:** The minimum time required for an employee to become eligible for consideration for a within-grade increase.
- **Within Grade Increase/Quality Step Increase:** An increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade of his/her position to the next step of that grade. This is granted when the employee has met both the waiting period and the level of competence requirements.
- **Award:** Something bestowed or an action taken to recognize and reward individual or team achievement that contributes to meeting organizational goals, or improving the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the government, or is otherwise in the public interest.
- **Rating of Record:** The overall summary rating provided at the end of the rating cycle specified in the performance management plan (July 1 through June 30 of the following year) or at other times warranted by special circumstances (e.g., a supervisor may elect to complete a rating on an employee who transfers during the cycle to another federal agency, or an employee may qualify for a grade raise or within grade increase "mid-cycle").
- **Progress Review:** A review held for each individual at least once during the appraisal period (at least one such review is required at mid-year). The review consists of a review of progress toward achieving the performance standards and is not a rating in itself.
- **Out of Cycle Rating:** An out of cycle rating of record needed for special circumstances (including, but not limited to, an employee's departure or when his/her performance is other than "meets expectations").
- **Rating Official:** The official to whom an employee reports on a daily basis and who gives the employee his/her performance rating.
- **Reviewing Official:** The official who reviews the ratings of the supervisor, usually the next

level supervisor in the direct line of supervision.

- **Training:** Adequate training for supervisors and employees to promote effective job performance and best management practices is imperative. Training requirements may be fulfilled through attendance at centrally funded training as well as through courses funded through the Agency training budget.
- **Negative Written Notification:** A negative written notification can be an email or memo detailing events that occurred surrounding poor performance, and can come in several forms.
 - 1) A senior staff member can generate a negative written notification to an employee's supervisor by drafting the email and/or memo on first hand knowledge or by having it brought to his/her attention by a subordinate. At this point, it is at the discretion of the senior staff member to generate a negative written notification to the appropriate supervisor who will then brief the reviewer of record (usually the employee's second line supervisor).
 - 2) An outside agency/institution can generate a negative written notification detailing the events that led to the negative notification being sent. At this point, it is at the discretion of the senior staff member that receives this notification to generate a negative written notification to the appropriate supervisor who will then brief the reviewer of record (usually the employee's second line supervisor).
 - 3) A member of the public may submit a complaint concerning an employee to the employee's supervisor, or to any OSTP staff member who shall refer the complaint to the employee's supervisor.

Records of Employee Performance:

- **Employee Performance File:**

The employee's official performance file is maintained by the Office of Administration/Human Resources Division (OA/HR) and contains ratings of record and performance plans covering five (5) rating periods. In addition, the next rating period performance plan is contained in the Employee Performance File.

- **Program Evaluation:**

The OSTP performance management system and employee recognition process will be evaluated at least biennially in order to monitor its effectiveness in meeting the stated purposes. Any adjustments and improvements will be initiated as appropriate. OSTP will use a variety of evaluation methods including but not limited to a review of other agency plans, staff surveys, etc. A report of the evaluation will be provided to the OSTP Chief of Staff and Director.

Performance Appraisal:

- **Coverage and Exclusion:**

- **Coverage:** The performance management and employee recognition programs apply to all OSTP employees appointed under Title 3 U.S.C. section 107(b)(2) (e.g. all General Schedule employees hired in accordance with section 3101 of Title 5 U.S.C.)
- **Exclusions:** The performance management and employee recognition programs do not apply to OSTP employees hired under Title 3 U.S.C. section 107(b)(1) (e.g. Schedule C employees, experts and consultants). Nor do these programs apply to any employee for which employment is not reasonably expected to exceed 120 consecutive days.
- **Requirements:**
 - **Written Appraisals:** A written performance appraisal will be provided to employees for discussion at the annual appraisal meeting. The meeting should include a discussion of the employee's overall achievements with respect to each performance element, as well as the determination of the summary rating.
 - **Required Signatures:** Both the rating official and the employee will sign the performance appraisal. The employee's signature indicates the appraisal was received and does not denote employee agreement with the appraisal. The signature of the reviewing official should also be obtained by rating official prior to discussion of the final rating with the employee.
 - **Employee Comments:**
 - Recognizing that there may be differences of opinion between employees and rating officials on performance assessments and ratings, employees may respond to performance ratings and request reconsideration. Employee comments become a part of the official appraisal reconsideration.
 - Employees wishing to add such written comments shall have five (5) working days from the date of the issuance of the appraisal.
 - Employee comments must be reviewed by the rating and reviewing officials to determine whether these comments warrant any changes in the narrative, element, or summary ratings to be submitted for the record.
- **Appeal Rights:**
Employees being reduced in grade or removed based on performance have appropriate appeal rights to the Merit Systems Protection Board.
- **EEO Complaint Process:**
If an employee believes that there was discrimination in the performance appraisal process, he/she may pursue an EEO complaint of discrimination based on race, gender, age (40 and over), color, national origin, disability status, religion, or reprisal for engaging in any EEO protected activity.

The employee must first seek EEO counseling within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory event, prior to filing a formal complaint.

- **Authority for Establishing Plans:**

Although employees are encouraged to work with the supervisor in the development of the performance plan, final authority for establishing performance plans rests with the supervising official.

- **Communicating Elements and Standards:**

Job elements and performance standards should be communicated on or before the beginning of the appraisal period.

- **Written Elements and Standards:**

Written job elements and performance standards should be provided to the employee within the first 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period.

- **Basis for Standards:**

Standards are based on the requirements of the position. If substantive changes are made to job elements and performance standards, the changes are effective when presented in writing to the employee.

- **Basis for Rating:**

Ratings are based on a comparison of performance with the standards established for the appraisal period. The "summary rating" is based on the ratings of individual elements.

- **Organizational Objectives:**

Accomplishment of organizational objectives will be included in performance plans, by incorporating objectives, goals, program/work plans and other measures related to program results.

Appraisal Period

- **Annual Appraisal:**

Generally, all employees who have been in their positions for 90 days or more under a written performance plan should receive a written appraisal of performance at the end of the appraisal period. Rating officials must have been in the supervisory chain of the employees they are appraising for at least 90 days.

- **Annual Appraisal Input:**

Supervisors of record at the end of the annual appraisal cycle should solicit performance input from former supervisors for those employees who have changed positions during the appraisal cycle.

Determining Summary Ratings:

- **Narrative Evaluations:**

Written evaluations are necessary for all job element ratings that are above or below "meets expectations." Such evaluations are required for all employees who have been in their positions for 90 days or more under a written performance plan. If other than "meets expectations," the written evaluation should be of sufficient detail to explain why a particular rating was given.

- **Element Ratings:**

Employees will be rated on each element using the rating levels previously defined.

- **Summary Ratings:**

Summary ratings are determined based on a review of all of the element ratings.

- **Superior:**

To receive a summary rating of "Superior", the average of ratings for all critical elements must be 4.7 or higher

- **Exceeds Expectations:**

To receive a summary rating of "Exceeds Expectations", the average of ratings for all critical elements must be 3.8 – 4.69.

- **Meets Expectations:**

To receive a summary rating of "Meets Expectations", the average of ratings for all critical elements must be 3.0 – 3.79.

- **Needs Improvement:**

To receive a summary rating of "Needs Improvement," the average of ratings for all critical elements must be 2.0 – 2.99

- **Unacceptable:**

If any critical element is rated "Unacceptable", the employee's summary rating must be "Unacceptable". Non-critical elements that are rated "Unacceptable" may or may not result in a rating of "Unacceptable."

Supervisors and managers shall monitor performance and provide assistance, where needed, before the level of performance falls below the "Meets Expectations" level and shall continue to provide assistance if performance is rated below "Meets Expectations". Such assistance may include, but is not limited to, formal training, on-the-job training, counseling and/or closer supervision.

Agency Values:

- **Institutional Values:**

OSTP staff is expected to perform consistent with OSTP values, and OSTP managers should use

performance elements and standards to institutionalize these values. Agency values include, but are not limited to: quality work, productivity, timeliness, customer service (internal and external to OSTP), flexibility, adaptability, teamwork (all OSTP and EOP staff and, as required, external agencies), security awareness, ethical conduct, and commitment to EEO and diversity practices and principles in all aspects of the work environment. Employee work that is consistent with agency values should be constantly reinforced, promoted, and rewarded. OSTP staff should, where applicable, be encouraged to take training courses or seminars that can aid them in the performance of their current duties.

- **Exhibiting Agency Values:**

Supervisors and managers should foster the following employee values through training (where appropriate), and feedback and iteration with staff (where appropriate) of performance elements and standards and award criteria.

- **Quality Work:**

Performs work that meets or exceeds the agreed-upon standards. Properly follows or implements applicable procedures, guidelines, regulations, or technical requirements.

- **Productivity:**

Produces a high quality and quantity of products and/or services with the desired effect, impact, or outcome.

- **Timeliness:**

Completes work projects, duties and tasks in a timely manner.

- **Customer Service:**

Contributes in a manner that emphasizes customer focus and quality service. Maintains positive relationships with customers and provides service that meets or exceeds customer expectations. Assists customers in a helpful and courteous manner. Interactions (face-to-face, telephonic and written) with customers, team members and others are positive and present a favorable image of the office/agency. Identifies and demonstrates knowledge of internal and external customer needs, requirements and expectations. Energetically responds to customer deadlines. Continually looks for opportunities to improve customer service. Performs proactively.

- **Flexibility/Adaptability:**

Picks up new ideas and procedures quickly, is easy to instruct, can adapt to the demands of new situations, and understands and carries out oral or written instructions. When appropriate, shifts readily to other tasks or assignments, transferring and applying skills and knowledge of changes in the job. Able to appropriately judge and balance competing priorities. Open to the views and feedback of others.

- **Teamwork:**

Demonstrates good judgment in dealing with others. Builds effective work relationships with both internal and external customers. Contributes, both within own work team and across functions. Helps the team be successful in meeting its goals by accepting team tasks. Takes initiative to assure that needed work gets done. Remains sensitive to the behavior of fellow workers, supervisors, and subordinates; maintains effective working relationships.

- **Security:**
Protects and safeguards sensitive and classified information at all times.
- **Ethical Conduct:**
Complies with the Standards of Official Conduct for Federal Employees, and other applicable laws and regulations. Seeks guidance from the Agency's ethics officers when questions or questionable situations arise.
- **Commitment to EEO and diversity practices and principles in all aspects of the work environment:**
 - Participates in a fair and harassment free work place. Reports any EEO related issue/concerns per established protocol.

- **Rating Cycle:**

The appraisal period in OSTP is July 1 through June 30 of the following year.

Rating Levels:

The rating levels apply as follows:

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE RATINGS. Each employee will be assigned a formal performance rating that summarizes the assessment of employee performance against the standards established for the position. The appraisal will include a rating on each performance element as well as an overall or summary rating. Individual element ratings and the summary rating are assigned using one of the five descriptors as defined below.

Unacceptable:

0.0 – 1.9

- (a) An employee consistently fails to meet job requirements; performance clearly below minimum requirements; immediate improvement required to maintain employment; or (b) Management receives more than two negative written notifications from a senior staff member on any one of the sub-elements for each element described in the following pages.

Needs Improvement:

2.0 – 2.99

- An employee occasionally fails to meet job requirements; performance must improve to meet expectations of position; or (b) Management receives two negative written notifications from a senior staff member on any one of the sub-elements for each element described in the following pages.

Meets Expectations:

3.0 – 3.79

- (a) An employee must be able to perform 100% of job duties satisfactorily, normal guidance and supervision are required; and (b) Management receives no more than one negative written notification from a senior staff member on any one of the sub-elements for each element described in the following pages.

Exceeds Expectations:

3.8 – 4.69

- (a) An employee frequently exceeds job requirements; all planned objectives were achieved above the established standards and accomplishments were made in unexpected areas as well; and (b) Management receives no negative written notification from a senior staff member on any one of the sub-elements for each element described in the following pages.

Superior:

4.7 – 5.0

- Consistently exceeds job requirements; this is the highest level of performance that can be attained; and (b) Management receives no negative or only positive written notification from a senior staff member on any one of the sub-elements for each element described in the following pages.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING. The adjective used to describe the overall or summary performance level of the employee, taking into accounts both strengths and weaknesses on each individual job element. The overall or summary rating may be unacceptable, minimally acceptable, fully successful, excellent, or outstanding.

Unacceptable:

0.0 – 1.9

- **Unacceptable:** Overall performance is deemed unacceptable. The employee's performance fails to meet established performance standards in one or more critical elements of the employee's position. Corrective action must be taken, consistent with required procedures.

Needs Improvement:

2.0 – 2.99

- **Needs Improvement:** Overall performance is at a level adequate for retention on the job but is not at a sufficient level of competence to merit a regular within-grade increase. All critical elements must be rated at least "needs improvement" level or higher. It may be necessary to take remedial action.

Meets Expectations:

3.0 – 3.79

- **Meets Expectations:** Overall is consistently performed at a sufficient level to merit a regular within-grade pay increase and is more than merely adequate for retention on the job. In the individual Element Ratings, all of the critical elements must be rated at the "meets expectations" level or higher, and no performance element may be "unacceptable."

Exceeds Expectations:

3.8 – 4.69

- **Exceeds Expectations:** Overall performance of high quality in which the employee exceeds the established normative performance standards. All performance elements must be rated at the "exceeds expectations" level or higher, and no performance element may be "unacceptable."

Superior:

4.7 – 5.0

- **Superior:** Overall performance of the highest quality which substantially exceeds the established normative performance standards. The employee has consistently performed in an exceptional manner on all aspects of the job. In the Individual Element Ratings, the employee usually must demonstrate "Superior:" performance in all critical elements of the position, and no performance element may be less than "meets expectation"

Mid-Year Progress Review:

Discussion:

No other issues withstanding, i.e., change in position or performance issues, at a minimum, one formal discussion on overall performance, at a time other than the final performance appraisal meeting, also a discussion on any negative written notification(s) is required at mid-year.

Discussion Focus:

During the mid-year performance discussion, the rating and reviewing officials and the employee have the opportunity to focus on performance issues, goals and objectives, and training. Supervisors should speak precisely, but at the same time be supportive of allowing the employee the chance to perform successfully.

Changing Elements and Standards:

Although a change in elements or standards may be required at any time during the rating cycle, the mid-year performance review is an ideal time for the supervisor or the employee to initiate a change in one or more job elements, which must be finalized by revision of the performance plan. In addition, it is also appropriate to discuss and adjust performance standards. The supervisor should review the employee's position description with him/her to ensure that it accurately reflects the position's responsibilities.

Communication:

Importance of Communication:

Interpersonal communication between employees and supervisors about job performance is key to an effective and useful performance management system.

Methods for Facilitating Communication:

Supervisors should:

- Maintain an “open door” policy.
- Conduct meetings with employees to discuss performance goals, expectations, concerns, and issues.
- Share information with employees concerning agency policies, new initiatives and improvements.
- Provide positive feedback to encourage motivation.
- Discuss deadlines and the importance and consequences of not meeting agreed-upon goals.
- Discuss any negative written notification(s) and go over ways to improve prior problems.

Employees should not have to guess about their performance expectations, shortcomings, accomplishments or goals. Supervisors and employees alike should demonstrate a commitment to a system of open, ongoing interpersonal communications.

Employee, Supervisor (Rating Official), and Reviewing Official Roles:

Employees, supervisors, and reviewing officials each play a critical role in the success of the performance management system. Some of the respective responsibilities are outlined below:

Each Employee is responsible for:

- Familiarizing him/herself with the performance management system.
- Actively participating with the supervisor in the development of performance standards.
- Making every reasonable effort to perform at or above the “meets expectations” level.
- Requesting clarification from the supervisor on any job element or standard not clearly understood.
- Participating in the performance evaluation and rating process with the rating official by adding any comments, write-ups or self-evaluations for the supervisor’s consideration.
- Preparing written comments when disputing a job element, a standard or a rating.
- Seeking professional development or training opportunities to enhance performance.
- Signing the performance standards. Signing these documents does not mean that the employee agrees, but signifies that he/she has discussed the matters with the supervisor and has seen the documents.

Rating Officials are responsible for:

- Adhering to the parameters of developing and submitting performance standards and appraising subordinate employees' job performance.
- Informing employees of the overall mission, objectives, goals, plans, activities, and priorities of the work unit, and clearly communicating duties and responsibilities to employees.
- Informing employees of their positions' critical and non-critical job elements.
- Appraising employees on a continuous basis and keeping them informed of their progress in meeting performance expectations.
- Providing an impartial and objective evaluation of each employee's performance and assigning a rating for employees based on accomplishments and other relevant criteria.
- When departing before the end of the appraisal cycle, completing ratings on the employees who report directly to them and providing them to the new supervisor or reviewing official.
- Giving guidance and assistance to employees, including providing specific assistance to employees whose work is below "Meets Expectations."
- Recommending quality step increases, or performance awards based on the appropriate criteria.
- Proposing personnel actions based on the employee's level of performance, including training, developmental assignments, promotion, reassignment, reduction in grade, or removal.
- Identifying and approving professional development opportunities.

Reviewing Officials are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their performance appraisal procedures are in conformance with current laws, applicable OPM rules and regulations, and agency policies.
- Reviewing and giving final approval of performance standards for employees.
- Ensuring employees are receiving adequate information, guidance, counseling, and training on their rights, duties, and responsibilities under the performance management system.
- Communicating overall mission, objectives, goals, plans and activities to each subordinate-level supervisor within the organization.
- Reviewing performance appraisals completed by rating officials subordinate to them, and providing second level approval of ratings.
- In the event of discrepancy between the rating and reviewing official, pertaining to the rating or recommendations for awards, the reviewing official's, as the more senior organizational official, recommendation will prevail.

The OSTP Human Resources Manager is responsible for:

- Communicating the purpose, requirements, and procedures of the performance management system to employees and supervisors.
- Providing assistance to supervisory officials concerning the identification of critical elements, and the establishment of performance standards.
- Serving as the liaison with main HR and OPM for the purposes of implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and redesigning the performance management system when necessary.
- Providing training and orientation sessions in the operation of the performance management system for supervisors and employees who are subject to and responsible for the system.
- Ensuring that OA/HR maintains performance appraisal files, compensation records, and

related documentation in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act, and other applicable laws and regulations.

Within-Grade Increases:

Applicability to the General Schedule:

Employees who occupy permanent positions under the General Schedule who are not already at the highest step in their grade and have an acceptable level of performance (fully successful or higher) are eligible to receive within-grade increases.

Waiting Periods:

- **Waiting Periods Under the General Schedule:**

Assuming qualifying performance, employees will advance to the next higher step within the grade at the beginning of the pay period following:

- 52 calendar weeks of service in each of steps 1, 2 and 3.
- 104 calendar weeks of service in each of steps 4, 5, and 6.
- 156 calendar weeks of service in each of steps, 7, 8, and 9.

Creditable Service:

- Creditable service towards completion of a waiting period of within-grade increases includes:

1. Paid civilian employment, including temporary and term, in any branch of the federal government.
2. Leave of absence (leave without pay or furlough) for active duty in the military or receipt of injury compensation.
3. For GS employees, time in a non-pay status which does not exceed: two workweeks for step three and below; four workweeks for steps four through six; and six workweeks for step seven and above.

Notice of Determination:

Supervisors and managers should pay close attention to negative written notifications. Supervisors that receive negative written notifications regarding a subordinate must meet with any employee or group that receives a negative written notification to obtain any additional details surrounding the notification.

- The OSTP Human Resources Manager will provide advice and assistance to any supervisor who has determined that an employee's work has fallen below an acceptable level of competence or is approaching an unacceptable level.

- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all employees are provided with job elements and performance standards and that they make determinations of an employee's acceptable level of competence on the basis of the employee's assigned performance standards only.
- Supervisors should monitor the employee's performance and notify the OSTP Human Resources Manager immediately when an employee's performance falls below "meets expectations."
- The employee will be informed, by the supervisor, in writing, that a performance issue has been identified and the reason.
- At the time that unacceptable performance is identified, the employee must be informed of the performance standards that must be satisfied. The employee must receive a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance.
- The employee will be provided a specific date on which the determination of an acceptable level of competence will be considered. The reconsideration should be scheduled no earlier than the completion of the minimum appraisal period or no later than 180 calendar days from the date the employee was informed of the decision to delay the original determination of acceptable level of competence.
- The employee must have written performance standards for the opportunity period.
- The supervisor will devote extra attention to monitoring the performance of the affected employee during the delay period. If the delay was due to unsatisfactory performance, at the conclusion of the period, the supervisor will prepare a special rating of record which covers the employee's performance during the opportunity period.
- If performance improves to the "Meets Expectations" level at the conclusion of the opportunity period, a new rating or record is completed.
- If, following the delay period, the employee's performance is judged to be less than "meets expectation," the supervisor should consult with OSTP Human Resources Manager, the OA/HR Operations Branch Chief and/or the OA/HR Employee Relations Specialist prior to providing the employee with the official rating. When it is necessary to further delay the determination of an acceptable level of competence, the employee will be advised, in writing, by the supervisor. Included will be a statement of the reasons for the additional delay, the specific performance improvement that needs to be accomplished by the employee, the date when further reconsideration will be given, and information on how the employee may request reconsideration of the supervisor's decision.
- If, at the conclusion of this opportunity period, the employee's performance continues to be unacceptable, the employee may be reassigned, reduced in grade, or removed.
- Performance issues are addressed in a separate addendum.

Request for Reconsideration and Appeals:

Request for Reconsideration:

Employees may submit a request for reconsideration if the rating official's decision to delay the determination of an acceptable level of competence is based on performance.

The following procedures will apply:

- The employee's request will be in writing and will set forth specific reasons supporting the request for reconsideration.
- The request for reconsideration will be submitted to the rating official no later than 15 calendar days from the date that the employee receives the notice indicating that the determination of an acceptable level of competence would be delayed.
- A signed copy of the request will be sent to the supervisor.
- The employee making the request for reconsideration will be granted no more than eight (8) hours of official time in order to prepare his/her request.
- The supervisor will provide the employee with a written decision within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the request for reconsideration.

Appeals:

- When the delay of the determination of acceptable level of competence is not due to performance, the employee may appeal to the Reviewing Official if he/she believes the delay is due to neglect.
- If a negative determination is sustained on appeal after all requests for reconsideration, whether based on performance or for other reasons, the employee may appeal the decision to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Effective Dates:

- A within-grade increase will be effective on the first day of the first pay period following completion of the required waiting period and in compliance with the conditions of eligibility.
 - When an acceptable level of competence is achieved at some time after a negative determination, the effective date is the first day of the first pay period after the acceptable level of competence determination has been made.
 - If a negative determination is changed to an affirmative determination as a result of reconsideration, the within-grade increase will be retroactive to the original due date.
-

Quality Step Increases:

Eligibility

Purpose:

The purpose of a Quality Step Increase (QSI) is to provide incentives and recognition for excellence in performance by granting faster than normal step increases. Under no circumstances are QSIs to be used as a substitute to compensate employees who do not receive awards in a given year. Rather, QSIs may only be approved when an employee's overall performance is so exceptional as to justify a permanent increase in salary.

Criteria:

The recipient must demonstrate sustained performance of high quality that is significantly above that

expected at the "meets expectation" level. This is determined under the performance related criteria listed below.

To warrant a QSI, the employee should be one whose:

- Performance on which the recommendation is based is characteristic of the employee's overall high quality performance in the major performance elements of the employee's performance plan, and is not based on a single achievement.
- Recommendation is based on the expectation that the high quality of performance will continue in the future.
- Level of performance clearly merits and was designated at the high summary rating level of "superior."
- Recommendation is based on a work period in a specific job of not less than 12 months.

Authority to Grant:

- Normally a QSI would be initiated by the immediate supervisor using a standard Form 52 to which is attached any supporting documentation, such as a copy of the performance rating upon which the QSI is based. Higher level supervisors may also propose QSIs. In such cases, the higher level supervisor should consult with the employee's immediate supervisor to complete an assessment. A QSI must be approved by the Associate Director or Deputy Director in the candidate's supervisory chain or the Chief of Staff.

Restrictions:

A QSI may be granted at anytime during a year, but no more than one (1) QSI may be granted to an employee in any 52-week period.

Awards:

As a part of the completion of the performance appraisal cycle, a request is made to all staff to submit award nominations, supported by a narrative which specifically addresses the published criteria for the award.

Award Criteria:

A uniform set of criteria is used for evaluating contributions from those who are nominated for the awards. By using a standard set of criteria, there is a greater assurance of equity in the awards review process. The criteria identified and listed below should be used as general guidelines when writing and reviewing nominations.

- Quality – describe how the quality of what the nominee accomplished exceeded expectations, or demonstrate the good, accurate or error-free nature of the final result.
- Quantity – describe how the quantity of the nominee's accomplishment exceeded the expected amount of work produced within a specific time frame.
- Timeliness – describe how the nominee's accomplishment exceeded expectations for specific time frames or deadlines.

- Complexity – describe the degree of difficulty, involvement or challenge presented to the nominee in accomplishing the result.
- Initiative taken or leadership demonstrated – describe how the nominee demonstrated initiative and/or leadership through performance of unassigned requirements, assumed responsibility, self-initiated an action and/or inspiring teamwork and productivity in others.
- Organizational impact and challenges – describe the effect of the nominee’s accomplishment or results on achieving or maintaining the organization’s mission, objectives, initiatives, and strategies. Also, describe the manner in which the nominee resolved issues, faced obstacles and tackled problems in achieving the accomplishment or results.
- Customer Service Focus – describe how the nominee demonstrated consideration of the internal or external customer requirements, exceeded customer expectations, and established, maintained, or enhanced positive relationships with customers.
- Tangible benefit – consider the following when describing a tangible benefit:
 - Did the accomplishment result in reduction of time or person hours required to complete a task or an operation? How much and what task or operation was affected?
 - Will the accomplishment result in eliminating or reducing the amount of materials once used (i.e., office supplies or use of equipment)?
 - Were procedures changed or improved that eliminated or reduced the expense associated with the previous process (i.e., the previous way of doing things)?
- Intangible Impact – Describe the impact of the nominee’s accomplishment in terms of increased customer satisfaction.

Award Nomination Review:

Generally, the process will involve initiation of the award, review and sign-off by the immediate supervisor and then followed by a review with the appropriate Associate Director or Deputy Director, the Chief of Staff, with final approval by the OSTP Director.

Types of Awards:

On-the-Spot Cash Awards:

On-the-spot cash awards are presented to an employee when his/her contribution merits immediate recognition. Such an award is granted in recognition of contributions to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of the OSTP mission, represented by a special act or service. The monetary award for an on-the-spot award shall not exceed an amount specified each fiscal year by the Director.

Time-Off Award:

- A time-off award is presented to an employee for superior accomplishments or other personal efforts that contribute to the quality, efficiency, or economy of government operations. This award provides time off from duty without loss of pay and without requiring the employee to use leave.
- A variety of employee contributions may be recognized with a time-off award. These contributions include:
 - High quality contributions involving difficult or important projects or assignments.

- Completion of additional work or a project assignment while maintaining the normal workload to ensure the mission of the work unit is accomplished during a difficult period.
- In granting and determining the length of the time-off awards, the benefits realized by OSTP from the employee's contribution will be considered. The amount of time-off will be proportionate to the value of the contribution being recognized.
- Time-off awards must be submitted to HRM on a SF-52, showing the type of award and the number of hours granted. Timekeepers and certifiers must insure that the time-off award hours are correctly reflected in the timekeeping system when the hours are taken.
- Recipients of time-off awards must consult with the supervisor to determine a suitable time for scheduling the time off. Since the award is a form of immediate recognition, it is preferable to take the time off within 6 pay periods. If the total amount of a time-off award is not used within one (1) year after it is approved, any unused time-off is forfeited and may not be restored.
- A time-off award, unlike accrued leave, cannot be converted to a cash payment upon separation from the Federal Service. Also, a time-off award cannot be transferred when an employee leaves OSTP to transfer to another agency. Since a time-off award is not annual leave, award balances cannot be transferred to approved leave recipients under voluntary leave transfer program.

**Please see additional detailed information on the OSTP Awards Policies and Procedures Program in the OSTP Awards Policy /