



*Office of Executive Resources
Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer
U.S. Department of Energy*

FY 2015 Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Appraisal System Opening Guidance

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Fiscal Year 2015
SES Performance Appraisal System Opening Guidance

This document provides a summary of the key performance management requirements. These requirements should be understood and applied for all SES members in the context of the existing policies.

Rating Officials (i.e., supervisors) must establish performance plans for SES members in consultation with them and communicate the plans within 30 days of the beginning of the rating cycle. The performance plan must encompass the entire rating period. SES performance plans must include the Government-wide SES performance requirements as written. The gaining organization must also set performance goals and requirements for any detail or temporary assignment of 120 days or longer and appraise the performance in writing.

I. ePERFORMANCE ACTIONS and TIMELINE

DATES (2014-2015)	ACTIONS
Dec 2014	Performance Plan templates are available in ePerformance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SES member prepares performance requirements in ePerformance and submits his/her recommendations to the Rating Official
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rating Official reviews, discusses with employee and approves Performance Plan in ePerformance • SES member acknowledges approved Performance Plan in ePerformance
Jan 30, 2015	All Performance Plans in ePerformance are complete
Mar 31, 2015	Progress Review 1 complete
Jun 30, 2015	Progress Review 2 complete
Sep 30, 2015	End of Performance Appraisal Cycle

II. PERFORMANCE PLAN - CRITICAL ELEMENTS

All executives will be assessed and rated on each of the five Critical Elements (CEs) which are based on the Executive Core Qualifications. The five CEs are: Leading Change, Leading People, Business Acumen, Building Coalitions, and Results Driven. All DOE executives must have the Results Driven CE weighted at 40% and have the flexibility to weight the other four CEs (minimum 5% and maximum of 20%) as long as the total weight of the elements add up to 100%.

All CEs, with the exception of Results Driven, will contain one mandatory OPM pre-populated performance requirement that cannot be changed. The agency-specific performance requirements section is not editable and is reserved for any DOE-wide requirement established by the Secretary or designee. If the Secretary or designee requires additional agency-specific requirements in these

elements, they will be incorporated in the performance appraisal by the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer.

For the Results Driven CE, the performance requirements (including measures, targets, timelines, or quality descriptors, as appropriate) must describe the range of performance at Level 3 (fully successful) for each result specified. It is recommended to also establish the threshold measures/targets for Levels 5 and 2.

The mandatory language for four of the CEs is provided below, as well as a summary of the expectations for the Results Driven CE:

1. Leading Change (5% - 20%)

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

2. Leading People (5% - 20%)

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

3. Business Acumen (5% - 20%)

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

4. Building Coalitions (5% - 20%)

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

5. Results Driven (40%)

- This CE includes specific performance results expected from the executive during the appraisal period, focusing on measurable outcomes from the strategic plan or other measurable outputs and outcomes clearly aligned to organizational goals and objectives.
- The Results-Driven CE must also identify clear, transparent alignment to relevant agency or organizational goals/objectives, page numbers, from the Strategic Plan, Congressional Budget Justification/Annual Performance Plan, or other organizational planning document in the designated section for each performance result specified.

III. OPM PERFORMANCE RATING LEVEL DEFINITIONS

The performance standard definitions for each rating level are specified below:

- **Level 5 (Outstanding):** The executive demonstrates exceptional performance, fostering a climate that sustains excellence and optimizes results in the executive's organization, agency, department or government-wide.
 - This represents the highest level of executive performance, as evidenced by the extraordinary impact on the achievement of the organization's mission. The executive is an inspirational leader and is considered a role model by agency leadership, peers, and employees.
 - The executive continually contributes materially to or spearheads agency efforts that address or accomplish important agency goals, consistently achieves expectations at the highest level of quality possible, and consistently handles challenges, exceeds targets, and completes assignments ahead of schedule at every step along the way.
- **Level 4 (Highly Successful):** The executive demonstrates a very high level of performance beyond that required for successful performance in the executive's position and scope of responsibilities.
 - The executive is a proven, highly effective leader who builds trust and instills confidence in agency leadership, peers, and employees.
 - The executive consistently exceeds established performance expectations, timelines, or targets, as applicable.
- **Level 3 (Fully Successful):** The executive demonstrates the high level of performance expected and the executive's actions and leadership contribute positively toward the achievement of strategic goals and meaningful results.
 - The executive is an effective, solid, and dependable leader who delivers high-quality results based on measures of quality, quantity, efficiency, and/or effectiveness within agreed upon timelines.
 - The executive meets and often exceeds challenging performance expectations established for the position.
- **Level 2 (Minimally Satisfactory):** The executive's contributions to the organization are acceptable in the short term but do not appreciably advance the organization towards achievement of its goals and objectives.
 - While the executive generally meets established performance expectations, timelines and targets, there are occasional lapses that impair operations and/or cause concern from management.

- While showing basic ability to accomplish work through others, the executive may demonstrate limited ability to inspire subordinates to give their best efforts or to marshal those efforts effectively to address problems characteristic of the organization and its work.
- **Level 1 (Unsatisfactory):** In repeated instances, the executive demonstrates performance deficiencies that detract from mission goals and objectives.
 - The executive generally is viewed as ineffectual by agency leadership, peers, or employees.
 - The executive does not meet established performance expectations/timelines/targets and fails to produce – or produces unacceptable – work products, services, or outcomes.

IV. RATING CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The rating level determination for each CE will be based on the relationship of the executive’s accomplishment to the performance requirements, as established in the plan, for his/her position. When any CE contains more than one performance requirement, the rating official will use the rating determination in Table 1.

Table 1: Critical Element Derivation Formula

Critical Element Rating Levels	Rating Determination
Level 5 Outstanding	All performance requirements are rated Outstanding, as defined by Level 5 above.
Level 4 Highly Successful	A majority of the performance requirements are rated at least Highly Successful, with none below the Fully Successful level, as defined by Level 4 above.
Level 3 Fully Successful	A majority of the performance requirements are rated at least at the Fully Successful level, with none below the Fully Successful level, as defined by Level 3 above.
Level 2 Minimally Satisfactory	One or more of the performance requirements in the element were performed at the Minimally Satisfactory level, as defined by Level 2 above.
Level 1 Unsatisfactory	One or more of the performance requirements in the element were performed at the Unsatisfactory level, as defined by Level 1 above.

V. DERIVING THE SUMMARY RATING

The overall final performance score and rating is determined based on the derivation formula located in Table 2. Each CE is provided with a rating (Level 1 – Level 5) and it is multiplied by the weight of the CE. All five CEs are summed to determine the overall performance score (max of 500 points) which equate to a corresponding final rating level (Level 1 – Level 5).

Table 2: Overall Performance Rating Derivation Formula

*EXAMPLE	Rating Level		Score	Final Rating Level Derivation Formula		
Critical Element	Initial Element Rating	Weight	Initial Point Score			
1. Leading Change	4	20	4 x 20 = 80	475-500	Level 5	Outstanding
2. Leading People	5	10	5 x 10 = 50			
3. Business Acumen	3	20	3 x 20 = 60	400-474	Level 4	Highly Successful
4. Building Coalitions	4	10	4 x 10 = 40	300-399	Level 3	Fully Successful
5. Results Driven	4	40	5 x 40 = 200	200-299	Level 2	Minimally Satisfactory
	Total	100	430			

VI. TRAINING AND EVALUATION

- All executives must review the annual training on the OPM performance management system. This will constitute as training for FY 2015. The training slides are available for review on the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer website at the following link: <http://www.energy.gov/hc/downloads/ses-performance-management-system-plan-training>
- The Department of Energy will evaluate the effectiveness of the performance management system and implement improvements as needed.
- OPM released an online, interactive training for SES members that provides guidance and resources for writing results oriented performance requirements and helps to identify benchmarks for success.
 - The training is highly participatory and asks participants to come prepared with a copy of their strategic plan and organizational goals.
 - The online training takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete but at the end of the training, executives should have created performance requirements to include in their performance plan.
 - The OPM training is located on the Manager’s Corner of HR University at the following link: http://www.hru.gov/course_catalog.aspx?cid=178&mgr=true

VII. PERFORMANCE PLAN TIPS – SES MEMBER

- Ensure performance requirements are:
 - Written at an executive level with a strategic focus, yet measurable and quantifiable
 - Focused on outcomes/deliverables rather than meeting milestones
 - Not written like a Position Description
 - Completed with Metrics for Meeting/Exceeding

- Use bullets or narrative format for performance requirements
 - Minimum of 3 performance requirements with a maximum of 5 performance requirements for Results Driven CE
 - May not exceed 4000 characters per performance requirements
 - Limit the use of jargon/acronyms and technical terms so goals are better understood
 - Eliminate typos
- Reference a specific DOE or the respective organization’s Strategic Plan for each performance requirement
 - May use an Organizational Goal that stems from the Strategic Plan
- Provide a timeframe for completion (not just September 30)
- Use the SMART Framework

VIII. PERFORMANCE PLAN TIPS – RATING OFFICIAL

- Ensure performance requirements are of quality and provide a challenge to the SES member
 - Communicate changes/edits to be made by employee in the Rater’s Comments section of the plan
 - Rater Comments are not included as part of the official Performance Plan
 - Identify performance targets for inclusion that were not identified by the employee
 - Ensure performance targets are realistic and within employee’s control
 - Ensure member is made fully aware of performance expectations
 - Conduct Initial Feedback Session

IX. SMART FRAMEWORK

Performance Standards should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ligned, **R**ealistic, and **T**imeframe – bound.

Specific - Clear, concise statement of what is being measured with observable outcomes.

Measurable - Result should be observable or verifiable with a method, procedure or standard to assess and record the result of the requirement.

Aligned - A clear, direct connection should exist between Standards and the organizational priorities and/or component strategic goals.

Realistic - The outcome must be achievable with the resources and personnel available, and it should be within the employee’s control and responsibility.

Timeframe - bound - Timeframe needed to complete the Standard should be within the period of performance.

Tips

- Use the phrase “as measured by...” to ensure measures have been included
- Use multiple measures, when possible
- Measure what is truly critical to the performance of the job – not just what is easiest to measure

X. ePERFORMANCE SYSTEM and DOE POINTS OF CONTACTS

- ePerformance must be accessed through the Internet Explorer browser using this link:
<https://eperformance.doe.gov>
- Contact the ePerformance Program Manager for assistance:
 - Sharon Pollock; Sharon.Pollock@hq.doe.gov; (202) 586-1373
- Contact the Office of Executive Resources for assistance:
 - Erin Moore; Erin.Moore@hq.doe.gov; (202) 586-9558