

## **Instructions for Completing the Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP) Form**

**Establishing Critical Elements and Performance Standards** Critical elements (at least one, but not more than five) must be established for each employee at the start of the appraisal period. Through these elements, employees are held accountable for work assignments and responsibilities of their position. A critical element is an assignment or responsibility of such importance that Unacceptable performance in that element alone would result in the determination that the employee's overall performance is Unacceptable. Please see 370 DM 430 or the Performance Management Handbook for more detailed information.

Performance standards are management-approved expressions of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met to be appraised on a critical element at a particular level of performance. They must be focused on results and include credible measures such as quality, quantity, timeliness, cost effectiveness, etc. The attached Benchmark Standards describe general parameters of the standards. **Federal regulations require, at a minimum, that a specific performance standard be established for the Fully Successful level for each critical element. Rating officials are strongly encouraged to develop specific performance standards at additional levels to ensure that the employee has a clear understanding of the levels of performance expected.**

At least one, and preferably all, critical elements must show how the element is linked to the strategic goal(s) of the organization. These goals should be aligned throughout the organization (i.e., show how the strategic goal cascades from the senior executive level down to the lowest non-supervisory levels). The employee should be able to clearly understand how the results they are held responsible for are linked to the results that those in their supervisory/managerial chain are held responsible for.

**Employee Involvement:** Employees must be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of their performance plans. Part A-2 of the DI-3100 form requires employee and rating official signatures certifying that employee input into the development of the plan was solicited. For electronic appraisal systems, signatures will be captured during the initiation of the plan.

**Individual Development Plan (IDP):** The IDP provides a connection between the employee's career interests and needs to the organizational mission and priorities. The employee and the rating official should develop goals together.

**Progress Reviews:** A progress review discussion is required approximately midway through the appraisal period. Part B of the DI-3100 or corresponding steps in the electronic equivalent system should be completed after the progress review. Any written feedback or recommended training can be noted on a separate sheet and attached to the EPAP form or uploaded if an electronic appraisal system is used.

**Assigning the Summary Rating:** A specific rating is required for each critical element to reflect the level of performance demonstrated by the employee throughout the appraisal period. Only one numerical rating level is assigned for each critical element. Before the rating official assigns a summary rating, he/she should consider all interim appraisals received for the employee during the annual appraisal period. The summary rating is assigned as follows:

A. Assess how the employee performed relative to the described performance standards.

B. Document the employee's performance with a narrative that describes the achievements for the critical elements as compared to the performance standards. A narrative must be written for each critical element assigned a rating of Outstanding or Unacceptable to provide examples of the employee's performance that substantiate and explain how the performance falls within the level assigned. There is a block provided for the narrative for each critical element.

C. In Part C of the DI-3100 form, assign one of the numerical rating levels that accurately reflects the employee's performance for each of the critical elements. Use only whole numbers: Outstanding = 5 points, Exceeds Expectations= 4 points, Fully Successful = 3 points, and Unacceptable = 0 points. For electronic appraisal systems, select the rating for each applicable critical element.

D. Add up the numerical rating levels to get a total, and then divide the total by the number of critical elements that were rated to get an average. Elements that are not rated because an employee has not had a chance to perform them during the appraisal period are not assigned any points and should not be used to determine the average.

E. Assign a summary rating based on the table in Part D of the DI-3100 form. Employee and rating officials sign the form certifying that the rating was discussed. Summary ratings of Outstanding or Unacceptable must be reviewed and approved by the reviewing official prior to the rating official's discussion with the employee. Electronic appraisal systems will capture these required signatures in their respective steps.

**Note:** Whenever an employee is rated **Unacceptable** on one or more critical elements, the overall rating **must** be **Unacceptable** (regardless of total points). **The rating official should immediately contact the servicing Human Resources Office for guidance and assistance on addressing Unacceptable performance.**

**Privacy Act Notice:** Chapter 43 of Title 5, U.S.C., authorizes collection of this information. The primary use of this information is by management and your servicing human resources office to issue and record your performance rating. Additional disclosures of this information may be: To the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, U.S. Office of Special Counsel, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Federal Labor Relations Authority, or an arbitrator in connection with administrative proceedings; to the U.S. Department of Justice or other Federal agency, courts, or party to litigation when the Government is a party to or has an interest in the judicial or administrative proceeding; to a congressional office in response to an inquiry made on behalf of an individual; to the appropriate Federal, State, or local government agency investigating potential violations of civil or criminal law or regulation; and to Federal, State, local and professional licensing boards in determining qualifications of individuals seeking to be licensed.

If your bureau/office used the information furnished on this form for purposes other than those indicated above, it may provide you with an additional statement reflecting those purposes.

**Refusal to Sign:** In cases where the employee refuses to sign the Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP) form, the rating official has the authority to implement the performance plan and rating without employee agreement. Rating officials should identify in the employee's signature block that the "Employee refused to sign."