

# PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (PACS)

CHAPTER S430\_1

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# PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (PACS)

1. **ISSUE DATE** -*[Copy made available to AFGE during 9/06]*
2. **EMPLOYEES COVERED** - All SSA General Schedule and Federal Wage System employees below the GS-15 or equivalent grade and GS-15 employees in the bargaining unit. This includes employees under permanent competitive service and excepted service appointments and employees under term or time-limited appointments for periods of more than one year.

Covered employees who are newly hired into SSA positions or who enter new positions that require lengthy, formal training and a long period of time to demonstrate performance may be appraised under the provisions of the PACS - New Hires and Trainees (PACS-NHT). (See Section 5.19.)

Employees not covered include employees serving under temporary appointments limited to one year or less. Non-bargaining unit General Schedule or Federal Wage System employees above the GS-14 or equivalent grade, Administrative Law Judges and Administrative Appeals Judges are also exempted from coverage under PACS.

3. **LAW AND REGULATION**

3.1. **5 USC Chapter 43, Performance Appraisal**

**5 CFR Part 430, Performance Management**

**5 CFR Part 432, Performance Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions**

**5 CFR Part 752, Adverse Actions**

4. **SSA DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY**

See delegations of authority, Performance Management 3\_22.

5. **SSA POLICY**

5.1. **Introduction**

The Performance Assessment and Communication System (PACS) establishes a clear connection between Agency mission and employee contribution. It emphasizes the

importance of effectively communicating expectations and helping employees understand the role they play in Achievement of Agency goals. PACS:

- Considers the individual's contributions to the team effort needed to achieve the Agency's public service mission;

- Incorporates evaluation of both technical competence in achieving business results and the manner in which the results are achieved;

- Differentiates between levels of performance in a way that recognizes the high performer and addresses the marginal or failing performer in a constructive way;

- Promotes communication and teamwork among management and employees; and

- Uses objective data to provide context to expectations and helps employees understand the role they play in achievement of Agency goals.

## 5.2. **Overview**

PACS uses a three-tier rating system for ratings on individual performance elements and for the summary appraisal rating.

Supervisors will be expected to:

- Effectively communicate performance expectations and explain how the employee's work contributes to achievement of Agency goals and objectives;

- Discuss opportunities for achievement and recognition;

- Identify opportunities to develop employee skills;

- Provide ongoing feedback concerning performance and contributions; and

- Assess employee performance.

Employees will be expected to:

- Understand their supervisor's expectations and how their work links to component/office and Agency objectives;
- Provide feedback regarding their performance;
- Make suggestions to improve individual and unit performance; and
- Identify their developmental needs.

Most employees will be rated on four standard elements. Managers and supervisors, including team leaders and Management Support Specialists (MSSs), will be rated on the four standard elements plus two additional elements. All elements will be critical.

For most employees, the PACS offers three summary appraisal rating of record levels with clear distinctions among those performance levels to differentiate between high performing employees (Level 5 - Outstanding Contribution), the more typical successful employees (Level 3 - Successful Contribution), and employees whose performance is clearly failing (Level 1 - Not Successful).

New hires and trainees may serve under special performance plans during their initial appraisal period. This special provision for new hires and trainees recognizes that the first year of employment in their new SSA position may be spent in formal classroom and on-the-job training and allows those employees additional time to demonstrate performance in all elements of their positions. Employees covered by this section will serve under special PASS/FAIL performance plans. These are special performance plans because affected employees are rated on two elements rather than the four elements in the PACS Plan. An employee under the PASS/FAIL performance plan will be appraised at Level 3(Successful) if he/she "passes" both elements or Level 1 (Not Successful) if he/she "fails" one or both elements.

### 5.3. Commonly Used Terms

**Performance Elements** - Work assignments and responsibilities that are critical to achieving the Agency's mission and goals and reflect the Agency's commitment to providing outstanding public service. The performance elements used in PACS for rating employees are:

- Interpersonal Skills (for all employees)
- Participation (for all employees except new hires/trainees)
- Demonstrates Job Knowledge (for all employees except new hires/trainees)
- Achieves Business Results (for all employees except new hires/trainees)
- Demonstrates Leadership (for all managers and supervisors, including team leaders and MSSs)
- Assists in Managing Performance (for all team leaders, including MSSs)
- Manages Performance (for managers and supervisors)
- Engages in Learning (for new hires/trainees only)

Except for new hires and trainees, employees will be rated on each performance element using a three-tier rating system: Level 5 (Outstanding Contribution), Level 3 (Successful Contribution) and Level 1 (Not Successful).

All performance elements are critical (i.e., unacceptable performance on any element will result in a determination that an employee's overall performance is Not Successful).

**Performance Standards** - Provide the framework for the expectations of what employees will accomplish and how it will be done. Employees are only rated on the standards that are applicable to them. To be rated "Successful" on an element (e.g., Achieves Business Results), an employee must meet all of the applicable standards described as "Successful" for that element. To be rated "Outstanding" on an element, the employee must meet all the applicable standards described as "Successful" and a substantial number of the applicable standards described as "Outstanding." (See

Section 5.6.)

**Alignment Statement** - A tool to facilitate communication of the Agency mission, values, goals and objectives.

**Numeric Data** - Numeric data (e.g., the timeliness and/or accuracy of work or the need to produce a fair share of the workload) may be gathered and maintained in order to provide context to performance standards and expectations. (See Section 5.11.2.3.)

**Summary Appraisal Rating/Rating of Record** - There are three summary appraisal levels: Outstanding Contribution (Level 5); Successful Contribution (Level 3) and Not Successful (Level 1). (See Section 5.13.)

**New Hires** - External hires who are new to the Social Security Administration.

**Trainees** - Employees, both external hires and employees promoted/transferred to a new position, who need a structured period of training, including on-the-job training and mentoring, to perform the basic duties of the position.

**Element Average** - The average of the performance element ratings which is used to determine eligibility for awards. (See Section 5.15.)

#### 5.4. **Appraisal Period**

##### 5.4.1. **Length of Appraisal Period**

The PACS appraisal period is one year. The appraisal period is normally from October 1 through September 30. A rating of record will be prepared at the end of the appraisal period and issued to the employee within 30 days of the completed appraisal period.

##### 5.4.2. **Minimum Appraisal Period**

The minimum appraisal period for covered employees is 120 days. Employees must be under a performance plan for a minimum of 120 days to be eligible for an annual performance appraisal at the end of their appraisal period. Employees serving in a probationary

period will not receive a rating of record until after completion of their probationary period. The minimum appraisal period for the Performance Assessment and Communication System - New Hires/Trainees (PACS-NHT) is described in Section 5.20.

Employees who have been under their performance plan for less than 30 days and are approved for an extended absence in excess of 150 days will begin a new minimum appraisal period upon their return to duty. This does not preclude the supervisor from considering the employee's performance during the period the employee was under the performance plan for less than 30 days.

## **5.5. Alignment Statement**

### **5.5.1. Purpose and Use**

The Alignment Statement is a written statement to facilitate communication of the Agency mission, values, goals and objectives to employees. At the beginning of the appraisal period, managers should meet with employees, individually or collectively, to review the Alignment Statement. Supervisors should explain the connection between individual employee duties and responsibilities and the Agency goals and objectives.

Alignment Statements will be provided to each employee. While the statement is not a part of employee performance plans, understanding the connection between Agency goals and objectives and employee contributions is important to the success of the Agency. Therefore, this information must be communicated to all employees.

### **5.5.2. Content**

The Alignment Statement includes the Agency mission statement, Social Security values and Agency Strategic Goals.

The Alignment Statement may be supplemented with information about individual component goals and targets. (See Exhibit 1)

## 5.6. Performance Plans

Performance plans will consist of a defined number of performance elements and performance standards, based on the type of position and whether employees are in new hire/trainee status. The PACS-NHT performance plans are described in Section 5.21.

Performance elements are work assignments and responsibilities that are critical to achieving the Agency's mission and goals and reflect the Agency's commitment to providing outstanding public service. Most employees will be rated on four standard elements. Managers and supervisors, including team leaders and MSSs, will be rated on the four standard elements plus two additional elements. All elements are critical.

For each performance element, performance standards have been established to provide the framework for expectations of employee performance. Successful Contribution (Level 3) and Outstanding Contribution (Level 5) standards have been defined for each performance element used in PACS appraisals. The performance elements and standards are as follows:

### 5.6.1. Performance Element: Interpersonal Skills

#### 5.6.1.1. Successful Contribution (Level 3) Performance Standard:

- Treats the public and fellow employees with courtesy and respect.
- Listens and responds appropriately to feedback from the public, co-workers and managers.
- Communicates effectively.
- Maintains positive and productive working relationships within the office, work unit or group.

5.6.1.2. **Outstanding Contribution (Level 5)**  
**Performance Standard:**

-- Contributes to developing trust, respect and cooperation among unit members.

5.6.2. **Performance Element: Participation**

5.6.2.1. **Successful Contribution (Level 3)**  
**Performance Standard:**

-- Provides quality support to customers and fellow employees.

-- Contributes to achievement of the office, work unit or group goals.

-- Demonstrates resourcefulness by successfully seeking solutions to problems.

-- Completes work assignments.

-- Provides assistance to others when requested.

-- Adapts to changes in the workplace, such as adjustments in work priorities and new technology.

5.6.2.2. **Outstanding Contribution (Level 5)**  
**Performance Standard:**

-- Demonstrates initiative by voluntarily assisting other employees.

-- Promotes teamwork and engages other members in the group's efforts to achieve goals.

-- Demonstrates initiative in seeking out and completing additional work assignments.

-- Contributes to implementation of

change through suggestions that facilitate change and/or by eliciting contributions from other team members or components.

**5.6.3. Performance Element: Demonstrates Job Knowledge**

**5.6.3.1. Successful Contribution (Level 3)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Learns new material and applies it accurately while using appropriate technology and automation tools.

-- Maintains integrity of work processes.

-- Demonstrates sound analytical reasoning in applying policy, procedures and instructions.

-- Provides clear, accurate oral and/or written information and completes accurate work products.

**5.6.3.2. Outstanding Contribution (Level 5)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Demonstrates initiative by voluntarily sharing information, knowledge, skills and best practices.

-- Develops material that is used for reference, training and mentoring.

-- Processes the most complex work accurately and effectively, and develops options and recommendations that result in improved work unit performance.

-- Contributes to introducing the use of automation tools and fosters

their use within the work unit.

**5.6.4. Performance Element: Achieves Business Results**

**5.6.4.1. Successful Contribution (Level 3)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Produces a fair share of work according to supervisory expectations.

-- Completes work assignments timely and/or as scheduled.

-- Uses a balanced approach to complete work assignments effectively and efficiently using appropriate technology.

**5.6.4.2. Outstanding Contribution (Level 5)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Makes a significant contribution to achievement of work unit goals by completing extra work assignments.

-- Maximizes use of available time and resources.

-- Identifies barriers to completing work timely and develops reasonable solutions likely to result in improvement.

-- Develops creative procedures and approaches for using technology.

**5.6.5. Performance Element: Demonstrates Leadership  
(For all Managers, Supervisors, Team Leaders  
and MSSs)**

**5.6.5.1. Successful Contribution (Level 3)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Plans and assigns work, aligns staff and resources and delegates effectively to meet the Agency's

goals and objectives.

-- Provides adequate personnel management, technical and administrative support.

-- Reviews and evaluates work processes and service delivery, identifies areas needing improvement and takes appropriate action.

-- Supports and effectively implements change.

-- Maintains a positive work environment by encouraging employee involvement, cooperation and contribution to the group.

-- Communicates effectively and keeps subordinates, peers and executives informed and involved.

-- Identifies the need for and provides training.

-- Provides a safe work environment and ensures the security and integrity of Agency information, facilities, equipment and business processes.

-- Applies the principles of equal opportunity and diversity to decisions, including appraisals, promotions, developmental opportunities, assignments and awards.

**5.6.5.2. Outstanding Contribution (Level 5)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Implements change effectively by creating solutions and practices that are also used successfully and shared with other work units.

-- Creates a high performing work unit or significantly improves the performance and effectiveness of an existing unit.

-- Identifies problems quickly and addresses them promptly and successfully. Problems requiring interaction with another party are routinely accompanied by recommendations for an effective solution or course of action.

-- Shares resources/skills with other components to contribute to their achievement of agency goals and objectives.

**5.6.6. Performance Element: Assists in Managing Performance (For all Team Leaders and MSSs)**

**5.6.6.1 Successful Contribution (Level 3) Performance Standard**

-- Supports ongoing performance management activities (reviews work, service observations, audits, etc.) as assigned timely and efficiently.

-- Provides honest, constructive, effective oral and/or written feedback to individual employees and groups on an ongoing basis.

-- Provides employees with appropriate training and support and responds appropriately to their needs, recommendations and requests.

-- Provides information to manager enabling him/her to evaluate employee performance and contributions fairly and accurately.

-- Acknowledges employee and work unit contributions through appropriate use of informal recognition, and provides input to manager for formal recognition.

-- Provides manager with appropriate recommendations for the development of subordinates.

-- Recommends appropriate action based on performance assessment activities with manager and provides information/data needed to support these actions.

5.6.6.2. **Outstanding Contribution (Level 5)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Identifies additional information sources/data or methods to assist manager in assessing performance of employees.

-- Advises and/or assists other members of the management team in addressing difficult performance problems.

-- Mentors new employees or team leaders/officials and/or participates as mentor to employees selected for formal development programs.

5.6.7. **Performance Element: Manages Performance (For all Managers and Supervisors)**

5.6.7.1. **Successful Contribution (Level 3)  
Performance Standard:**

-- Completes ongoing performance management activities timely and efficiently.

- Establishes and communicates appropriate performance expectations.
- Provides honest, constructive, effective feedback to individual employees and groups on an ongoing basis.
- Provides employees with appropriate training and support and responds appropriately to their needs, recommendations and requests.
- Evaluates employee performance and contributions fairly and accurately.
- Acknowledges employee and work unit contributions through appropriate use of informal and formal recognition.
- Provides appropriate opportunities for the development of subordinates.
- Takes appropriate action based on performance results.

5.6.7.2. **Outstanding Contribution (Level 5)  
Performance Standard:**

- Advises and/or assists other members of the management team in addressing difficult performance problems.
- Mentors new management officials and/or participates as mentor to employees selected for formal development programs.

5.7. **Expectation Discussions**

At the beginning of the appraisal period, the supervisor and the employee will meet to discuss the

performance expectations. Expectation discussions provide meaningful context to performance standards and provide a means to convey how employee contributions align to Agency goals and objectives. The discussion will include an explanation of the performance plan terminology, the method(s) to be used to determine the level of performance in each element, the nature and type of work product or other results to be counted, reviewed or otherwise monitored. The discussion may also include examples of the performance requirements as they relate to the requirements for the Successful Contribution level. The discussion should provide sufficient information to avoid subsequent misunderstandings about the performance expectations and their application to the employee's performance. An employee shall not be rated on a performance standard that was not disclosed to him/her as part of a written performance appraisal plan.

Supervisors will use numerical data where relevant and applicable to provide context. For example, numerical data may be used to describe expectations regarding the timely and accurate processing of reasonable work assignments or expectations to define the fair share of the work.

Subsequent expectation sessions should be held when there is a change in the work situation such as:

- A change in the supervisor of record,
- A detail,
- A change in component goals or objectives, or
- A return to duty from an extended absence of 120 calendar days or more.

Supervisors will document the expectations discussed with employees. The documentation may be a short statement or a bullet list of the expectations conveyed to the employee.

Standard expectations may be developed for standard positions. Documentation of the expectations is filed in the employee's SF-7B Extension File as part of the

PACS and a copy must be given to the employee.

## **5.8. Issuing Performance Plans**

### **5.8.1. Timeframe for Issuing Performance Plans**

Supervisors will issue performance plans to employees no later than 30 days from the beginning of their appraisal period.

### **5.8.2. When to Issue a Performance Plan**

Performance plans are issued at the beginning of the assessment year (i.e., October 1), at the beginning of a permanent position change and at the beginning of a temporary promotion or temporary reassignment. Details are not considered a position change for this purpose and a performance plan would not be issued as a result of an employee beginning a detail.

A new performance plan need not be issued for an employee returning to his/her permanent position following a temporary personnel action provided the employee is returning during the same appraisal year and did not receive a performance rating when the temporary assignment began (e.g., the employee did not have 120 days under his/her current plan). In this case, the appraising official for the permanent position must reinstate the plan previously in effect. The service previously accrued under that plan would count toward the 120 day period for rating eligibility.

NOTE: If the employee is returning to his/her permanent position following a break of 120 days or more, the supervisor must conduct another expectation discussion.

### **5.8.3. Initial Performance Plan Discussion**

Supervisors will meet with employees individually to discuss their performance plans at the time they are issued. In the context of this discussion, supervisors will:

-- Discuss the Alignment Statement with employees and review its content. (See Section 5.5.)

-- Discuss employee performance elements, standards and expectations.

-- Identify any numeric data that may be considered in measuring employee progress and contributions.

-- Discuss employee development needs and opportunities, the employee's commitment to success and the relationship between contributions and employee recognition.

Supervisors may meet with employees collectively, in addition to individual performance discussions, to convey information that is general for all employees, such as unit/team goals.

**5.8.4. Documentation of Initial Performance Discussion**

Employees and their supervisors will sign the performance plan to acknowledge that the performance plan has been issued and the initial performance discussion has been conducted. A copy of the signed performance plan will be given to the employee and the original will be placed in the employee's SF-7B Extension File.

**5.9. Monitoring Performance**

**5.9.1. Two-Way Communications**

Ongoing, two-way communication between the supervisor and the employee is an effective tool for successful performance. Supervisors should engage in frequent, routine communications with employees and/or work units to foster effective performance by:

-- Clearly communicating goals and expectations.

-- Providing timely feedback to employees that is positive or that is constructive and helps

the employee improve performance.

-- Discussing opportunities available for achievement, recognition and development.

Supervisory conclusions based upon observations of an employee by management will be timely communicated to the employee during informal discussions and/or the formal performance discussion. If the employee disagrees with the supervisory conclusions on individual cases or overall performance to date, he/she may provide management with written rebuttals, including e-mail, which will be placed in the employee's SF-7B Extension File.

#### 5.9.2. **Employee Involvement**

To foster the concept of two-way communication, employees also have a responsibility for:

-- Expressing their commitment to achieving goals and objectives.

-- Seeking clarity to fully understand what is expected.

-- Discussing ways to improve individual and unit performance.

-- Asking for guidance and assistance to help them do a better job.

-- Assisting in documenting their contributions.

Discussions may be initiated by the supervisor or the employee at any time. An employee may inform his/her supervisor, in writing, which includes e-mail, of any factors beyond his/her

control that may affect performance. The supervisor will consider such factors when evaluating performance for the appraisal

period. This written documentation will be placed in the employee's SF-7B Extension File.

## **5.10. Formal Performance Discussions**

### **5.10.1. Supervisory Responsibilities**

At least once during the appraisal period the supervisor will have a documented performance discussion with each employee regarding the employee's performance. This documented discussion should be conducted near the mid-point of the employee's appraisal period.

During the discussion, supervisors should discuss the employee's contributions and results achieved within each performance element, reinforce expectations and identify needs for performance improvement. Because employee contributions for the entire appraisal period will be considered by the supervisor in determining the final appraisal rating for each element, indications of specific rating levels should not be included.

### **5.10.2. Employee Responsibilities**

To ensure that all performance-related activities are identified and documented, employees should provide feedback to their supervisors about their contributions.

### **5.10.3. Documentation of Formal Performance Discussion**

Supervisors should document the content of performance discussions. The documentation may be a short statement or a bullet list highlighting individual accomplishments and/or the need for performance improvement.

Employees and supervisors will sign the performance plan to acknowledge that the formal discussion was held. The documentation will be placed in the employee's SF-7B Extension File and a copy given to the employee.

## **5.11. Annual Performance Appraisal**

### **5.11.1. Timeframe for Annual Performance Appraisals**

Supervisors will provide employees with their rating of record within 30 days of the end of the employee's appraisal period.

If employees have not served under their performance plans for the minimum appraisal period, their annual performance appraisal will be postponed until the 120 day appraisal period has been completed.

Annual performance appraisals for new employees who are not covered by the PACS-NHT procedures will be postponed until one of the following conditions are met:

- The probationary period is completed;
- The trial period for term appointment is completed; or
- The first year of an excepted service appointment (not limited to one year or less) is completed.

Please see Exhibit 7 for additional information regarding the timing of issuing performance appraisals.

### **5.11.2. Preparation of Informational Appraisals**

Informational appraisals are appraisals that are prepared at the time an employee changes his/her position (e.g., reassignment, promotion, voluntary change to lower grade, temporary promotion) but the position change does not coincide with the end of the Agency's appraisal period (i.e., September 30) and the employee has served under a performance plan for a minimum of 120 days. In these instances, an informational appraisal is completed and a copy is placed in the employee's SF-7B extension file.

If, at the end of the appraisal year, the employee does not have a minimum of 120 days

under his/her current performance plan but does have an informational appraisal from earlier in the same appraisal year, the informational appraisal becomes the employee's rating of record for that appraisal year.

If the employee has completed 120 days under his/her current performance plan at the end of the appraisal period, and the employee has an informational appraisal from earlier in the same appraisal year, the appraising official should consider the informational appraisal when preparing the employee's final rating of record.

**5.11.3. Information to Be Considered by the Rating Supervisor**

Supervisors are responsible for an accurate assessment of the employee's performance. In determining the rating of record, consideration must be given to the employee's overall contributions for the entire assessment period. The ratings should include consideration of:

- The applicable performance standards for the duties of the employee's position;
- Feedback from the Optional Employee Self-Assessment (See Section 5.11.3.1.);
- Feedback from Workgroups/Special Projects/Details, if appropriate. (See Section 5.11.3.2.);
- Feedback from Team Leaders;
- Factors that may be outside the employee's control; and
- Applicable numeric data. (See Section 5.11.3.3.)
- An informational appraisal(s) from the same appraisal year, if applicable.

**5.11.3.1. Optional Employee Self-Assessment**

Employees will be given the option of providing to their supervisor a one-page, end-of-appraisal self-assessment highlighting their contributions and accomplishments relating to their performance plan. Employees who wish to submit a self-assessment must do so no later than 10 calendar days after the end of their appraisal period. A reasonable amount of time, as determined by the supervisor, will be provided for this activity. Self-assessments should be maintained in the employee's SF-7B Extension File.

**5.11.3.2. Feedback from Workgroups/Special Projects/Details**

Supervisors are responsible for requesting feedback regarding an employee's performance on special assignments, projects, workgroups or details outside of the normal work unit when the activity would have an impact on the evaluation of the employee's performance. In determining when to solicit feedback, consideration should be given to the duration of the activity and the amount of time the employee spent on the activity.

Feedback should be obtained in writing from the supervisor responsible for the workgroup, project or detail. The assignment supervisor may include feedback obtained from a non-supervisory project leader, technical expert or team leader. The documentation should include the project/activity name, the workgroup/project supervisor's name, phone number and e-mail address, narrative feedback and comments regarding the

employee's performance and the date the feedback was provided. The employee should be given a copy of the documentation and provided an opportunity to include comments. The documentation should be maintained in the employee's SF-7B Extension File.

#### **5.11.3.3. Consideration of Numeric Data**

Supervisors should consider appropriate measures of performance in rating employees. Since data alone cannot capture the full extent of the employee's contributions, the use of numeric data should not be the exclusive measure of performance. Supervisors should be aware that numeric data can only measure certain aspects of performance; therefore, care should be taken when considering numeric data.

#### **5.12. Ratings for Individual Performance Elements**

Supervisors must use judgment when determining whether the employee's performance meets a particular standard. Expectations should not be so rigid as to eliminate flexibility and judgment in applying them.

The supervisor, when assessing performance, will consider factors which affect performance that are beyond the control of the employee. When numerical goals, guidelines and indicators are factors in appraising an employee in a given performance element, management will consider the employee's other job assignments and the actual amount of time available to perform the job function being appraised under the performance element. The procedures that are used to gather information in order to evaluate employee performance must reasonably ensure accurate evaluation of performance. Supervisors will timely disclose to each employee all records that relate to his/her performance appraisal.

Each employee will be rated at Level 5, 3, or 1 on each of the elements in his/her performance plan. All elements have equal weight.

**5.12.1. Successful Contribution Element Rating**

To be rated at the Successful Contribution (Level 3) on a performance element, employees must meet all of the successful standards appropriate to their jobs for that element.

**5.12.2. Outstanding Contribution Element Rating**

To be rated at the Outstanding Contribution (Level 5) on a performance element, employees must meet all of the successful standards appropriate to their job for that element and a substantial number of the applicable standards described as "Outstanding" for that element.

**5.12.3. Not Successful Element Rating**

Employees who do not meet one of the successful standards appropriate to their job on any performance element will be rated Not Successful (Level 1) for that element.

**5.13. Summary Appraisal Ratings**

The Summary Appraisal Rating will be based on the rating of each element, as follows:

-- Employees with a Level 5 rating on all elements will be rated at the Outstanding Contribution (Level 5) summary level.

-- Employees who have a rating of less than Level 5 on any element and no Level 1 rating on any element will be rated at the Successful Contribution (Level 3) summary level.

-- Employees who receive a Level 1 rating on any one element will be rated at the Not Successful (Level 1) summary level.

#### **5.14. Documentation of Annual Performance Appraisal**

The supervisor will sign and date the PACS Performance Plan Forms, SSA-230, 231, 232, or 233. (See Exhibits 2, 3, 4 and 5) Only a Level 1 rating of record requires a concurring signature of a higher level management official. Employees will sign and date their annual performance appraisals to indicate receipt. Employees will receive the original signed appraisal. A copy of the appraisal will be maintained in the employee's SF-7B Extension File. Appraisals will be maintained in accordance with SSA's policies and procedures.

#### **5.15. Element Average**

In order to differentiate degrees of above average performance to assist in awards determinations, an Element Average will be computed based on the rating of each individual element. The Element Average is computed by adding the ratings for each element and then dividing that sum by the total number of elements. (See Exhibit 6)

-- Only performance element ratings of 3 and 5 are used.

-- All elements are given equal weight in computing the Element Average.

-- An Element Average is not computed on PACS-NHT appraisals. New hires and trainees covered by PACS-NHT will be rated on two elements and will be rated either at the Successful Contribution Level (Level 3) or Not Successful Level (Level 1).

-- An Element Average is not computed when the rating on any element is at Level 1.

#### **5.16. Dealing with Marginal and Failing Performance**

The procedures for dealing with marginal and failing performance apply to employees who are entitled to the procedural and appeal rights described in 5 CFR 432 or 5 CFR 752.

These procedures are not applicable to employees who are not entitled to the procedural and appeal rights

described above, or who have waived those rights. These employees may be terminated for performance reasons with appropriate written notice.

#### **5.16.1. Performance Assistance**

##### **5.16.1.1. Discussion**

When an employee's performance is identified as marginal or failing, the supervisor should conduct a performance discussion with the employee. The supervisor should include in the discussion the expectations for improving performance, the employee's responsibilities and any assistance that may be needed for the employee to perform at the Successful Contribution Level, including workload assistance, training, mentoring and other appropriate support.

##### **5.16.1.2. Timeframe for Improvement**

An employee will be allowed 30 calendar days to successfully improve his/her performance. The supervisor may extend the period if the employee is demonstrating significant progress toward successful performance.

##### **5.16.1.3. Documentation of Performance Assistance**

The supervisor should document the discussion in writing and place the documentation in the employee's SF-7B Extension File. Copies of training schedules and documentation of any other assistance to be provided should also be placed in the SF-7B Extension File. The employee will be given copies of all

documentation.

**5.16.1.4. Employee Status during Performance Assistance**

Employees are considered to be performing at the Successful Contribution Level (Level 3) during a period of performance assistance. If a rating of record becomes due during a period of performance assistance, the employee will be rated no lower than the Successful Contribution Level (Level 3). Employees will be eligible for Within-Grade Increases (WIGI) and awards during an assistance period.

If after successful completion of a Performance Assistance period an employee's performance is later identified as marginal or failing, the employee is entitled to another period of Performance Assistance.

**5.17. Opportunity to Perform Successfully (OPS)**

If following the Performance Assistance period, the employee's performance has not improved or is below the Successful Contribution Level, the supervisor should initiate an OPS plan. The OPS represents a formal process for performance improvement and is developed by the supervisor.

**5.17.1. Written Notice**

To institute an OPS plan, the supervisor must provide written notice to the employee that includes:

- The critical element(s) for which performance is unacceptable;
- The performance requirement(s) or standards(s) that must be attained in order to demonstrate acceptable performance;

-- A statement that the employee is not in good standing and any WIGI or career ladder promotion will be withheld for the duration of the plan;

-- A summary of assistance already provided, along with the results;

-- A statement of the supervisor's plan for providing additional assistance to the employee (e.g., training, mentoring, etc.);

-- A statement that unless the employee's performance in the critical element(s) improves to and is sustained at an acceptable level, the employee may be reassigned, reduced in grade or removed from Federal service.

--A statement that the employee has the responsibility to improve performance, which may include seeking assistance needed, reading and researching issues, etc.; and

-- A statement informing the employee that the supervisor will continue to monitor the employee's performance and progress towards improvement during the course of the OPS.

#### 5.17.2. **Timeframe for OPS**

OPS plans will be instituted for a period of 120 calendar days. Supervisors may terminate the plan if successful performance is demonstrated and sustained before the end of the 120 days. Supervisors may extend the period if the employee is demonstrating significant progress towards the Successful Contribution Level of performance.

#### 5.17.3. **Documentation**

A copy of the written OPS notice will be placed in the employee's SF-7B Extension File.

During the OPS period, the supervisor will conduct ongoing discussions with the employee about progress towards improvement. The

supervisor will document these discussions in the employee's SF-7B Extension File.

If performance has not improved to the Successful Contribution Level by the end of the OPS period, a Level 1 rating of record will be issued. If performance has improved to the Successful Contribution Level and a rating of record is due, the rating will be at Level 3. If performance has improved to the Successful Contribution Level and a rating of record is not due, the employee will be notified in writing of his/her successful completion of the OPS plan and a copy of the notice will be placed in his/her SF-7B Extension File.

#### **5.17.4. Employee Status during the OPS Plan**

Employees are considered to be performing at the Not Successful Level (Level 1) while under an OPS plan. If a rating of record becomes due while an employee is under an OPS plan, the rating of record will be delayed until the plan is completed. If a WIGI becomes due while an employee is under an OPS plan, a Not Successful rating of record will be prepared and the WIGI will be denied.

### **5.18. Performance-Based Actions**

#### **5.18.1. Requirements for Performance-Based Actions**

Supervisors will initiate a performance-based action if, despite the additional assistance provided in accordance with the OPS plan, the employee's performance has not improved to the Successful Contribution Level by the end of the OPS plan. This will result in the employee's removal or placement in another position commensurate with his/her demonstrated ability (e.g., the prior position held) via a reassignment or change to lower grade.

Supervisors have the option of taking a performance-based action without instituting a

new OPS plan if the following three conditions are met:

-- The employee has successfully completed an OPS plan by demonstrating improved performance;

-- Within a one-year period following the beginning of the initial OPS plan the employee's performance again falls below the Successful Contribution Level in the same element(s), and

-- There is sufficient documentation to support a performance-based action.

If these three conditions are not met, the supervisor must initiate a new OPS plan.

#### **5.18.2. Performance-Based Demotion or Removal Actions**

Demotions or removals for performance-based reasons must be in accordance with the applicable law and government-wide regulations (5 CFR Part 432 or 5 CFR Part 752).

#### **5.18.3. Performance-Based Reassignments**

Supervisors may reassign employees to different positions or to prior positions at the same grade for performance-based reasons if the employee's performance has not improved to the Successful Contribution Level by the end of the OPS plan. Reassignments at the same grade are not covered by the government-wide adverse action or performance-based action procedures. However, supervisors should provide a 30-day advance notice of the action that identifies the specific instances of unacceptable performance, the element(s) involved and the position to which the employee is being reassigned.

#### **5.18.4. Performance Ratings Following Demotion or Reassignment**

The Not Successful (Level 1) rating of record

for an employee who has been demoted or reassigned for performance-based reasons in accordance with this Section will continue in effect until completion of the employee's appraisal period for his/her new position. However, if the employee is eligible for a WIGI prior to the completion of this appraisal period, a rating of record will be issued when the employee has demonstrated successful performance for at least 120 days.

## **5.19. Special PACS Provisions for New Hires and Trainees (PACS-NHT)**

### **5.19.1. Overview**

New hires and trainees may be issued a PACS-NHT performance plan. Employees covered by this type of performance plan serve under special PASS/FAIL provisions. The PACS-NHT provisions recognize that many new hires and trainees require a lengthy period of formal classroom training and/or on-the-job training before they can perform the full range of their job duties. The PACS-NHT provisions provide these employees with additional time to demonstrate successful performance before they are rated under the normal PACS performance plan. Deputy Commissioners, their equivalents or their designees are responsible for determining which positions will be covered under PACS-NHT.

### **5.19.2. Employees Covered**

#### **5.19.2.1. New Hires**

Employees newly hired into SSA positions for the first time, or following a break in SSA employment, may be covered by the special PACS-NHT provisions. Because new hires for some positions would be expected to perform the full range of job duties without extensive training/mentoring, additional time may not be needed to evaluate

performance. Therefore, each SSA component should determine which positions should be covered by PACS-NHT plans.

#### 5.19.2.2. **Current SSA Employees**

Current SSA employees who move, without a change in appointment or a break in service, into new positions that require a lengthy training period may also be covered by special PACS-NHT provisions during the training period.

### 5.20. **PACS-NHT Appraisal Period**

#### 5.20.1. **New Hires**

The initial appraisal period for the new hires covered under PACS-NHT provisions begins with their entrance on duty into the new position and ends one year from that date. They are issued a limited performance plan consisting of two elements: Engages in Learning and Interpersonal Skills.

If the employee's training period ends before the end of the probationary period, he/she is issued a rating of record at the end of the probationary period based on these two elements. **NOTE: Probationary employees are not appraised during their first year.** The employee is then issued a full performance plan for the next rating period.

If the employee's training period does not end before the end of the probationary period, he/she is issued a rating of record at the end of the probationary period based on the two elements. The employee is then reissued a PACS-NHT performance plan until training is completed.

At the completion of training, the employee is given a regular PACS performance plan. A rating of record is issued if a rating is due

and the employee has been under the PACS-NHT plan for at least 120 days.

The above also applies to covered employees serving under a trial period for term appointments and to covered employees in the first year of employment under excepted service appointments that are not limited to one year or less.

Upon issuance of a regular PACS performance plan, employees will be given a minimum appraisal period of six months. If a rating of record is due before completion of this six month period, the rating will be delayed until the end of the first six months under the regular PACS performance plan. Thereafter, all employees will be covered under the normal PACS provisions.

#### 5.20.2. **Current SSA Employees**

The initial PACS-NHT appraisal period for SSA employees who move, without a change in appointment or a break in service, into new positions that require a lengthy training period begins with the date they enter the trainee position.

**NOTE: Trainee as used here is not meant to include the length of time needed to reach the journeyman level of a career ladder position.**

If the employee's training period has not ended by the end of his/her appraisal period, the supervisor will issue a PACS-NHT appraisal if the employee has been covered by a performance plan for at least 120 days. The employee is then issued another PACS-NHT performance plan.

If the employee's training period has not ended by the end of his/her appraisal period, and the employee has not been covered by a performance plan for at least 120 days, the supervisor will defer issuing a PACS-NHT appraisal until the employee has been covered

for 120 days. The employee is then issued another PACS-NHT performance plan.

If the training period is completed by the end of the employee's appraisal period, the employee is issued a PACS-NHT appraisal. The supervisor will then issue a regular PACS performance plan.

Upon issuance of a regular PACS performance plan, employees will be given a minimum appraisal period of six months. If a rating of record is due before the completion of this six month period, the rating will be delayed until the end of the first six months under the full performance plan. Thereafter, the employee will be covered under the normal PACS provisions.

## **5.21. PACS-NHT Performance Plans**

PACS-NHT performance plans include two elements on which employees are rated rather than the four elements in the PACS performance plan. Both elements are critical and no other elements may be included. Only the Successful Contribution (Level 3) performance standard is defined for each performance element. Employees covered by this section serve under special PASS/FAIL performance provisions. An employee under the PASS/FAIL performance plan will be appraised at Level 3(Successful) if he/she "passes" both elements or Level 1 (Not Successful) if he/she "fails" one or both elements. The PACS-NHT performance elements and standards are as follows:

### **5.21.1. PACS-NHT Element #1: Engages in Learning**

#### **5.21.1.1. Successful Contribution (Level 3) Performance Standard:**

-- Participates in training by asking appropriate questions, researching information and successfully completing tests and assignments.

-- Processes work accurately,

successfully completes on-the-job training, and seeks assistance when appropriate.

-- Demonstrates progress towards independent completion of work.

**5.21.2. PACS-NHT Element #2: Interpersonal Skills**

**5.21.2.1. Successful Contribution (Level 3) Performance Standard:**

-- Treats the public and fellow employees with courtesy and respect.

-- Listens and responds appropriately to feedback from the public, co-workers and managers.

-- Communicates effectively.

-- Maintains positive and productive working relationships within the office, work unit or group.

**5.22. Issuing PACS-NHT Performance Plans**

**5.22.1. Timeframe for Issuing Performance Plans**

Supervisors will issue PACS-NHT performance plans to new employees and trainees no later than 30 days from their entrance on duty into their new positions.

**5.22.2. Initial Performance Plan Discussions**

Supervisors will meet with new employees and trainees to discuss their performance plans at the time they are issued. These initial performance plan discussions will be conducted and documented. (See Section 5.8.)

**5.22.3. Monitoring Performance**

Supervisors will monitor the performance of new hires and trainees and conduct formal

progress reviews. (See Section 5.9.)

## **5.23. Annual PACS-NHT Performance Appraisal**

### **5.23.1. Initial Appraisal Period**

#### **5.23.1.1. Timeframe**

Annual PACS-NHT performance appraisals must be completed at the end of the employee's appraisal period as discussed in Sections 5.20.1. and 5.20.2. Supervisors will provide employees with their rating of record within 30 days of the end of their appraisal period.

If employees have not served under their PACS-NHT performance plans for the minimum appraisal period (i.e. 120 days), their annual performance appraisal for the initial appraisal period will be postponed until the minimum appraisal period has been completed.

Please see Exhibit 8 for additional information regarding the timing of issuing performance appraisals.

#### **5.23.1.2. Information to Be Considered by the Supervisor**

Supervisors will consider first hand observations, feedback from other sources, including mentors and training instructors, to ensure a fair, complete and ongoing appraisal of the employee's work/learning activities during the rating period. Feedback should be obtained, maintained and considered in accordance with Section 5.11.2.

#### **5.23.1.3. Ratings on the Performance Elements**

Supervisors will rate new hires and

trainees on each of the two PACS-NHT critical performance elements. To be rated at the Successful Contribution Level (Level 3) for each element, employees must meet all of the standards appropriate to their jobs. Employees who do not meet all of the appropriate standards will be rated at the Not Successful Level (Level 1) for those elements.

**5.23.1.4. Summary Appraisal Ratings**

Employees who are rated at the Successful Contribution Level (Level 3) on both of their critical elements will be rated at the Successful Contribution (Level 3) Summary Level.

Employees who are rated at the Not Successful Level (Level 1) in either of the critical elements will be rated at the Not Successful (Level 1) Summary Level.

**5.23.1.5. Documentation**

PACS-NHT annual performance appraisals will be documented and maintained. (See Section 5.14.)

**5.24. Dealing with PACS-NHT Marginal and Failing Performance**

**5.24.1. New Hires and Trainees with Appeal Rights**

The procedures for dealing with marginal and failing performance in Section 5.16 will also apply to new hires and trainees serving under PACS-NHT performance plans who are entitled to the procedural and appeal rights described in 5 CFR 752 or 5 CFR 432.

**5.24.2. New Hires and Trainees without Appeal Rights**

The procedures for dealing with marginal and

failing performance in Section 5.16 do not apply to new hires and trainees serving under PACS-NHT performance plans if they are not entitled to the procedural and appeal rights described in 5 CFR 752 or 5 CFR 432 or they have waived those rights. In these situations, new hires and trainees who demonstrate marginal or failing performance may be terminated for performance reasons with appropriate written notice.

## **6. SSA LABOR-MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS**

See the Office of Labor-Management and Employee Relations web site at <http://eis.ba.ssa.gov/olmer/index.htm> for additional provisions applicable to bargaining unit employees.

Provisions in collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) pertain to the respective bargaining unit employees and govern over the provisions in the SSA Personnel Policy Manual (PPM), unless the provisions of the PPM implement a nondiscretionary mandate of Federal statute or law or a government-wide regulation that predated the execution of the CBA.

## **7. RECORDS RETENTION**

A copy of the signed performance plan will be given to the employee and the original will be placed in the employee's SF-7B Extension File. The original annual performance appraisal form will be given to the employee and a signed copy will be maintained in the SF-7B Extension File. The appraisal rating will be recorded in the Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS). Appraisals will be maintained in accordance with SSA's policies and procedures.

Records must be kept according to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) General Records Schedule. This schedule can be accessed through the NARA web site at <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/grs01.html>.

**Sample Alignment Statement**

**Social Security Values**

- To treat every individual with equal regard and respect
- To act with integrity
- To imbue quality in all we do and help others do the same
- To remember that courtesy and compassion mean everything
- To listen carefully and to act on what we hear
- To respect stability and embrace change, keeping what works and changing what could be better
- To value diversity
- To discharge faithfully our role as guardians of the public trust
- To act with this thought in mind: to millions of people, we are "the government"

**Agency Strategic Goals**

**Service:** To deliver high-quality, citizen-centered service

**Stewardship:** To ensure superior stewardship of Social Security programs and resources

**Solvency:** To achieve sustainable solvency and ensure Social Security programs meet the needs of current and future generations

**Staff:** To strategically manage and align staff to support SSA's mission

**Component/Mission Goals**

**(To be determined by each component)**

<b>PACS Performance Plan: Non-Managers</b>																											
<b>Appraisal Year:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____																											
<b>Employee:</b> _____ <b>SSN:</b> _____ <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> <span>Last</span> <span>First</span> <span>MI</span> </div>																											
_____	_____	_____																									
<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Position #</b>	<b>Series/Grade</b>																									
<b>Initial Performance Plan Discussion:</b>																											
<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>																									
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<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>																									
<b>Final Appraisal</b>																											
<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>																									

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Non-Managers**

**Appraisal Period:**

**1. Interpersonal Skills**

- Treats the public and fellow employees with courtesy and respect.
- Listens and responds appropriately to feedback from the public, coworkers and managers.
- Communicates effectively.
- Maintains positive and productive working relationships within the office, work unit or group.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Non-Managers**

**Appraisal Period:**

**2. Participation**

- Provides quality support to customers and fellow employees.
- Contributes to achievement of the office, work unit or group goals.
- Demonstrates resourcefulness by successfully seeking solutions to problems.
- Completes work assignments.
- Provides assistance to others when requested.
- Adapts to changes in the workplace, such as adjustments in work priorities and new technology.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Non-Managers**

**Appraisal Period:**

**3. Demonstrates Job Knowledge**

- Learns new material and applies it accurately while using appropriate technology and automation tools.
- Maintains integrity of work processes.
- Demonstrates sound analytical reasoning in applying policy, procedures and instructions.
- Provides clear, accurate oral and written information and completes accurate work products.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Non-Managers**

**Appraisal Period:**

**4. Achieves Business Results**

- Produces a fair share of work according to supervisory expectations.
- Completes work assignments timely and/or as scheduled.
- Uses a balanced approach to complete work assignments effectively and efficiently using appropriate technology.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

<b>PACS Performance Plan: Team Leaders including Management Support Specialists</b>			
Appraisal Year: _____		Date: _____	
Employee: _____		SSN: _____	
Last	First	MI	
_____	_____	_____	
Position Title	Position #	Series/Grade	
Initial Performance Plan Discussion:			
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:	
Summary Appraisal		Element Average	
Outstanding Contribution	_____	<b>Ratings in Individual Elements:</b> Interpersonal Skills _____ Participation _____ Job Knowledge _____ Achieves Business Results _____ Demonstrates Leadership _____ Assists in Managing Performance _____ Total _____ Divide total by number of elements to equal the Element Average _____	
Successful Contribution	_____		
Not Successful	_____		
Performance Discussion (Required)			
Employee:	Supervisor:		Date:
Performance Discussion (Optional)			
Employee:	Supervisor:		Date:
Informational Appraisal			
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:	
Final Appraisal			
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:	

**Social Security Administration**  
**PACS Performance Plan: Team Leaders including Management Support Specialists**

**Appraisal Period:**

<b>1. Interpersonal Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treats the public and fellow employees with courtesy and respect.</li><li>• Listens and responds appropriately to feedback from the public, coworkers and managers.</li><li>• Communicates effectively.</li><li>• Maintains positive and productive working relationships within the office, work unit or group.</li></ul>
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**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)

**Social Security Administration**  
**PACS Performance Plan: Team Leaders including Management Support Specialists**

**Appraisal Period:**

<b>2. Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides quality support to customers and fellow employees.</li><li>• Contributes to achievement of the office, work unit or group goals.</li><li>• Demonstrates resourcefulness by successfully seeking solutions to problems.</li><li>• Completes work assignments.</li><li>• Provides assistance to others when requested.</li><li>• Adapts to changes in the workplace, such as adjustments in work priorities and new technology.</li></ul>
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**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

<b>Social Security Administration</b> <b>PACS Performance Plan: Team Leaders including Management Support Specialists</b>	
<b>Appraisal Period:</b>	
<b>3. Demonstrates Job Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns new material and applies it accurately while using appropriate technology and automation tools.</li> <li>• Maintains integrity of work processes.</li> <li>• Demonstrates sound analytical reasoning in applying policy, procedures and instructions.</li> <li>• Provides clear, accurate oral and written information and completes accurate work products.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Discussion (Required):</b>	
<p>(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)</p>	
<b>Performance Discussion (Optional):</b>	
<p>(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)</p>	
<b>Final Rating: Level ____</b>	
<p>(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)</p>	

<b>Social Security Administration</b> <b>PACS Performance Plan: Team Leaders including Management Support Specialists</b>	
<b>Appraisal Period:</b>	
<b>4. Achieves Business Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produces a fair share of work according to supervisory expectations.</li> <li>• Completes work assignments timely and/or as scheduled.</li> <li>• Uses a balanced approach to complete work assignments effectively and efficiently using appropriate technology.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Discussion (Required):</b>	
<p>(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)</p>	
<b>Performance Discussion (Optional):</b>	
<p>(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)</p>	
<b>Final Rating: Level ____</b>	
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<b>Social Security Administration</b> <b>PACS Performance Plan: Team Leaders including Management Support Specialists</b>	
<b>Appraisal Period:</b>	
<b>5. Demonstrates Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans and assigns work, aligns staff and resources and delegates effectively to meet the Agency's goals and objectives.</li> <li>• Provides adequate personnel management, technical and administrative support.</li> <li>• Reviews and evaluates work processes and service delivery, identifies areas needing improvement and takes appropriate action.</li> <li>• Supports and effectively implements change.</li> <li>• Maintains a positive work environment by encouraging employee involvement, cooperation and contribution to the group.</li> <li>• Communicates effectively and keeps subordinates, peers and executives informed and involved.</li> <li>• Identifies the need for and provides training.</li> <li>• Provides a safe work environment and ensures the security and integrity of Agency information, facilities, equipment and business processes.</li> <li>• Applies the principles of equal opportunity and diversity to decisions, including appraisals, promotions, developmental opportunities, assignments and awards.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Discussion (Required):</b>  (This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)	
<b>Performance Discussion (Optional):</b>  (This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)	
<b>Final Rating: Level ____</b>  (This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)	

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Team Leaders including Management Support Specialists**

**Appraisal Period:**

<p><b>6. Assists in Managing Performance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports ongoing performance management activities (reviews work, service observations, audits, etc.) as assigned timely and efficiently.</li> <li>• Provides honest, constructive, effective oral and/or written feedback to individual employees and groups on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Provides employees with appropriate training and support and responds appropriately to their needs, recommendations and requests.</li> <li>• Provides information to manager enabling him/her to evaluate employee performance and contributions fairly and accurately.</li> <li>• Acknowledges employee and work unit contributions through appropriate use of informal recognition, and provides input to manager for formal recognition.</li> <li>• Provides manager with appropriate recommendations for the development of subordinates.</li> <li>• Recommends appropriate action based on performance assessment activities with manager and provides information/data needed to support these actions.</li> </ul>
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**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual’s accomplishments/ contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual’s accomplishments/ contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual’s accomplishments/ contributions.)

<b>PACS Performance Plan: Managers and Supervisors</b>		
Appraisal Year: _____		Date: _____
Employee: _____	SSN: _____	
Last	First	MI
_____	_____	_____
Position Title	Position #	Series/Grade
<b>Initial Performance Plan Discussion:</b>		
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:
<b>Summary Appraisal</b>	<b>Element Average</b>	
Outstanding Contribution _____	<b>Ratings in Individual Elements:</b> Interpersonal Skills _____ Participation _____ Job Knowledge _____ Achieves Business Results _____ Demonstrates Leadership _____ Manages Performance _____ Total _____ Divide total by number of elements to equal the Element Average _____	
Successful Contribution _____		
Not Successful _____		
<b>Performance Discussion (Required)</b>		
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:
<b>Performance Discussion (Optional)</b>		
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:
<b>Informational Appraisal</b>		
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:
<b>Final Appraisal</b>		
Employee:	Supervisor:	Date:

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Managers and Supervisors**

**Appraisal Period:**

**1. Interpersonal Skills**

- Treats the public and fellow employees with courtesy and respect.
- Listens and responds appropriately to feedback from the public, coworkers and managers.
- Communicates effectively.
- Maintains positive and productive working relationships within the office, work unit or group.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Managers and Supervisors**

**Appraisal Period:**

**2. Participation**

- Provides quality support to customers and fellow employees.
- Contributes to achievement of the office, work unit or group goals.
- Demonstrates resourcefulness by successfully seeking solutions to problems.
- Completes work assignments.
- Provides assistance to others when requested.
- Adapts to changes in the workplace, such as adjustments in work priorities and new technology.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Managers and Supervisors**

**Appraisal Period:**

**3. Demonstrates Job Knowledge**

- Learns new material and applies it accurately while using appropriate technology and automation tools.
- Maintains integrity of work processes.
- Demonstrates sound analytical reasoning in applying policy, procedures and instructions.
- Provides clear, accurate oral and written information and completes accurate work products.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Managers and Supervisors**

**Appraisal Period:**

**4. Achieves Business Results**

- Produces a fair share of work according to supervisory expectations.
- Completes work assignments timely and/or as scheduled.
- Uses a balanced approach to complete work assignments effectively and efficiently using appropriate technology.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Managers and Supervisors**

**Appraisal Period:**

**5. Demonstrates Leadership**

- Plans and assigns work, aligns staff and resources and delegates effectively to meet the Agency's goals and objectives.
- Provides adequate personnel management, technical and administrative support.
- Reviews and evaluates work processes and service delivery, identifies areas needing improvement and takes appropriate action.
- Supports and effectively implements change.
- Maintains a positive work environment by encouraging employee involvement, cooperation and contribution to the group.
- Communicates effectively and keeps subordinates, peers and executives informed and involved.
- Identifies the need for and provides training.
- Provides a safe work environment and ensures the security and integrity of Agency information, facilities, equipment and business processes.
- Applies the principles of equal opportunity and diversity to decisions, including appraisals, promotions, developmental opportunities, assignments and awards.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: Managers and Supervisors**

**Appraisal Period:**

**6. Manages Performance**

- Completes ongoing performance management activities timely and efficiently.
- Establishes and communicates appropriate performance expectations.
- Provides honest, constructive, effective feedback to individual employees and groups on an ongoing basis.
- Provides employees with appropriate training and support and responds appropriately to their needs, recommendations and requests.
- Evaluates employee performance and contributions fairly and accurately.
- Acknowledges employee and work unit contributions through appropriate use of informal and formal recognition.
- Provides appropriate opportunities for the development of subordinates.
- Takes appropriate action based on performance results.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/ contributions.)

<b>PACS Performance Plan: New Hires/Trainees</b>		
<b>Appraisal Year:</b> _____		<b>Date:</b> _____
<b>Employee:</b> _____	<b>SSN:</b> _____	
Last	First	MI
_____	_____	_____
<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Position #</b>	<b>Series/Grade</b>
<b>Initial Performance Plan Discussion:</b>		
<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Summary Appraisal</b>		
<b>Successful Contribution</b>	_____	
<b>Not Successful</b>	_____	
<b>Performance Discussion (Required)</b>		
<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Performance Discussion (Optional)</b>		
<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Informational Appraisal</b>		
<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Final Appraisal</b>		
<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: New Hires/Trainees**

**Appraisal Period:**

**1. Engages in Learning**

- Participates in training by asking appropriate questions, researching information and successfully completing tests and assignments.
- Processes work accurately, successfully completes on-the-job training, and seeks assistance when appropriate.
- Demonstrates progress towards independent completion of work.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Social Security Administration  
PACS Performance Plan: New Hires/Trainees**

**Appraisal Period:**

**2. Interpersonal Skills**

- Treats the public and fellow employees with courtesy and respect.
- Listens and responds appropriately to feedback from the public, coworkers and managers.
- Communicates effectively.
- Maintains positive and productive working relationships within the office, work unit or group.

**Performance Discussion (Required):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Performance Discussion (Optional):**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Final Rating: Level \_\_\_\_**

(This section should contain a short narrative or bullet list highlighting the individual's accomplishments/contributions.)

**Example of Determining the Element Average  
Using Four Critical Elements**

Critical Elements	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings
1	3	3	3	3	5
2	3	3	3	5	5
3	3	3	5	5	5
4	3	5	5	5	5
Element Average	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Summary Rating	Successful Contribution				Outstanding Contribution

**Example of Determining the Element Average  
Using Six Critical Elements**

Critical Elements	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings	Ratings
1	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
2	3	3	3	3	3	5	5
3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5
4	3	3	3	5	5	5	5
5	3	3	5	5	5	5	5
6	3	5	5	5	5	5	5
Element Average	3.0	3.3	3.7	4.0	4.3	4.7	5
Summary Rating	Successful Contribution						Outstanding Contribution

**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (PACS)**

<b>Event</b>	<b>PACS -Rating of Record Prepared?</b>
<p>1. End of the appraisal period for a non-probationary employee covered by PACS, who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has served under PACS for at least 120 days,</li> <li>• Has served under PACS for less than 120 days,</li> <li>• Is serving under an OPS plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, annual performance appraisal should be prepared.</p> <p>No, appraisal postponed until employee has 120 days under PACS.</p> <p>No, appraisal should be postponed until the OPS plan is completed.</p>
<p>2. Completion of an OPS plan and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee’s performance has improved to at least Level 3 and a rating of record is due.</li> <li>• Employee’s performance has improved to at least Level 3 and a rating of record is not due.</li> <li>• Employee’s performance is Not Successful (Level 1).</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, a rating of record will be prepared.</p> <p>No, a rating of record will not be prepared. The current rating of record remains in effect.</p> <p>Yes, a Not Successful (Level 1) rating of record must be prepared.</p>
<p>3. Employee with a current Not Successful (Level 1) rating of record has been reassigned or demoted to another position for performance-based reasons and the employee’s performance has improved to at least Level 3 and is eligible for a within-grade increase (WIGI).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee has served under the new performance plan for at least 120 days.</li> <li>• Employee has served under the new performance plan for less than 120 days.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, a rating of record must be prepared rating the employee at Level 3 or higher.</p> <p>No, employee is not eligible for a rating of record until he/she has served under the new performance plan for 120 days. The WIGI is delayed.</p>
<p>4. Employee returns to permanent position from temporary promotion, detail or other temporary assignment.</p>	<p>No, employee is not eligible for a rating of record based on this event.</p>

<p>5. End of the appraisal period for a non-trainee employee who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• currently serving a probationary period for initial career/career-conditional appointment;</li> <li>• in the first year of an employee's initial excepted service appointment which is not limited to 1 year or less.</li> </ul>	<p>No, rating of record is postponed until employee has completed the probationary period.</p> <p>Yes, as long as employee has served under the performance plan for 120 days.</p>
<p>6. End of the appraisal period for an employee whose current rating of record is a Successful PACS-NHT performance appraisal. If the employee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has served under a PACS performance plan for at least 6 months</li> <li>• Has served under PACS performance plan for less than 6 months</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, a PACS rating of record must be prepared.</p> <p>No, a PACS rating of record must be postponed until employee has 6 months under the performance plan.</p>
<p>7. Employee's WIGI is due and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee has a current level 3 or 5 rating of record.</li> <li>• Employee does not have a rating of record and is not eligible to be rated at this time, e.g., has served for less than 120 days under the performance plan.</li> <li>• Employee does not have a rating of record and has served at least 120 days under the performance plan.</li> <li>• Employee is serving under an OPS plan.</li> <li>• Employee has a current Not Successful (level 1) rating of record.</li> </ul> <p>Employee with a current Not Successful (level 1) rating of record has been reassigned or demoted to another position for performance-based reasons and has not served for at least 120 days under their new performance plan.</p> <p>Employee with a current Not Successful (level 1) rating of record has been reassigned or demoted to another position for performance-based reasons and has served for 120 days under their new performance plan.</p>	<p>No, a rating of record should not be prepared. The current rating of record will be used for the WIGI determination.</p> <p>No, a rating of record should be postponed until employee is eligible for a rating of record. The WIGI is delayed.</p> <p>Yes, a rating of record should be prepared and used for the WIGI determination.</p> <p>Yes, a rating of record of Not Successful (level 1) should be prepared. The new rating of record will be used to deny the WIGI.</p> <p>No, a rating of record should not be prepared. The current rating of record will be used to deny the WIGI.</p> <p>No, appraisal should be postponed until the employee has 120 days under the performance plan. The WIGI is delayed.</p> <p>Yes, a new performance appraisal should be prepared and used to make the WIGI determination.</p>

**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM – NEW HIRES  
AND TRAINEES (PACS-NHT)**

<b>Event</b>	<b>PACS-NHT Rating of Record Prepared?</b>
<p>1. End of the appraisal period for trainee who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• currently serving a probationary period for career/career-conditional appointment;</li> <li>• in the first year of an excepted service appointment which is not limited to 1 year or less.</li> </ul>	<p>No, PACS-NHT rating of record is postponed until the trainee has completed the probationary period.</p> <p>Yes, as long as the employee has served under the performance plan for 120 days.</p>
<p>2. End of the appraisal period for a trainee who is not covered under the employment conditions described in Event #1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the trainee has served under a PACS-NHT performance plan for at least 120 days.</li> <li>• If the trainee has served under a PACS-NHT performance plan for less than 120 days.</li> <li>• If the trainee is serving under an OPS plans.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, the PACS-NHT rating of record should be issued.</p> <p>No, the PACS-NHT rating of record should be postponed until employee has 120 days under the performance plan.</p> <p>No, the rating of record is postponed until completion of the OPS plan.</p>
<p>3. Within-grade increase (WIGI) is due for a trainee who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• currently serving a probationary period for career/career-conditional appointment;</li> <li>• in a trial period for term appointment; or</li> <li>• the first year of an employee's initial excepted service appointment not limited to 1 year or less.</li> </ul> <p>AND the trainee does not have a rating of record.</p> <p>AND the trainee has a current Level 3 or higher rating of record and performance is still at this level.</p>	<p>No, the PACS-NHT rating of record should be postponed until employee is eligible to be appraised. WIGI determination should be delayed.</p> <p>No, a rating of record should not be prepared. The current rating of record will be used for the WIGI determination.</p>
<p>4. A WIGI is due for a trainee who is not covered by the employment conditions described in Event #3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the trainee does not have a rating of record and has served under a PACS-NHT</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, the PACS-NHT rating of record must be prepared and used for the WIGI determination.</p>

<b>Event</b>	<b>PACS-NHT Rating of Record Prepared?</b>
<p>performance plan for at least 120 days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="240 289 740 380">• If the trainee does not have a rating of record and has served under a PACS-NHT performance plan for less than 120 days.</li> <li data-bbox="240 415 716 470">• If the trainee has a Level 3 or 5 rating of record.</li> <li data-bbox="240 537 727 569">• The trainee is serving under an OPS plan.</li> </ul>	<p>No, the PACS-NHT rating of record must be postponed until employee has 120 days under the performance plan. The WIGI determination will be delayed.</p> <p>No, rating of record must not be prepared. The current rating of record will be used for the WIGI determination.</p> <p>Yes, a Not Successful (Level 1) rating of record must be prepared. The new rating of record will be used to deny the WIGI.</p>