Performance Element Evaluation Job Aid
When Is Performance Sufficiently Above What Was Expected?

Contents

Note: This job aid focuses on applying the performance standards for the six standard performance elements. It is not designed to replace the IC Performance Standards provided in Volume 2011, rather, it is designed to be used in conjunction with the standards to help Rating and Reviewing Officials find a common understanding of expectations of "Successful" performance, and how performance expectations could be considered to determine if a higher, or lower, rating is appropriate for specific performance elements.

Introduction

The discussions below provide examples seen in actual narrative statements from performance evaluations of record, and provide questions and thoughts Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials could consider individually or in a group setting to support discussion when determining if the performance noted was expected, or substantially exceeded expectations. Rating and Reviewing Officials are encouraged to meet and discuss the behaviors, actions and results that are expected, and then those that would support other ratings that are available in DCIPS in the context of their work unit, and/or position types, work levels and work assigned. While useful to individuals, using this tool in a group or other setting with multiple raters or reviewers supports a shared understanding through discussion.

Officials should recognize that different levels of performance are expected by employees in the different work levels and types of work assigned. While the six performance elements are standard and apply to all, varying levels of performance are expected, for example, performance that is above expectations for a Full Performance Work Level analyst may be exactly what is expected of an analyst at the Senior Work Level. To support consistency, the scope and breadth of both the performance objectives and behaviors considered when evaluating the performance elements should be substantially different at each of the work levels in each of the work categories. As decisions are made in the context of what is expected based on the performance standards, Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials must be able to clearly distinguish between performance that is sufficiently or substantially above expectations as to be rated above "Successful", and then for example, to be rated "Excellent" in comparison that which could be rated as "Outstanding"- all based on the performance standards. Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials must ensure alignment with the performance standards; employees cannot be compared with other employees, their performance must be evaluated against the performance standards.

Finally, when considering the discussions and explanations below, it is important to take into consideration the consistency of the performance and the individual's level of expertise. For instance, performing a significant collateral responsibility above standards and expectations one time during the performance period, may not warrant a higher rating if the rest of the year the employee's performance was as expected, i.e., they were meeting the "Successful" standards. Work that consistently exceeds the "Successful" standards through the reporting period could be performance that is at the "Successful" level, or, considered within the context of impact and results, it could demonstrate performance at the "Excellent" or "Outstanding" level. Exceeding expectations in one part of a performance element, while meeting expectations in most parts of the element is arguably a demonstration of "Successful" performance. Exceeding expectations consistently across all parts of a performance element, and with great impact and results, provides a stronger foundation for a rating above "Successful" than such performance that occurs occasionally or for a limited period of time. The same applies for work that is below the "Successful" level. Not meeting expectations consistently would be indicative of performance that is not at the "Successful" level. It is important to keep in mind that context is important – what was the impact, what were the results of the employee performing above or below the expectation? Doing extra effort on a task that has no mission impact would not be considered as contributing to exceeding expectations.

Considerations as we get started:

- Be consistent with the merit system principles set out in Chapter 23 of Title 5, United States Code (Reference (h)).

- This tool aims to provide a starting point for answering the challenging question – "When is performance sufficiently more than expected so as to support a higher rating on any one of the standard performance elements?" This tool is created to help start the conversation and the considerations. It focuses primarily on the six standard performance elements, but can help inform discussions on applying standards to performance objectives.

- Doing the types of things noted in the descriptions of the performance elements below and meeting these expectations is indicative of performance at the "Successful" level.   We expect everyone to be successful at what they do.

- Doing more (quantitative), more efficiently, effectively and with better than expected results (qualitative), can be, but is not always, indicative of performance that is above the "Successful" level.   We need to consider how much, how often, and what were the impact and results.

- In assessing the performance, we need to first look at the work expected, and then the work that occurred:

    - Was it a little bit better all the time?
    - Was it moderately better a few times?
    - Was the work just done faster?

- Then, in the context of the above, we need to consider the impact and results of the better and faster.

    - Did it make a difference?
    - How big of an improvement or how great an impact on results was the work?

- After considering these questions, if you can't easily determine the link to improved mission accomplishment, or the impact and results weren't consistent, or were not noticeably more than would be expected, the work is most likely rated appropriately at the "Successful" level.

- When work was consistently better or more than expected with more impact and results than we expected, it is more likely to demonstrate performance above the "Successful" level.

- Worthy of note is that looking at performance elements we are not always looking to see if the employee exceeded the "Successful" standard, we need to also consider impact, results and context when considering if employees have fallen below the Successful standard.

The following pages provide thoughts and considerations for each of the standard performance elements in the context of the "Successful" standard. As you review and consider the information provided for each of the standard performance elements, please keep in mind that the standards provided in the beginning of each section are written at the Successful level.

Performance Elements for All Employees, Supervisory and Non-Supervisory

Accountability for Results - Successful Standard: Successful DCIPS employees are expected to take responsibility for their work, setting and meeting priorities, and organizing and utilizing time and resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the desired results, consistent with their organization's goals and objectives. In addition, DCIPS supervisors and managers are expected to use these same skills to accept responsibility for and achieve results through the actions and contributions of their subordinates and their organization as a whole.

- Turned in project meeting all established standards. Meeting the expectations is indicative of Successful performance. Did the employee overcome severe obstacles to accomplish a major project to standard? Duration, breadth and scope of the project and obstacles are key contributing factors.

- Employee helped out when the office was short-handed; Employee took on other responsibilities. Did the size of the work section/team/group assigned to the effort impact the breadth and scope of the employee's responsibility? We are all doing more with less, but was there something unexpected that this employee overcame that would have sidelined other employees or the effort?

- Employee met deadlines and goals through change in leadership or redirection of a project. Achieving mission success through major change is indicative of "Successful" performance. Was there a special impact or a result that would not have occurred except for this employee's ability to overcome it? Did a last minute change in resources threaten to derail the effort and the employee was able to meet mission regardless? Also, consider turnaround time, resources, or efforts that may have impacted this mission.

- Collaborated with colleagues to provide the best products possible. We expect collaboration to be the norm for all employees, appropriate to work and work level of the employees. Was there something significantly challenging about the scope of accomplishments or results that extended beyond the work section? Did this employee engage in behaviors that had positive effects on the department, organization, other organizations, and/or other components? What impacts and results were seen, in comparison with those expected?

- Turned in all reports on time in final format. Performing all duties at expected levels of quality and quantity is performance at the "Successful" level. Would execution of all duties to near perfection in all aspects of quantifiable duties for the entire performance evaluation period be expected? Improve impact and results? Or mission success? We expect reports to be final and accurate when providing them to customers, providing such, unless substantial unforeseen challenges were overcome, would be performance at the "Successful" level. Consider this in the context of the employee's work level. Did the employee do more; have broader impact and increased results than you would expect at his/her work level? Employees at the Expert Work Level, by definition, should be expected to provide accomplishments with broader scope and apply an expanded depth of knowledge.

- Employee was detailed to a different position and performed well. Was the employee detailed to a position at a higher work level and exceeded expectations at that work? Employees are to be evaluated against standards at their assigned work level. However, meeting expectations while working at a higher work level or different position could be recognized as performance substantially above expectations that warrants a higher rating for the applicable element(s).

- Employee participated in a working group or Represented the office in meetings. Representing the office or component on a collaborative group inside or outside the organization, depending on the work level of the employee, could be the standard of what is expected or alternatively, it could be considered a collateral, or "extra" duty. An employee's performance on that effort needs to be evaluated in light of their work level and expectations of that collateral duty in the context of mission – what was the impact or result that is being measured?

- Selected as employee of the quarter for the organization or office. Selection as employee of the year/quarter or other similar recognition is not in itself justification for a higher rating on a performance element. Look to the work performed during the performance period, and to what the award was recognizing when considering the appropriate rating level for an element.

Communication – Successful Standard: Successful DCIPS employees are expected to effectively comprehend and convey information with and from others in writing, reading, listening, and verbal and nonverbal action. Employees are also expected to use a variety of media in communicating and making presentations appropriate to the audience. In addition, DCIPS supervisors and managers are expected to use effective communication skills to build cohesive work teams, develop individual skills, and improve performance.

- Authored an article that was published. Authoring an article that was published in a professional journal or by another organization within the IC might be what the employee does for a living, or he or she may have authored the article with quite a bit of assistance from others. Context of the article and relationship to the employee's assigned duties and mission are important when considering if such performance was expected or sufficiently exceeded expectations.

- Served as guest speaker. Taught related course a local community college or NIU. Serving as the guest speaker or lecturer for a professional event or period of instruction in a formal school or training course, especially if by-name requested may go hand-in-hand with the communication expected of an employee, or it may be something truly above and beyond. Just being the guest speaker or lecturer is not in itself a reason for a higher rating on this element. Was engagement like this expected or necessary as a part of his/her work? Was it directly related to mission and how did the component benefit? Consider the employee's area of expertise and work level. An employee is expected to be able to craft messages and make presentations at the appropriate levels for an audience. Was there something about the presentations that may have made this more complex, difficult or challenging? What was the frequency of these engagements? And who was the audience?

- Efforts resulted in accurate and useful report responsive to client's requirements. Accurate and useful information in a product or written or verbal report are expected of "Successful" performance. We don't expect employees to provide anything other than accurate information and appropriate reports. Did employee go above and beyond in linking to seemingly unconnected pieces of information to solve a puzzling question? Was there some impact or result above and beyond that which is expected of most employees at the same work level extended past the work section and had positive effects on the department, organization, other organizations, and/or other components that should be considered?

- Written products rarely required correction in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. There is a general expectation of all employees that written products will rarely require correction in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Meeting this expectation is generally indicative of performance at the "Successful" level. Take a look at the work level and position of the employee to determine if there was something special or a challenge that was overcome in about producing quality reports consistently and be able to justify if this is used to support a higher than "Successful" rating on a performance element.

- Received Office Level recognition for final written product. Awards received or recognition for a written product can fit within expectations, or could indicate performance truly above and beyond expectations. Carefully consider the purpose of the award, the assignment, and work level of the employee. Was there something above and beyond the employee did to earn this award or recognition?

Critical Thinking – Successful Standard: Successful DCIPS employees are expected to use logic, analysis, synthesis, creativity, judgment, and systematic approaches to gather, evaluate and use multiple sources of information to effectively inform decisions and outcomes. In addition, DCIPS supervisors and managers are expected to establish a work environment where employees feel free to engage in open, candid exchanges of information and diverse points of view.

- Developed new procedures that contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the team. Developing new concepts, procedures, or products that meaningfully contributed to the efficiency or efficacy of the work section, directorate or component could be a part of the expectations for an employee. When a Full Performance employee encounters a problem and creates a new system that supports enhanced mission success, considering the work level of the employee, that performance might be appropriate for consideration for rating level above "Successful" if we don't expect that type of critical thinking from everyone at the Full Performance work level, but we could expect such creativity of a Senior or Expert Work Level employee. We have higher expectations for employees at Expert work level.

- Employee's performance performed a service that rendered unique and significant contributions to some aspect of the mission. Unique and significant might read as "above and beyond" but it is important to consider what was done in the context of what was expected. If the employee's task was to solve a specific problem related to mission and he or she did so, performance could be seen as meeting the expectation. Consider not only the impact and results but the context. Was there something that made the performance that much harder or more difficult that we would expect the average employee to have been able to overcome?

- Conducted problem-solving meetings/events to engage others on supporting mission success. Consider the results. Was a solution achieved? Engaging others through meetings and events is expected of all employees. Just engaging others isn't enough to justify a higher rating on this element. Look to impact and results. Consider the work level of the employee and their assigned work. Such engagements should be common place (successful) if the employee is a team lead or supervisor or above the Full Performance work level.

- Applied all relevant standards and critical thinking in providing final or formal intelligence product. Successful employees routinely incorporate all relevant standards and critical thinking structured analysis techniques into formal intelligence products. We expect the product has been well designed, researched, analyzed, etc. What unique technique did the employee bring to the product? Did the application of these techniques have a significant positive impact on mission?

Engagement and Collaboration – Successful Standard: Successful DCIPS employees are expected to responsibly and proactively, discover, and request information and knowledge to achieve results, and in that regard are expected to recognize, value, build, and leverage diverse collaborative networks of coworkers, peers, customers, stakeholders, and teams, within an organization and across the IC. In addition, DCIPS supervisors and managers are expected to create an environment that promotes engagement, collaboration, integration, and the responsible sharing of information and knowledge.

- Employee presented at Peer Conference. Did the employee note a problem or identify when information should be shared on a large scale and in response organized a conference or significant training event with outside agencies to help support mission success? In this context, the event might be worthy of note in supporting a rating on this element above "Successful", but probably wouldn't be enough by itself. Consider the context of the employee's position, their work level, and support they received. An analyst performing this task might be more impressive than if an employee who is expected to plan events as part of their position.

- Represented the office at Industry Conference or at briefing with Hill staffers. We expect all employees to collaborate and leverage networks, so representing the organization or work section at conferences and meetings or other engagements is not necessarily indicative of performance above the "Successful" level. Representing could be anything from taking up a seat to full engagement, answering problems, and providing solutions where other participants need assistance. Consider the employee's position; are they expected to engage in these forums or others? What is the work level of the employee; do we expect them to engage with other components and with senior executives or are such engagements at their level not the norm? Consider the impact and results of their engagements.

- Routinely sought and used feedback from customers to be responsive to their requirements and exceed customer expectations. We expect all employees to seek and apply feedback from customers to ensure we are meeting the customer's requirements and answering the customer's question. Doing this throughout the process prevents unexpected issues at the end. A focus on mission could put in context of additional complexities, impacts or results that went above and beyond expectations. We expect all to be responsive to their peers and customers, and requests they received, how much above and beyond that norm did this employee go?

- Routinely creating intelligence products at the lowest classification level and highest releasability to maximize responsible sharing. This statement aligns directly with the measure of "Successful" performance, in fact, this is included in similar language at the Department and IC levels as the expectation for all. Was there a unique impact on mission or an unexpected challenge or result from sharing that would suggest this was substantially more than was expected?

- Employee created products that were used to support a major joint or combined exercise or operation is expected. Consider this in the context of what wouldn't be expected; what was truly above and beyond? Positive customer feedback outlining impact on outcomes is useful, but should focus on how the outcomes exceeded expectations to justify a higher than "Successful" rating on this performance element.

- <u>Engaged and collaborated with colleagues to provide the best products possible.</u> We expect engagement and collaboration to be the norm for all employees, appropriate to the work assigned and work level of the employees. Engagement and collaboration should be considered in the context of providing and sharing information, leveraging and participating in efforts with representatives of other teams, work units, or Components and the results of these efforts. Consider the challenges, was there something significantly challenging about the scope of accomplishments or results that extended beyond what was expected? Or beyond the work unit, or even the Component? Did the employee recognize the value of building networks, meeting and engaging colleagues from outside the work unit? And most importantly, did those networks contribute to results that were better or broader than expected? Did the employee engage in behaviors that had positive effects on the department, organization, other organizations, and/or other components? What impacts and results were seen, in comparison with those expected?   Just engaging with others is not enough, need to focus on the results that benefitted from the engagement and collaboration.

Performance Elements Specific to Non-Supervisors

Personal Leadership and Integrity – Successful Standard: Successful DCIPS employees are expected to demonstrate personal initiative and innovation as well as integrity, honesty, openness, and respect for diversity in their dealings with coworkers, peers, customers, stakeholders, teams, and collaborative networks across the IC. DCIPS employees are also expected to demonstrate core organizational and IC values, including selfless service, a commitment to excellence, and the courage and conviction to express their professional views and to constructively address or seek assistance to properly address concerns related to the protection of classified information in accordance with Executive Order 13526 (Reference (n)).

- Consistently acknowledged as a leader amongst his/her peers. Employees are assigned work because they are knowledgeable and successful in meeting expectations, including openness, sharing with coworkers and collaborating. Being the source peers seek out for questions in the employee's are of expertise is expected. Achieving unexpected positive results and impact to mission because of, or in support of being leader among peers.

- Consistently maintained a positive attitude under challenging circumstances and helped motivate peers. Achieving positive results to mission is expected. Did any additional challenges make this noteworthy such as natural disaster, war zone? Consider the context and the frequency whi ch made this difficult – one earthquake in the DC area or daily work for 7 months in a war zone? Positively affecting morale of the team needs to be put in context to show why it was more than expected.

- Quickly and ably adjusted to new authority and responsibility. What is the context of time and level of authority in relation to the expectations for the employee's work and work level? Was this something the employee had been building up to over time by being the "acting" or something thrown at the employee because of unforeseen circumstances. Was this something that occurred throughout the performance period, or in the last two weeks? Consider the work level of the employee. These things put the statement into context to help determine if this was substantially above expected behavior.

Technical Expertise – Successful Standard: Successful DCIPS employees are expected to acquire and and apply the knowledge, subject matter expertise, tradecraft, or technical competency necessary to achieve results. This includes the proper handling and protection of classified information in accordance with Reference (n).

- Took the initiative to train co-worker(s) on an important, job-related technical skill. This statement probably fits better with one of the other performance elements. Supporting the team, and fellow team members, even peers across the community is expected of all employees. Was there something special here that made this more than expected? Did the employee support the co-workers during a time of heightened work load or mission focus? Did he or she do it better, more effectively or with special methods that supported quicker or better learning on behalf of those being trained? Was this one person being trained or retrained or just receiving updates due to absence from the office for a year or a brand new employee or team of employees? Context is necessary to determine if this was beyond the expectations. "Outstanding".

- Using technical knowledge and/or skill to develop a new process or system that saved resources (e.g., time, funding, and/or staffing). Impact to mission is an important differentiator in the context of the employee's work level. Would you expect employee's at this level to do this, or was this truly above expectations? Does the new process recycle pencil shavings into notepads, or does it make a current product more useful in a combat environment?

- Consistently sought feedback throughout the evaluation period and quickly applied it to produce notably enhanced results. The foundation of DCIPS is engagement with supervisors and supporting mission accomplishment. Seeking feedback, applying it and improving is commendable but is it beyond the expectations? Clarifying the context, impacts and results that show the mission would not have been as successful without this employee evolving beyond expectations could help this statement support a higher rating on a performance element. Without details and a statement of impact, this would be considered standard behavior.

Performance Elements Specific to Supervisors and Managers

Leadership and Integrity – Successful Standard: DCIPS supervisors and managers are expected to exhibit the same individual personal leadership behaviors as all DCIPS employees. In their supervisory or managerial role, they also are expected to achieve organizational goals and objectives by creating shared vision and mission within their organizations; establishing a work environment that promotes equal opportunity, integrity, diversity (of both persons and points of view), critical thinking, collaboration, protection of classified information in accordance with Reference (n) and information sharing; mobilizing employees, stakeholders, and networks in support of their objectives; and recognizing and rewarding individual and team excellence, enterprise focus, innovation, and collaboration.

- Assigned credit to subordinates who executed or contributed to products or successful results. This would not justify a higher than successful rating as it is expected that supervisors and managers give credit where credit is due.   Expanding this to show how the supervisor achieved organizational goals by creating shared vision could help expand this statement.

- Developed, implemented, or reinvigorated cost-saving measures or checks on waste/fraud/abuse.   Please see above. While this is good, this is expected in the day-to-day operations of all, specifically managers and supervisors and in doing so, employees are meeting expectations.

- Quickly and ably adjusted to new authority and responsibility. What is the context of time and level of authority in relation to the expectations for the employee's work and work level? Was this something the employee had been building up to over time by being the "acting" or something thrown at the employee because of unforeseen circumstances. Was this something that occurred throughout the performance period, or in the last two weeks? Consider the work level of the employee.

- Assisted and mentored a subordinate in achieving a certification, promotion, or formal award. This statement fits comfortably under the expectations provided in the Successful standard for this performance element. Context could help show why this might be more than expected, but generally, anything related to assisting and mentoring subordinates is expected.

- Actively participated in an event that promoted diversity in the workplace. This statement fits directly under the expectations provided in the standard for this performance element. Actively participating, evening planning or leading an event meets the expectations of all supervisors and managers.

Managerial Proficiency – Successful Standard: DCIPS supervisors and managers are expected to possess the technical proficiency in their mission area appropriate to their role as supervisors or managers. They are also expected to leverage that proficiency to plan for, acquire, organize, integrate, develop, and prioritize the human, financial, material, information (including classified), and other resources to accomplish their organization's mission and objectives. In so doing, all supervisors and managers are also expected to focus on the development and productivity of their subordinates by setting clear performance expectations; providing ongoing coaching and feedback; constructively addressing or seeking assistane to properly address concerns related to the protection of classified information in accordance with Reference (n); evaluating the contributions of individual employees to organizational results; and linking performance ratings and rewards to the accomplishment of those results.

- <u>Ensured all subordinates completed 100% of required training on time</u>. As part of the expectations of a manager or supervisor, they are expected to ensure their subordinates have appropriate career development goals documented and to support achievement of those goals.

- <u>Planned, organized, and executed a conference or significant training event within the organization or across the IC that had a meaningful impact and exceeded expectations</u>.   The context of the employee's work level and position need to be considered when looking at this broad statement. We expect any event we support through government resources to have meaningful impact. But how to measure exceeding expectations? Context of impact and results are needed to determine if there was something beyond what was expected related to this effort.

- <u>Achieved mission success despite the work section being understaffed</u>.   Did the size of the work section/team/group assigned to the effort impact the breadth and scope of the manager or supervisor's ability to meet mission? We are all doing more with less, but was there something unexpected that this employee overcame that would have sidelined other employees or the effort?

- <u>Adapted to changes in the mission of the work unit</u>. Expected behavior of a manager or supervisor. Context of statement defining impacts and results and changes could help clarify if this performance was beyond what was expected.

- <u>Ensured the effective and timely execution of the budget and spend plan successfully despite fiscal turbulence and uncertainty (e.g., continuing resolutions).</u> This statement defines exactly the performance expected of all managers and supervisors. Was there something, some impact, some restriction, some additional requirement that made timing execution beyond what was expected?

- <u>Seized the initiative to capitalize on an opportunity or prevent a crisis which would have had significant impact on the organization and/or IC</u>. This provides a statement of what we expect from all managers and supervisors. What were the risks and challenges that the manager or supervisor overcame? Why is this considered more than what was expected?