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MANAGING THE CIVILIAN PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

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This instruction describes a program to evaluate the performance of civilian employees and integrate performance with pay and recognition. It implements the requirements of Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), Chapter 43 (Performance Appraisal) and Chapter 45 (Performance-Based Cash Awards), and Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 430 (Performance Appraisal), Parts 531 and 532 (Within-Grade Increases (WGI)), Part 315 (Probation), and Part 451 (Performance Awards). It implements and complies with DoD 1400.25-M, Subchapters 430, Performance Management (The DoD Performance Appraisal System), and 451, Awards. It also implements AFPD 36-10, *Civilian Performance Management.* This instruction requires collecting and maintaining information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974. Privacy Act System of Records OPM/GOVT-2, Employee Performance File System Records, applies. Records Disposition. Maintain and dispose of all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication IAW AFMAN 37-139, *Records Disposition Schedule*.

Under 5 CFR 430.201(b), the Air Force Performance Management Plan approved by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) continues in effect as an appraisal program under the DoD Performance Appraisal System until the effective date of this AFI. Actions initiated under a performance management plan in existence prior to the effective date of this AFI shall continue to be processed consistent with that pre-established plan.

(21SW) The OPR for this supplement is 21 MSS/DPCE (Siobhan P. Berry). This supplement implements and extends the guidance of Air Force Instruction 36-1001, *Managing the Civilian Performance Program, 1 July 1999*. This supplement describes 21 SW procedures for use in conjunction with the basic AFI. This supplement applies to all civilian personnel serviced by the Civilian Personnel Flight (DPC), 21st Mission Support Squadron (21 MSS), Peterson AFB CO, unless otherwise specified in a negotiated

Labor-Management agreement. Maintain and dispose of records created as a result of prescribed processes in accordance with AFMAN 37-139, *Records Disposition Schedule*.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

This revision updates the appraisal period (paragraph **1.2.**); establishes new forms (paragraph **1.2.3.**); adds information on additional performance elements (paragraph **1.5.2.**); requires a prescribed feedback form (paragraph **1.8.2.**); establishes a two-level rating system (paragraph **2.2.**); clarifies information on administrative ratings done for promotion appraisal purposes (paragraph **2.6.**); requires impact on mission accomplishment statements to be completed for GS-14s/15s (paragraph **2.7.3.**); updates probationer appeal information (paragraph **3.5.6.**); adds civilian promotion appraisal information (**Chapter 7**); clarifies the authority of the reviewing official (**Attachment 1**); and deletes incentive awards information previously in **Chapter 3**, **Chapter 4**, **Chapter 5**, and **Chapter 6** that have been incorporated into AFI 36-1004, *Managing the Civilian Recognition Program*. A bar (|) indicates revision from the previous edition.

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Chapter 1

PERFORMANCE PLANNING, MONITORING AND DEVELOPING

1.1. Air Force Policy. The Air Force depends upon a large civilian work force to accomplish its various missions. Managing this work force requires an effective program for planning, monitoring, developing, evaluating, and rewarding individual and organizational performance. Terms and definitions relating to this program are at **Attachment 1**.

1.1.1. General schedule (GS), federal wage system (FWS), senior level (SL), and scientific and professional (ST) employees are covered by this program (**Attachment 2**).

1.2. Program Summary. The appraisal period in the Air Force is 1 April through 31 March. The Air Force program requires written performance plans containing critical position performance elements and standards for evaluation of overall performance for the position. AF Form 860, **Civilian Performance Plan** or AF Form 1003, **Core Personnel Document** (CPD) are used for this purpose. A discussion of the performance plan at the beginning of the appraisal period is required, as well as at least one progress review, normally at the midpoint of the appraisal period (AF Form 860B, **Civilian Progress Review Worksheet**, will be used). At the end of the appraisal period, employees are rated using the AF Form 860A, **Civilian Rating of Record**, and assigned an appropriate summary rating of record. If employees are rated "Unacceptable" on any critical element(s), the supervisor is required to take other actions (**Chapter 5**).

1.2.1. Recognition for performance in the form of an award is not automatic. Awards may be approved using the AF Form 860A, Part D.

1.2.2. The Civilian Promotion Appraisal (AF Form 860A, Part F) is completed at the end of the appraisal period.

1.2.3. The following is a summary of the forms required by the program, and the appropriate paragraph in which to find additional information:

1.2.3.1. AF Form 860, **Civilian Performance Plan** or AF Form 1003, **Core Personnel Document**: Paragraph **1.5.**

1.2.3.2. AF Form 860A, **Civilian Rating of Record**: Paragraph **2.7.**, **Table 2.1.**, **Table 2.2.**, and **Table 2.3.**.

1.2.3.3. AF Form 860B, **Civilian Progress Review Worksheet**: Paragraph **1.8.**.

1.2.3.3.1. (Added-21SW) **21 SW IMT 860C, Worksheet for Mid-Term and Initial 90-Day Performance Progress Reviews** : Paragraph **1.8.**

1.3. Planning Performance. Performance plans spell out expectations for employees based on position requirements. They may be written as part of a CPD and may be tailored at local discretion to meet mission needs. The AF Form 860 may be used to record performance plans not covered by a CPD. The performance plan is a result of a thorough review of position requirements and any oral or written input from the employee.

1.4. Team, Group, or Organizational Performance Elements. Team or group performance may be addressed in the following way:

1.4.1. Additional Performance Element. Team, group, or organizational performance may be included as a performance plan additional element (paragraph **1.5.2.**).

1.4.2. Individual's Contribution to a Team. Performance plan critical elements may address the individual employee's contribution to a team or organization.

1.5. Steps in Developing the Performance Plan.

1.5.1. Determine Critical Performance Elements. At least one critical element addressing individual performance must be included in the performance plan, but more may be necessary (normally not more than 7). A critical element is a work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in a determination that an employee's overall performance is unacceptable. ***NOTE:*** Non-critical elements are not permitted. Accordingly, non-critical elements in plans must be reviewed and eliminated, made additional elements, or modified to be critical (to include incorporation with a current critical element).

1.5.2. Determine Additional Performance Elements. Additional elements may be included in the performance plan. They are a dimension or aspect of individual, team, or organizational performance that is not a critical element. These elements cannot be used in assigning a summary level rating of record, but are useful for communicating performance expectations. They may include, but are not limited to, objectives, goals, and other means of expressing expected performance. A written standard is not required for an additional element.

1.5.3. Determine Performance Evaluation Requirements. Required items for performance plans, whether they are included as separate stand-alone performance elements or are incorporated as a portion of other elements, and the employees to whom they apply, are at **Attachment 3**.

1.5.4. Establish Performance Standards. Performance standards must be developed for each critical performance element, defining at least acceptable performance. They may address characteristics of performance such as quality, quantity, timeliness or work behaviors.

1.5.5. Involve the Employee. Before the rating official signs the performance plan, the rating official should ensure the employee has had an opportunity to provide feedback concerning the plan (supervisors ultimately decide which elements and standards to include). The rating official then signs and dates the form.

1.5.6. Obtaining Approval by Reviewing Official. The plan is submitted to the reviewing official, who approves and signs the plan. The reviewing official has the authority to change the plan.

1.6. Discussion. Once the plan is approved, the rating official should discuss the plan with the employee. The employee signs and dates the form acknowledging receipt of the plan. If the employee refuses to sign the form, the rating official writes, "Employee chose not to sign," on the form and dates the form.

1.7. Disposition of Form. The employee is given a copy of the performance plan. The rating official retains the original of the performance plan in the Employee Performance File (EPF) (paragraph **8.2.**).

1.8. Monitoring the Performance Plan and Progress Review. Performance plans cover the Air Force appraisal period which runs from 1 April to 31 March. The rating official and employee meet at the beginning of each appraisal period to discuss the employee's approved performance elements and standards in the plan. A copy is provided to the employee. Further progress reviews and discussions during

the appraisal period keep the performance elements current and allow rating officials to make changes to the performance plan, as appropriate.

1.8.1. When a rating official or employee is newly assigned, and at the beginning of each appraisal period, the performance plan will be reviewed and discussed (normally within 30 calendar days). It may be revised and signed as appropriate.

1.8.2. At least one progress review of the employee's performance against all the elements of the performance plan will take place during the appraisal period, normally at the midpoint. AF Form 860B will be used to document this review and may be filled out prior to and/or during the review with the employee. Use of this form is mandatory. It facilitates the communication on performance. The progress review is a private communication between rating official and employee. The process is intended for employee development and to help the individual. The employee should be made aware the progress review is meant to provide feedback on performance that may impact the rating of record at the end of the appraisal period. A copy of the form is provided to the employee. The original is retained by the rating official in the EPF.

1.8.2.1. (Added-21SW) Supervisors must be familiar with and apply the requirements in the Memorandum of Agreement pertaining to the performance management of Peterson Complex bargaining unit employees. The negotiated feedback IMT, 21 SW IMT 860C, will be used to document the initial and mid-term performance feedback of all Peterson Complex bargaining unit employees. Supervisors will conduct and document feedback upon completion of the first 90 days of Air Force employment and approximately midway through each subsequent appraisal period.

1.8.3. If ongoing performance problems are anticipated, the rater should contact a personnel specialist, who is available to assist the rater in helping the employee improve performance. The specialist may assist in determining whether more extensive documentation is necessary and may suggest a course of action.

1.9. Developing Performance. Rating officials determine whether training or other developmental opportunities would help an employee perform better on the job. Monitoring performance should help identify remedial or developmental training necessary for an employee to meet a specified performance standard. Rating officials may include training requirements or assignments which focus on improving future performance in a career enhancement plan (AFI 36-401, *Employee Training and Development*).

Chapter 2

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

2.1. Performance Evaluation and Ratings of Record. A rating of record is assigned upon completion of the annual appraisal period and to support a within-grade increase action. An administrative rating is assigned at the time the rating official decides to render an evaluation "out-of-cycle" (appraisal rating type code is O) because an employee is performing unacceptably on one or more critical elements of the performance plan, or the rating is necessary to support a personnel action such as a career ladder promotion (**Table 2.1.**). The employee must have performed in the official position for 90 days or more and be appraised against the elements of a performance plan to be assigned a rating. When an annual rating of record (appraisal rating type code is A) cannot be prepared at the end of the appraisal period because the employee was not in the position for at least 90 days, the appraisal period should be extended until the employee has been in the position for 90 days. This includes employees on workers' compensation, extended sick leave or leave without pay who have not worked for at least 90 days during the appraisal period. When the 90-day period ends, the rating should be prepared within 30 days. Input from previous supervisors or transferred ratings covering an employee's performance within the current appraisal period will be taken into consideration when deriving the next rating of record (**Table 2.2.** and **Table 2.3.**).

2.1.1. The rating of a disabled veteran shall not be lowered because the veteran has been absent from work to seek medical treatment (5 CFR 430.208(f)).

2.2. Summary Rating Level Pattern. The Air Force Performance Appraisal Program uses summary level pattern "A" in assigning a rating of record to each employee. Under the patterns in **Table 2.1.**, Level 1 through Level 5 are ordered categories for federal performance management programs, with Level 1 as the lowest and Level 5 as the highest.

Table 2.1. Summary Levels and Patterns for Federal Agencies.

PATTERN	SUMMARY LEVEL				
	1	2	3	4	5
A	X		X		
B	X		X		X
C	X		X	X	
D	X	X	X		
E	X		X	X	X
F	X	X	X		X
G	X	X	X	X	
H	X	X	X	X	X

2.3. Evaluating Performance Elements. The rating official determines if the employee met or did not meet the standards for each element, and rates the employee "Does not meet" or "Meets" on each element. If an employee is rated "Does not Meet" on any critical element, the rating is Unacceptable. An Unacceptable rating of record grants no additional years of reduction-in-force (RIF) retention credit. If all critical elements are rated "Meets," the rating is Acceptable. An Acceptable rating of record grants 12 or 20 additional years of RIF retention credit, depending on whether a single rating pattern or multiple rating pattern exists, respectively (5 CFR 351.504).

2.4. Distribution of Ratings. Forced distribution of summary ratings of record is prohibited.

2.5. Appraising Temporary Duty Performance. When an employee is temporarily assigned for 120 days or more (for example, on detail or temporary promotion), the temporary rating official gives the employee a written performance plan reflecting the temporary assignment as soon as possible. At the end of the temporary assignment, the temporary rating official rates the employee's performance on the elements and forwards the information to the permanent rating official. The permanent rating official considers the input received from the temporary rating official in completing the employee's next rating of record.

2.5.1. When an employee is on temporary assignment for 90 days or more and the annual appraisal is due, the temporary rating official completes the rating of record.

2.5.2. If an annual appraisal is due and the detail or temporary promotion has lasted for fewer than 90 days, the permanent rating official completes the rating, but consults with the temporary rating official.

2.6. Appraising Performance Under Other Circumstances. In order to be assigned a rating of record, an employee must have performed in the official position for 90 days or more during the appraisal period and be appraised against the elements of a performance plan. Employees such as those on long-term full-time training (LTFT), leave without pay-uniformed service (LWOP-US), or Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignments must meet this criteria in order to be assigned a rating of record at the end of the appraisal period.

2.6.1. If an employee has not worked at least 90 calendar days against an approved performance plan during the appraisal period, the appraisal period should be extended when feasible until the 90-day requirement has been satisfied. When the 90-day period ends, the rating should be prepared within 30 days.

2.6.2. When it is not feasible to extend the appraisal period, for administrative purposes, extend the last rating of record and merit promotion factors for one year (this is not a rating of record for RIF, appraisal rating type code is E).

2.6.2.1. If the employee's absence continues in subsequent years, an administrative rating of assumed Acceptable is assigned (this is not a rating of record for RIF, appraisal rating type code is F). In this circumstance, the rating and reviewing officials of record for the official position may retain the last promotion appraisal factor scores (as opposed to the assignment of "5s" after the first year). In the case of employees on LWOP-US, this applies for the length of the active duty tour or until the employee's restoration rights have expired, whichever occurs first.

2.6.2.2. In situations involving long-term training, managers may develop a performance plan related to the training. The plan could include critical elements related to achievement of specific training objectives.

2.7. Steps in Completing AF Form 860A, Civilian Rating of Record.

2.7.1. Rate the Performance Elements. The rating official fills out and completes the AF Form 860A, **Civilian Rating of Record** within 30 days after the end of the appraisal period.

2.7.2. Assign a Rating of Record. A rating of record is derived from the results of the appraisal of the performance plan elements (paragraph **2.3.**).

2.7.3. Develop Impact on Mission Accomplishment Statements (AFPAM 36-1003, *Civilian Appraisal Impact on Mission Accomplishment Statements*). Must be completed for GS-14s/15s. Optional for other grades. List in bullet format the employee's specific contributions to the unit's mission—what did the employee do, how well was it done, and what impact it had on mission accomplishment. This information will be used in GS-15 screening boards.

2.7.4. Determine Award, As Appropriate. An award recognizing high levels of performance may be recommended at the end of the appraisal period in conjunction with the annual performance rating in accordance with each commander's award program. Awards are not given automatically. Justification for an award is submitted on AF Form 860A, Part C in bullet format. The justification will address accomplishments in the employee's position.

2.7.4.1. Performance cash awards may be granted as a percentage of the employee's basic salary (not more than 10% without Secretary of the Air Force approval and not more than $10,000 without OPM approval), or as a specific dollar amount. AF Form 2858, **Performance Award**, is available for optional preparation and presentation by the presenting organization.

2.7.4.2. Quality Step Increases (QSI). GS employees at or above step 4 of their grade may be considered for QSIs. Criteria is at paragraph **2.8.**

2.7.4.3. Time-off awards may also be recommended using the AF Form 860A.

2.7.4.3.1. (Added-21SW) Typically, supervisors have the authority to approve time-off awards of no more than 1 working day without review and approval of a higher official; however, in the case of time-off awards in connection with the AF Form 860A, the awards approving official must approve all time-off awards regardless of the duration.

2.7.4.4. A combination of a performance cash award and time-off award may be granted to an employee.

2.7.4.4.1. (Added-21SW) Justifications for performance awards are required to nominate an employee for an award and will address the employee's accomplishments in relation to their performance elements and standards. Consideration of the employee's impact to overall mission accomplishment may provide further distinguishing factors for distribution of awards. The nine appraisal factors describe the employee's manner of performance, assess work behaviors that can be observed in the context of the employee's current position, and are predictive of performance at the next higher grade level. They are not linked to the overall performance rating or justification for award. While organizations are not prohibited from establishing additional criteria for granting awards, the establishment of specific quantitative or standardized award distribution schemes is discouraged, as doing so may inadvertently prevent otherwise deserving employees from receiving appropriate awards. Organizations desiring to establish award distribution schemes must consult with their servicing Employee Relations Specialist in the Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF) prior to implementation. Proposed award distribution schemes affecting bargaining unit employees must also be coordinated with the exclusive representative, through the Labor Relations Officer, prior to implementation.

2.7.5. Certify. The rating official certifies the form by signing and dating it in Part E.

2.7.6. Obtain Approval of Reviewing Official. The rating official provides the completed form to the reviewing official for approval and signature/date. The reviewing official has the authority to change the rating and award.

2.7.6.1. (Added-21SW) Rating and reviewing officials are normally the first and second level supervisors, respectively. Where the rating official is a wing commander or tenant commander, the commander is the rating, reviewing, and awards approving official for all employees reporting directly to them. At the headquarters level, in directorates headed by a general officer or equivalent, the director serves as the rating, reviewing, and awards approving official for employees reporting to them. In directorates headed by an O-6 or equivalent, the director will serve as the rating, reviewing, and awards approving official for secretaries and administrative support personnel reporting them. AFSPC/DS will serve as the reviewing and awards approving official for civilian division chiefs and civilian deputies reporting to O-6 directors.

2.7.7. Ensure Quality Control. Commanders should establish a quality control process to ensure accurate completion of the appraisal process.

2.7.7.1. (Added-21SW) Annually, the CPF will ask commanders to appoint a Quality Control Monitor (QCM) for their organization. The CPF will provide performance management training to the appointed QCM, and the QCM will serve as a liaison between the CPF and supervisors/managers/employees within their organization. Additionally, the QCM will be responsible for (1) implementing the quality control review process for performance plans and appraisals in their organization, (2) ensuring supervisors are aware of the civilian performance management program requirements so the program operates properly in their organization, (3) ensuring supervisors are aware of the established time frames for certifying performance plans, accomplishing performance feedback documentation, completing and reviewing appraisals to ensure they are signed by the appropriate rating official, reviewing official, and awards approving official, and (4) providing copies of completed civilian performance appraisals to the CPF within established time frames.

2.7.8. Discuss the Rating. After obtaining any required approvals, the rating official discusses the rating with the employee. The employee signs and dates the form acknowledging receipt of the appraisal. If the employee refuses to sign the form, the rating official writes, "Employee chose not to sign," on the form and dates the form.

2.7.9. Disposition of AF Form 860A. Whether or not the employee signs the form, the employee is given a copy. After following local procedures for documenting the rating in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS), the rating official retains the original form in the EPF, maintained along with the AF Form 971, **Supervisor's Employee Brief**, in the supervisor's employee work folder, or follows local procedures, as appropriate.

2.8. Quality Step Increases (QSI).

2.8.1. An employee who receives a QSI must display the highest quality performance, significantly above that ordinarily found in the type of position to which the employee is assigned. The award justification will describe specific accomplishments that demonstrate sustained exemplary performance, well above normal expectations. The employee must have a current rating of record at the highest level ("Acceptable") at the time the QSI is made effective.

2.8.2. Recommendations for QSIs must be accomplished in conjunction with the annual performance rating. Charge a minimum of 3 percent of the employee's salary against the awards budget for each QSI.

2.8.3. Employees may receive only one QSI at the same grade level in a three-year period, unless an exception is approved at MAJCOM or equivalent level. In any case, a QSI may not be granted to an employee who has received a QSI in the previous 52-week period.

2.8.4. A QSI and performance cash award are not approved for the same period of performance. The QSI should be made effective as soon as practicable after it is approved and the employee meets all eligibility requirements. The effective date may be delayed only to give a greater advantage to the recipient, e.g., to allow a regular step increase to step 7 to be processed first. However, the delay should not exceed four pay periods.

2.8.4.1. (Added-21SW) A QSI will *normally* be effective the beginning of the first full pay period after the QSI is approved by the awards approving official. However, if the employee does not have at least an "Acceptable" rating of record, the QSI will be effective the first full pay period following the effective date of the rating of record. QCMs will inform the CPF in advance of any current or pending personnel actions when a QSI is approved, i.e., temporary promotions, promotions, change to lower grades, within grade increases, etc. This will assist the CPF in processing the personnel actions in the order that will give the greater advantage to the recipient. Retroactive corrections to awards will not be processed more than 60 days after the award is effective unless required by law or regulation, as part of a bona fide settlement of a formal proceeding, or when an award was incorrectly processed.

2.8.5. AF Form 2857, **Quality Step Increase**, is available for optional preparation and presentation by the presenting organization.

2.9. Related Personnel Actions. Performance appraisals rendered under this program shall be used as a basis for taking appropriate personnel actions in accordance with applicable provisions of law and regulation.

Table 2.2. Annual Performance Appraisal Cycle.

PAY PLAN	TYPE OF RATING	APPRAISAL PERIOD	DATE RATED	PROCESSING PERIOD	EFFECTIVE PERIOD
GS, FWS, SL or ST	Annual	1 Apr, or date of entry on duty, through 31 Mar	1 Apr	1 Apr through 31 May	1 Jun through 31 May
	Out-of-cycle	Date following last rating through rating date	Recommended when performance is unacceptable. A new rating may be issued when performance improves. Rate when needed to support a personnel action such as a career ladder promotion	Normally, no more than 30 days	From date of final approval through 31 May

Table 2.3. Management Responsibilities When Employee Changes Positions.

IF EMPLOYEE MOVES WITHIN THE AIR FORCE		BETWEEN THESE DATES	THEN	AND
FROM	TO			
GS, FWS, SL or ST	GS, FWS, SL or ST	Beginning of appraisal period to 1 Jan	Losing supervisor prepares information concerning performance and forwards to new supervisor	New supervisor renders annual rating of record at end of annual cycle
GS, FWS, SL or ST	GS, FWS, SL or ST	1 Jan to 31 Mar	Losing supervisor renders annual rating of record	Losing organization pays approved award

Table 2.4. Management Responsibilities When Supervisor Departs.

IF THE EMPLOYEE IS	AND THE SUPERVISOR DEPARTS BETWEEN	AND THE SUPERVISOR	THEN
GS, FWS, SL or ST	Beginning of appraisal period to 1 Jan	Supervised employee for any length of time	Departing supervisor prepares information concerning performance and leaves it and performance plan for new supervisor
	1 Jan to 31 Mar	Supervised employee fewer than 90 days	Reviewing official prepares annual rating of record with input from departing supervisor
		Supervised employee for 90 days or more	Departing supervisor prepares annual rating of record and leaves it for processing by reviewing official

Chapter 3

PROBATION FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

3.1. Basic Probation Requirements. Employees who receive a career or career-conditional appointment, and who have not previously completed probation serve a one-year probationary period. This probation extends and continues the merit system competitive examining process for initial entry into federal civilian service. During probation, supervisors evaluate the new employee for qualities and characteristics essential to effective performance, but which pre-employment testing and examination methods do not adequately measure. An employee who does not satisfactorily complete the probation must be assigned to another position or separated.

3.2. Evaluating Factors. This instruction sets guidelines for evaluating job performance and work behavior. The supervisor also evaluates the probationer's character, conduct, and attitude that directly affect job performance.

3.3. Certifying Completion of Probation. The supervisor certifies the probationer's performance in writing, normally no later than during the 10th month of the probation.

3.3.1. The CPF advises the supervisor of this requirement with a notice from DCPDS.

3.3.2. The supervisor completes the certification through supervisory channels, sends it to the CPF, and retains a copy in AF Form 971, unless the determination is unsatisfactory.

3.3.3. If the supervisor does not recommend keeping the employee, the supervisor must contact the CPF as soon as possible before the probationary period ends for guidance on the proper course of action.

3.3.4. If the supervisor does not complete the certification process on time, an employee may pass probation by default.

3.4. When Employee Fails Probation.

3.4.1. Assign an employee who fails the probationary period to another position only:

3.4.1.1. When enough time remains in the probationary period to determine fitness in the new position and the federal service.

3.4.1.2. Where good reason exists to believe the employee will successfully complete the continued probation.

3.4.2. A supervisor who decides that change-to-lower grade (CLG) or separation is appropriate for the employee consults with the CPF staff and issues a notice of the action.

3.4.3. A probationer has no right to adverse action benefits provided by law or OPM governing rules. Procedures in 5 U.S.C., chapters 43 and 75, are inappropriate in CLG or separation of a probationer.

3.4.4. A supervisor who decides to terminate a probationer based in whole or in part on conditions arising before appointment must comply with the requirements of 5 CFR 315.805 and 1201.21.

3.5. Notice of Action. The supervisor:

3.5.1. Notifies the probationer in writing of the intended action to demote or separate.

3.5.2. Signs and sends the notice to the probationer as far in advance as possible before the effective date.

3.5.3. The notice must include:

3.5.3.1. What will be done and the action's effective date.

3.5.3.2. Specific, detailed reasons sufficient to conclude that the probationer is unlikely to give subsequent satisfactory service.

3.5.3.3. Information on how the probationer may ask for an official review of the action.

3.5.3.4. The name and official address of the reviewer.

3.5.3.5. The probationer's duty status until the effective date.

3.5.3.6. Information that the probationer may appeal to the MSPB only based on:

3.5.3.6.1. Alleged partisan political reasons or marital status (5 CFR 315.806(b)).

3.5.3.6.2. Improper procedure (5 CFR 315.806(c)).

3.5.3.6.3. Discrimination, if raised in addition to one of the two issues above, (5 CFR 315.806(d)).

3.5.4. Give the employee a reasonable time: To file a written response to the notice and to furnish affidavits that support the response.

3.5.5. The notice must meet the requirements of 5 CFR 1201.21.

3.5.6. A probationer may file the petition for appeal to the MSPB any time from the day after the effective date of the action until 30 calendar days after the effective date.

3.5.7. The supervisor must set a time limit for the probationer's response. Unless the probationary period ends sooner, allow at least 3 working days.

3.6. Reviewing the Action. At the probationer's request, the reviewing official determines if the action is arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable in view of the documentation and other information provided by the supervisor relative to required performance, conduct, behavior, and attitude. The probationer receives notice in writing of the reviewing official's decision.

Chapter 4

PROBATION FOR NEW SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

4.1. Probation Requirements. New supervisors and managers must serve a probationary period the first time they start a permanent supervisory or managerial position in the competitive service (supervisory status codes 1, 2, or 3).

4.1.1. The employee serves a probationary period on receiving an initial managerial assignment unless the selecting official waives the requirement based on the employee's previous satisfactory completion of a supervisory probationary period.

4.1.2. When the initial assignment is both supervisory and managerial, an employee must complete a single probationary period.

4.2. Exceptions.

4.2.1. An employee who, as of 11 August 1979, was serving or had served for any length of time in a federal civilian supervisory or managerial position, need not serve a comparable probationary period under this chapter.

4.2.2. Temporary service (temporary appointment, promotion, or reassignment) as a supervisor or manager before 11 August 1979, counts if the employee officially held the position for more than 120 calendar days. Service while on detail or in an acting capacity does not count.

4.2.2.1. Employees must give evidence of current or prior federal civilian supervisory or managerial experience using official records or other evidence supplied by the employee or a federal official.

4.3. Advance Notification. Inform the employee about the probationary period in writing before assignment to a supervisory or managerial position.

4.3.1. Include information on the entitlement to placement if the employee does not satisfactorily complete the probation, and the absence of appeal rights over such placement.

4.3.2. Recruitment notices and vacancy announcements must explain these requirements and entitlements.

4.4. Training. Ensure that mandatory supervisory training requirements, identified in AFI 36-401, are met and determine if any additional training is required.

4.4.1. (Added-21SW) The mandatory supervisory training requirements, identified in AFI 36-401, *Employee Training and Development*, Attachment 4, should be completed during the supervisory/managerial probationary period. Completion of the required training is not required to satisfactorily complete the probationary period since the availability of training/funding may not be within the employee's control. However, early or final certification of successful probationary period completion is discouraged if the employee has not completed the required supervisory training and it was available prior to the completion of their probationary period.

4.5. Full and Fair Evaluation. The manager over the supervisory or managerial position develops a performance plan on initial appointment to the supervisory or managerial position. Hold performance discussions during the probationary period to monitor the progress of the new supervisor or manager.

4.6. Length of Probation . The maximum length of the probation is 1 year. New supervisors and managers normally serve the entire period.

4.6.1. The DCPDS produces a notice 90 calendar days before the end of the probation to remind the CPF and supervisor of the certification due date.

4.6.2. The supervisor, with agreement from the next higher level manager, may terminate probation when it becomes clear the employee lacks the aptitude or skills for the position and further training and experience will not provide the skills for full and effective performance.

4.6.3. As an exception to the rule, based on consistently demonstrated acceptable performance for at least 6 months, the supervisor may certify that probation was satisfactorily completed. The supervisor certifies this in writing, signs and forwards it to the CPF.

4.7. Failing to Complete Probation. Managers and supervisors may not continue in the position if they do not satisfactorily complete probation.

4.7.1. When the employee cannot complete probation satisfactorily, the employee returns to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position.

4.7.2. Return an employee to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position for failing to complete probation only for reasons that relate directly to the employee's performance as a supervisor or manager. This return is not an adverse action. Process actions to demote or separate for conduct or performance unrelated to supervisory or managerial performance under 5 CFR Part 432 or 752.

4.7.3. Give an employee who returns to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position sufficient facts to make clear why you took such action.

4.7.3.1. Give written notice of the reasons for the action to the employee.

4.7.3.2. Include with the notice information on how the Air Force will satisfy the employee's placement rights.

4.7.4. Continue to consider an employee whom you returned to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position for assignment to other supervisory or managerial positions. Because position requirements and individual abilities vary, an employee who is unsuited to one supervisory or managerial position may perform satisfactorily in another.

4.7.5. An employee who returns to a lower graded nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position may not retain the grade or pay of the higher position.

4.7.5.1. If the employee already has an entitlement to grade or pay retention from a prior position, it is unaffected by this assignment.

4.7.5.2. If the employee's entitlement to grade retention ceased on promotion to a supervisory position, the employee may resume the remainder of the period of eligibility if the employee does not complete probation and returns to the previous or equivalent position.

4.7.6. An employee who received a promotion from a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position to a supervisory or managerial one may return under this instruction to a position of no lower grade and pay than the one left.

4.7.6.1. An employee who transfers from a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position at a different agency to a supervisory or managerial position in the Air Force and does not satisfactorily complete probation has the right to be assigned in the Air Force rather than at the originating agency.

4.7.6.2. If the employee fails probation under this chapter, do not use RIF procedures to determine the new assignment.

4.7.6.3. Do not use a temporary appointment to give a "fall-back" job to the supervisor or manager who fails probation. Don't obligate the Air Force except in connection with overseas employment with return rights.

4.7.7. When it is appropriate for an employee to return to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position, the employee's organization will place the employee. If the employee in question is to be moved from or to a career program position, the CPF must coordinate the placement with the career program.

4.7.8. An employee who is serving a supervisory or managerial probation overseas and was assigned to that position from a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position with return rights, may need to exercise those rights to regain the nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position.

4.8. Crediting Service Toward Completing the Probationary Period.

4.8.1. Moving to Other Supervisory or Managerial Positions During Probation. A supervisor or manager who is assigned or promoted to another supervisory or managerial position during probation must serve probation for the new position. Service in the former position counts toward completing the probation for the new position.

4.8.1.1. When an employee serving probation is temporarily placed in another supervisory or managerial position (for example, under detail, or temporary promotion), the employee receives credit toward completing the probationary period for the temporary service.

4.8.2. Temporarily Moving to a Nonsupervisory Position During Probation. Temporarily moving to a nonsupervisory position during probation (for example, detail, temporary promotion, or reassignment) does not give credit toward completing probation.

4.8.3. Getting Credit Toward A Subsequent Probationary Period. When an employee serving probation under this chapter moves to a permanent nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position, a nonpay status, or has a break in service of over three calendar days, the employee does not receive credit toward completing a probationary period under a subsequent appointment. ***EXCEPTION:*** Employees receive full credit for absence on or off the rolls for compensable injury, illness, or military duty.

4.8.3.1. When the Air Force separates an employee for cause or returns the employee to a nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial position during probation, the service does not count toward completing probation under subsequent appointment or assignment.

4.8.4. Temporary Service Before Probation. Serving as a supervisor or manager under temporary appointment counts toward completing probation if the temporary period was more than 120 calendar

days or occurred immediately (without a break in service) before changing to a permanent supervisory or managerial position.

4.8.5. VRA Service Prior to Probation. Serving as a supervisor or manager under a VRA appointment counts toward the employee's conversion to a supervisory position in the competitive service. If the Air Force moves an individual serving on a VRA appointment to a supervisory position during the 2-year period and the employee does not have enough time under the VRA to satisfy the supervisory probation, the individual serves the remaining probation time after conversion.

Chapter 5

DEALING WITH PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

5.1. Identifying Performance Problems. To maintain a high-quality civilian work force and encourage employees to strive for top performance, supervisors should act as soon as they notice a performance problem. The supervisor can't always know the source of the problem. Health problems, injury, disease, psychiatric problems, alcohol abuse, or other disabling conditions might exist. Nor will the supervisor necessarily know if the medical condition is the cause of the problem. Supervisors must identify, address, and correct problems early.

5.2. When Medical Condition Impairs Performance. If the supervisor suspects that the employee's performance is adversely affected by alcohol or drug abuse, or by some other medical condition, apply the provisions of AFI 36-810, *Substance Abuse Prevention and Contro*l. Medical condition means health impairment which results from injury or disease, including psychiatric conditions.

5.2.1. Do not remove an employee through adverse action for ineffective performance unless these requirements are met.

5.2.2. When a medically-based performance problem exists or might exist, the supervisor:

5.2.2.1. Informs the employee that job performance is suffering.

5.2.2.2. Advises the employee to supply medical documentation of any medical condition that could be affecting work performance.

5.2.2.3. Explains exactly what documentation the employee needs (5 CFR 339.104) and the amount of time (opportunity period, see paragraph **5.4.**) employee has to provide it.

5.2.3. The employee supplies pertinent documentation as soon as possible after being informed of unacceptable performance on the job. If the employee does not provide the documentation within the specified time, the supervisor may grant more time or proceed with the action.

5.2.4. If the employee provides medical documentation and has 5 years of creditable service under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or 18 months of creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), the CPF furnishes information about disability retirement and explains that applying for disability retirement will not preclude or delay any other appropriate personnel action.

5.2.5. The supervisor and an Air Force or other federal medical officer review the medical documents that the employee provides. These criteria apply:

5.2.5.1. When the employee's job requires meeting physical or medical standards or is covered by the environmental health or bioenvironmental engineering programs, the supervisor may require the employee to report for a medical examination.

5.2.5.2. In any case, a management official may require or offer a psychiatric examination according to 5 CFR 339.301(e)(1)(i) and (ii). Coordinate any such action in advance with the CPF.

5.2.5.3. When the supervisor requires or suggests a medical examination, the employee must receive a written explanation and be informed of the consequence of refusing.

5.2.6. All medical examinations must comply with Title 5 CFR Part 339. The Air Force pays for or provides the medical examination.

5.3. When Disabled Employee Has Performance Problem. When dealing with a disabled employee's performance problem, both the supervisor and the CPF must discharge any obligations per 29 CFR 1614.203.

5.4. Initiating the Opportunity Period:

5.4.1. If the employee's performance becomes unacceptable in one or more critical element(s) at any time during the appraisal cycle, the supervisor must inform the employee in writing:

5.4.1.1. The critical element(s) of the performance plan for which the employee's performance is unacceptable.

5.4.1.2. How performance is unacceptable.

5.4.1.3. What the employee must do to remain in the position.

5.4.2. Air Force recommends that the supervisor complete a performance appraisal, if possible. (**Table 2.1.**)

5.4.3. The supervisor initiates an opportunity period to give the employee a reasonable time to demonstrate acceptable performance. The time period should align with the level of the employee's duties and responsibilities, usually 30-60 days.

5.4.4. If the supervisor issues the employee's appraisal, the employee has the right to ask a higher level supervisor (if any) to reconsider the appraisal. The reconsideration process must comply with the negotiated grievance procedures or agency grievance procedures.

5.4.5. The supervisor must help the employee improve performance during the opportunity period. Help may include closer supervision and counseling, personal demonstration, supervisory or peer coaching, frequent reporting, special assignments, and on-the-job training. Although this instruction does not require it, the supervisor may order formal training for the employee.

5.4.6. At the end of the opportunity period, if the employee's performance does not improve to an acceptable level, the supervisor may propose a reduction-in-grade or removal.

5.4.7. If the employee's performance improves to an acceptable level after receiving an unacceptable rating, the supervisor:

5.4.7.1. Completes a new rating (appraisal rating type O, unless the rating is the annual appraisal).

5.4.7.2. Obtains the reviewing official's and employee's signature.

5.4.7.3. Sends the rating to the CPF for input to DCPDS.

5.4.8. If an employee performs acceptably for one year from the beginning date of the opportunity period, and the employee's performance subsequently becomes unacceptable, the supervisor initiates a new opportunity period before proposing a reduction in grade or removal.

5.5. Reassigning, Demoting, or Removing Employee For Performing Unac ceptably. These rules do *not* apply to demoting or removing an employee serving a probationary period (see **Chapter 3**), or demot-

ing a supervisor or manager serving probation (see **Chapter 4**). Sample memos are at the Air Force Personnel Center WWW site at: **http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/permiss**.

5.5.1. When an employee's performance does not improve despite all attempts to correct it, use 5 U.S.C. 4303 and 5 CFR Part 432 to remove the employee.

5.5.2. When a supervisor demotes or removes an employee:

5.5.2.1. Coordinate with the CPF before issuing the notice.

5.5.2.2. Notify the employee in writing 30 calendar days in advance of the proposed action.

5.5.2.3. Identify specific instances of unacceptable performance justifying the proposed action.

5.5.2.4. Specify the elements in each instance of unacceptable performance. (***NOTE:*** The instances of unacceptable performance must have occurred during the opportunity period and within the previous 1-year period ending on the date of the proposed notice.)

5.5.2.5. Give the employee reasonable time to answer orally or in writing to the supervisor or other management official. The employee may retain an attorney or other representative.

5.5.3. The notice period expires at the end of the 30 days unless the supervisor extends it for an additional 30 days. See 5 CFR 432.105 (a)(4)(i)(B) for reasons allowing you to extend the notice period beyond 30 calendar days.

5.5.4. If the employee provides medical documentation during the notice period, consider it part of the reply to the notice. The employee must provide the documentation within the set time limit, if possible. Also, consider any documentation you receive after the time limit, but before making final decision.

5.5.5. The management official who makes the final decision considers only the unacceptable performance specified in the proposed action notice and any replies, including medical documentation.

5.5.6. Make the final decision within 30 calendar days after the notice period expires.

5.5.7. The supervisor who decides to go ahead and demote or remove the employee must specify or reference the unacceptable performance justifying the action.

5.5.8. A higher level management official than the person proposing the action must concur with the final decision, normally the second-level supervisor.

5.5.9. The notice of decision must tell the employee of appeal rights and whether eligible for disability or discontinued service retirement.

5.5.10. Deliver the written notice of decision to the employee on or before its effective date.

5.5.11. An employee who is demoted or reassigned due to unacceptable performance retains the unacceptable rating. The employee need not serve another opportunity period on entering the new position. After serving 90 calendar days in the new position, the employee receives a new rating, which then goes to the CPF for input to DCPDS.

5.5.12. If the employee's performance improves to an acceptable level during the notice period and continues to be acceptable for 1 year from the date of the advance notice specified in paragraph **5.5.2.**, above, the Air Force removes any records of less than acceptable performance from the employee's records.

5.5.13. After demoting or removing an employee for unacceptable performance, keep all pertinent documents according to AFMAN 37-139, *Records Disposition Schedule*. All documents must be available for review by the employee or representative. The file must include:

5.5.13.1. Copy of the notice of proposed action

5.5.13.2. Employee's written reply

5.5.13.3. Summary of any oral reply

5.5.13.4. Notice of decision and the reasons

5.5.13.5. Any supporting material including documentation regarding the employee's opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance

5.5.13.6. A statement that the OPM approved system and the program on which it is based is on file in HQ USAF/DPFM, if the employee appeals the action

Chapter 6

WITHIN-GRADE INCREASES (WGI)

6.1. General. This chapter applies to FWS and GS employees except those GS employees on a temporary appointment of one year or less. An employee automatically receives a WGI who:

6.1.1. Completes the required waiting period.

6.1.2. Did not receive an equivalent pay increase during the period.

6.1.3. Demonstrates overall acceptable performance.

6.2. Waiving Requirements For Determining Acceptable Performance:

6.2.1. A GS employee who completes the waiting period but is in a duty status for fewer than 60 calendar days during the final 52 calendar weeks of the waiting period due to absences considered creditable service, such as paid leave or service credit under the back pay provisions of 5 CFR Part 550, receives a WGI without demonstrating acceptable performance.

6.2.2. An FWS employee in a duty status for fewer than 30 calendar days during the 26-calendar weeks waiting period receives a WGI per paragraph **6.2.1.**

6.3. Granting WGI:

6.3.1. Employees meeting service requirements automatically receive the WGI when their last assigned rating was Acceptable. If performance declines to unacceptable on any critical element(s), see instructions below on withholding the WGI.

6.3.2. To grant a WGI any time following denial or when an employee's performance improves from unacceptable to acceptable, complete the appraisal form (indicating an Acceptable rating) and submit it to the CPF no later than 14 calendar days before the WGI due date.

6.3.3. When an employee transfers to an Air Force activity, the AFPC/CPF tries to obtain ratings from the losing activity/agency. If those ratings do not arrive in sufficient time to ensure the timely receipt of a WGI, the CPF may contact the gaining supervisor to obtain and input an Acceptable rating to ensure that the WGI will not be delayed if deserved.

6.4. Postponing WGI. Postpone giving the WGI to a GS or FWS employee when either condition in paragraphs **6.4.1.** and **6.4.2.** exists.

6.4.1. The employee's performance is unacceptable and you have not given the employee a performance plan or explained the specific requirements for acceptable performance at least 30 calendar days before the end of the waiting period. Notify the CPF that you intend to postpone granting a WGI.

6.4.2. The employee was reassigned or demoted due to unacceptable performance and is eligible within 60 calendar days for a WGI. The CPF notifies the supervisor of the increase due date and the requirement to postpone.

6.4.3. Under either condition, the supervisor must notify the employee in writing that:

6.4.3.1. WGI is being postponed

6.4.3.2. Reason for postponement

6.4.3.3. The employee has no more than 90 calendar days to demonstrate acceptable performance

6.4.4. Give the employee a new or revised performance plan setting the performance elements and standards to be met during the 90-day period.

6.4.5. When the employee attains acceptable performance any time after the 60th calendar day, but not later than the 90th calendar day, complete the rating of record form and send it to the CPF. The employee receives the WGI retroactive to the original date due.

6.4.6. If the employee's performance remains unacceptable after the 90th calendar day, the supervisor must withhold the WGI. Complete the appraisal form; send it to the CPF; and comply with paragraph **6.5.**.

6.5. Withholding WGI. Withhold WGI when: The employee's rating of record is Acceptable, but actual performance has deteriorated to unacceptable; the employee's rating of record is Unacceptable; and when the employee fails to demonstrate acceptable performance during the 90-day postponement period.

6.5.1. When an employee's performance deteriorates to unacceptable, the supervisor must:

6.5.1.1. Complete the appraisal form to notify the CPF of the decision to issue a new rating and deny WGI.

6.5.1.2. Give a copy of the rating to the employee.

6.5.1.3. After coordination with the CPF, give the employee a letter explaining the decision to deny WGI no later than 30 calendar days before WGI due date (sample at **Figure 6.1.**).

6.5.2. A letter of decision to withhold a WGI must contain:

6.5.2.1. The specific performance element and standard that the employee is not fulfilling.

6.5.2.2. An explanation of how the employee must improve performance to receive a WGI.

6.5.2.3. A statement of the employee's right to representation.

6.5.2.4. A statement that the employee or the employee's representative may request reconsideration of the decision no later than 15 calendar days after receiving the letter.

6.5.2.5. The name and address of the official to whom the employee may send a reconsideration request.

6.5.2.6. Information advising the employee:

6.5.2.6.1. To file any reconsideration request in writing and state why the decision deserves reconsideration.

6.5.2.6.2. To state in the reconsideration request if the employee or employee's representative also wants to reply orally to the decision.

6.5.2.7. A statement that the employee and the employee's representative may review the file containing all pertinent documents.

6.5.2.8. The file's location, how to review the file, and the name, office symbol, location, and telephone number of the person with whom to make review arrangements.

6.5.2.9. A statement granting the employee and the employee's representative a reasonable amount of time to review the material and prepare a response. ***NOTE:*** A standard definition of "reasonable" is impossible. You must base the amount of time you give for each case on the particulars of that situation, such as the amount of and type of material involved and the difficulty in obtaining assistance. If the employee is covered by a bargaining agreement, you must follow the provisions of the agreement.

6.5.2.10. A statement that the employee may request a time extension if sufficient reason exists.

6.6. Employee Representation Rights in Reconsidering WGI Denial. For bargaining unit employees, provisions of the bargaining agreement govern the employee's rights to representation. Employees not in a bargaining unit may be accompanied, represented, and advised by a representative of their own choice.

6.6.1. The reconsideration official may disallow the employee's choice of representative if:

6.6.1.1. The representative's activities pose a conflict of interest or position.

6.6.1.2. Releasing an employee from an official position to serve as representative would be too costly to the government.

6.6.1.3. The proposed representative's priority work assignments preclude serving as a representative.

6.6.2. If appropriate, formally disallow a representative in writing and deliver the notice to the employee or the employee's representative, if the employee is unavailable.

6.6.2.1. Justify the disallowance citing regulatory provisions and other authorities.

6.6.2.2. The notice of disallowance explains management's position in an adjudication.

6.6.3. An employee in a bargaining unit may challenge the decision to disallow a representative through the provisions of the bargaining agreement or 5 U.S.C. 7118.

6.6.4. An employee who is not in a bargaining unit may challenge the disallowance of the representative according to Air Force instructions.

6.7. Reconsidering Withholding WGI:

6.7.1. If the employee makes an oral response, prepare a transcript or summary. Give the employee or representative an opportunity to submit a written exception to the summary or transcript. Any exception becomes part of the reconsideration file.

6.7.2. Reconsideration review includes:

6.7.2.1. The employee's response

6.7.2.2. The performance plan

6.7.2.3. The rating of record

6.7.2.4. Documentation of periodic performance discussions

6.7.2.5. Other documentary evidence

6.7.2.6. The overall rating that was the basis for withholding the WGI

6.7.3. The reconsideration official must notify the employee in writing of the decision within 30 calendar days of receiving the employee's reconsideration request.

6.7.4. The rating and reviewing officials may revise or prepare a new rating of record form that documents an overall acceptable rating. If the rating is acceptable, the employee receives the WGI retroactively to the original due date.

6.8. When Withholding WGI Remains In Effect:

6.8.1. Inform the employee in writing of the reasons for the decision and explain the employee's appeal rights to the Merit System Protection Board (5 CFR 531.410(d)).

6.8.2. For an employee covered by a collective bargaining agreement, a reconsideration decision that sustains a negative determination is only reviewable in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

6.9. Action After WGI Is Withheld. After withholding the WGI, the supervisor may grant the WGI when the employee demonstrates sustained acceptable performance.

6.9.1. The supervisor will review the performance for an acceptable level of competence determination every 90-180 days and again no more than 1 year after the original WGI eligibility date. The supervisor who denies a WGI must make annual decisions on the employee's performance level.

6.9.2. If the employee's performance improves to an acceptable level after having WGI withheld, the supervisor completes the appraisal form, and sends it to the CPF. The employee then receives WGI the first day of the first pay period after the acceptable determination has been made.

6.9.3. If the employee's performance does not improve to an acceptable level after remedial action and within a reasonable period of time after originally withholding WGI, the supervisor works with the CPF to determine other corrective or administrative action.

6.10. Reconsideration File. When the employee receives a final negative decision, the CPF puts together an employee reconsideration file. The file must contain only documents that were available to the employee including:

6.10.1. Written negative decision.

6.10.2. Copy of the rating of record.

6.10.3. Documentation of the performance discussions that served as the advance notice of deficient performance.

6.10.4. Employee's written request for reconsideration.

6.10.5. Report of any investigation.

6.10.6. Written summary or transcript of any oral presentation by the employee.

6.10.7. Any written exception to the summary of transcript by the employee or designated representative.

6.10.8. Final decision on the reconsideration.

6.10.9. Other applicable documents.

Figure 6.1. Sample Letter of Decision to Withhold Within-Grade Increase.

FROM: Organization/Functional Address Symbol *(of employee's supervisor)*

SUBJECT: Decision to Withhold Within-Grade Increase (WGI)

TO: (Employee's name and organizational address)

1. This is to notify you that I am withholding your WGI, which is (was) due on ___(date)___. During your last progress review, held on ___(date)___, I advised you that you have been performing your duties and responsibilities unacceptably and that you would have to improve your performance by the end of the required waiting period on ___(date)___ to advance to the next higher step of your grade. Below are the performance elements and standards for acceptable performance in which you were deficient. (List each deficiency by element, standard, and reasons the performance does not meet the standard.)

2. On ___(date)___, I assigned you a rating of record. A copy of your rating is attached. Your performance was still unacceptable, as indicated above. Because your performance is not acceptable, the Air Force will withhold your WGI.

3. To be granted your WGI, your performance, for each element listed in paragraph 1, must meet the established standards. (If the standard does not state specifically what is expected, the supervisor must state here exactly what the employee must do to improve to an acceptable level). Your performance must also continue to meet the standard(s) established for all other elements of your performance plan. I will continue to counsel you in improving your performance.

4. (State here the employee's right to representation in preparing a response to the negative determination.) If you elect to have a representative, your request for reconsideration must so state and contain the name of that individual.

5. You or your personal representative may request an administrative reconsideration of this decision. Put your request in writing and make sure that (name, office location, and telephone number of reconsideration official) receives it no later than 15 calendar days from the date you receive this notice. Your request must state the specific reasons you believe the Air Force should reconsider the decision to withhold your WGI. Alternatively, if you or your personal representative wish to present the reasons for requesting reconsideration orally to (name of reconsideration official), indicate this in your written request and ask for an appointment to make this presentation. We will consider extending the time limit if you can show sufficient reasons for needing an extension. You and your representative, if otherwise in a duty status, may have up to _____ hours of official time to prepare your request for reconsideration. Submit your request for use of official time to me. If you have a representative who is a military member or federal employee, send a request for official time to your representative's supervisor. You or your representative may review copies of all material used in taking this action by contacting (name, office symbol, location, and telephone number).

6. If you wish to review civilian personnel regulations pertinent to this action or obtain additional information concerning how to submit a request for reconsideration, you may contact (name, address, and telephone number of CPF representative).

/SIGNED/

_____

Rating or Reviewing Official

Attachment

AF Form 860A, Civilian Rating of Record

Chapter 7

USING FACTOR RATINGS ON THE CIVILIAN PROMOTION APPRAISAL FOR COMPETITIVE PROMOTION AND INSERVICE PLACEMENT

7.1. Competitive Promotion and Inservice Placement. 5 CFR Part 335, *Promotion and Internal Placement*, establishes overall requirements that agency merit promotion programs must meet. Section 335.103 requires that due weight be given to performance appraisals. An Acceptable rating enables an employee to compete for promotion or other competitive inservice placement actions.

7.2. When the Civilian Promotion Appraisal is Used. The appraisal may be used for competitive inservice placement actions including promotions; reassignments to positions with known growth potential or to positions which provide new knowledges, skills, or abilities (KSAs) which enhance future career growth; selection for training that would result in enhancement of career growth; demotion to lower-graded positions that have career growth above the employee's current position; and other instances that may be determined in accordance with AFMAN 36-203, Chapters 2 and 8. The ratings on AF Form 860A, Part F may serve as a sort factor in determining rank order of those employees having substantively equal KSAs, if there are more candidates than can be referred to the selecting supervisor. The civilian promotion appraisal scores are applied using scores derived from algorithms to determine rank order.

7.3. Appraisal of Work Behavior. When a new employee enters the Air Force work force, the employee is automatically assigned a rating of "5 - Fully Successful" in the DCPDS on the nine appraisal factors on the Civilian Promotion Appraisal, AF Form 860A, Part F.

7.3.1. At any time after the employee has performed in the position for a minimum of 90 days, the rating and reviewing officials may complete the Civilian Promotion Appraisal if the officials determine that the employee's manner of performance warrants ratings other than "5 - Fully Successful". A change in the appraisal factors under these circumstances may only occur once before the end of the current appraisal period.

7.3.2. Annual ratings on promotion appraisal factors are required at the end of the appraisal period.

7.3.3. Appraisals cannot be rendered on an employee more often than once an appraisal period. However, this requirement may be waived at local discretion to satisfy a settlement agreement or third-party decision.

7.4. Security and Control Requirements. To maintain the merit system principle of fair and equal job competition, certain material used in competitive inservice placement cannot be given to unauthorized persons. This precludes compromise of the competitive selection process, and prevents unfair advantage to some competing candidates. Accordingly, the algorithms assigned to the nine appraisal factors will not be released to the public, Air Force or other government employees, commanders, managers, supervisors, or union officials.

7.4.1. HQ AFPC/DPK, 555 E Street West Suite 1, Randolph AFB TX 78150-4530, will maintain the algorithms in a secure fashion.

7.4.2. Qualified parties, as authorized by HQ USAF/DPF, may have access to and use of the algorithms for research validation purposes.

Chapter 8

RECORDS

8.1. Supervisor's Records. Supervisors use the AF Form 860, **Civilian Performance Plan** or the core personnel document (CPD) to record performance elements, set performance standards, and document employee acknowledgment of the element(s) and standard(s). The supervisor keeps the original of the AF Form 860 or CPD with the AF Form 971, **Supervisor's Employee Brief**, or in the EPF (paragraph **8.2.**, below), maintained along with the AF Form 971 in the supervisor's employee work folder. The supervisor gives a copy to the employee, and if the EPF is maintained at the CPF, sends a copy there. At the end of the appraisal period, the supervisor:

8.1.1. Completes AF Form 860A, **Civilian Rating of Record** and sends the original to the CPF, or keeps it in the EPF maintained along with the AF Form 971 in the supervisor's employee work folder and gives a copy to the employee.

8.1.2. If the original goes to the CPF, keeps a copy for the EPF and gives a copy to the employee following the requirements of any applicable bargaining agreement.

8.2. Employee Performance File (EPF). The EPF contains the AF Form 860 or CPD with performance element(s) and standard(s), and AF Forms 860A maintained IAW paragraph **8.3.** below. The EPF may be:

8.2.1. A separate file maintained along with the AF Form 971 in the supervisor's employee work folder, or

8.2.1.1. (Added-21SW) The Employee Performance File (EPF) is maintained with the AF Form 971, Supervisor's Employee Brief, in the Supervisor's Employee Work Folder (971 file).

8.2.2. A separate file maintained with the OPF, or

8.2.3. An envelope located on the left side of the OPF.

NOTE: No fewer than three months before each CPF is scheduled to be serviced through the Air Force Personnel Center, the contents of the EPF should be transferred to each supervisor for maintenance in the supervisor's employee work folder.

8.3. Keeping Records. Maintain AF Forms 860, 1003, and 860A for four years (5 CFR 293.404).

8.3.1. Destroy performance appraisals and DCPDS records superseded through an administrative, negotiated, quasi-judicial or judicial proceeding as soon as possible after receiving the final decision.

8.3.2. Keep any performance documents connected with the proceedings in a separate file as long as necessary.

8.3.3. Destroy performance appraisals and DCPDS records reflecting unacceptable performance when a notice of proposed demotion or removal was issued but not effected, within 30 calendar days after the employee completes one year of acceptable performance.

8.4. Transferring Records. When an employee moves within the Air Force or to a new agency any time during the appraisal period:

8.4.1. Transfer all performance ratings of record retained in the EPF, i.e., performance ratings that are four years old or less, including the performance plan on which the last rating was based (5 CFR 293.405(a)).

8.4.1.1. (Added-21SW) When an employee moves within the Peterson Complex, the losing supervisor is responsible for forwarding the employee's 971 file, including the EPF, directly to the gaining supervisor. When an employee leaves the federal service or moves outside the Peterson Complex, the losing supervisor is responsible for forwarding the EPF to the CPF when the employee departs.

8.4.2. See **Table 2.2.** to determine whether the rating of record is completed or an informational rating is sent to the gaining supervisor.

8.4.3. When an employee transfers from another agency to the Air Force, the AFPC/CPF tries to obtain ratings of record from the losing agency. Initially, DCPDS automatically generates a presumptive acceptable rating. When the AFPC/CPF gets current ratings from the losing agency, those ratings are recorded and the current rating replaces the presumptive acceptable rating.

8.4.3.1. Other agency appraisal systems may not use appraisal factors for merit promotion. In this case, ensure that the Air Force appraisal factors used for competition in merit promotion are appropriately completed.

8.5. Disposal of Records. When the OPF of a non-SES employee is sent to another Air Force activity, federal agency or the National Personnel Records Center, the losing AFPC/CPF includes in the OPF the contents of the EPF, i.e., performance ratings that are four years old or less, including the performance plan on which the last rating was based (5 CFR 293.405)(a)), as well as any rating prepared according to **Table 2.2.** or **Table 2.3.**.

8.5.1. (Added-21SW) The CPF is responsible for forwarding the EPF to the Air Force Personnel Center for inclusion in the employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF) and subsequent transmittal to the appropriate Air Force activity, federal agency, or the National Personnel Records Center.

8.6. Forms Prescribed. AF Form 860**, Civilian Performance Plan**, 860A, **Civilian Rating of Record**, 860B, **Civilian Progress Review**, 2857, **Quality Step Increase**, 2858, **Performance Award**.

8.6. (21SW) IMT Prescribed. 21 SW IMT 860C, **Worksheet for Mid-Term and Initial 90-Day Performance Progress Reviews.**

DONALD L. PETERSON, Lt General, USAF
DCS/Personnel

Attachment 1

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

References

Title 5, United States Code, *Government Organization and Employees*, current edition

Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, *Administrative Personnel*, current edition

Title 10, United States Code, *Armed Forces*, current edition

DoDD 1400.25-M, *DoD Civilian Personnel Manual System*, current edition

AFPD 36-10, *Civilian Performance Management*

AFMAN 36-203, *Staffing Civilian Positions*

AFI 36-401*, Employee Training and Development*

AFI 36-810, *Substance Abuse Prevention and Control*

AFMAN 37-139, *Records Disposition Schedule*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFMAN—Air Force Manual

CLG—Change to lower grade

CFR—Code of Federal Regulations

CPD—Core Personnel Document

CPF—Civilian Personnel Flight

CSRS—Civil Service Retirement System

DCPDS—Defense Civilian Personnel Data System

DoD—Department of Defense

EPF—Employee Performance File

FERS—Federal Employees Retirement System

FWS—Federal Wage System

GS—General Schedule

HQ USAF—Headquarters United States Air Force

IPA—Intergovernmental Personnel Act

MAJCOM—Major command

MSPB—Merit Systems Protection Board

OPF—Official personnel folder

OPM—Office of Personnel Management

OPR—Office of primary responsibility

QSI—Quality Step Increase

RIF—Reduction-in-force

SAF—Secretary of the Air Force

SES—Senior Executive Service

SF—Standard Form

SL—Senior level

ST—Scientific and professional

U.S.C.—United States Code

VRA—Veterans Reemployment Act

WGI—Within-grade Increase

Terms

Acceptable Performance—Performance meeting the expected requirements of critical performance plan elements.

Acceptable Rating—The summary rating assigned when an employee meets the requirements of the critical performance elements of the performance plan.

Core Personnel Document (CPD)—A single document which contains duties and responsibilities for determining proper classification (position description); recruitment knowledges, skills and abilities (KSAs) for staffing of the position; and performance elements and standards for appraising employee performance.

Critical Element—A work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in a determination that the employee's overall performance is unacceptable.

Day—The term "day" as used in this program refers to a calendar day unless specifically designated otherwise.

Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS)—The DoD automated multi-level civilian management data system.

Employee Performance File—A file containing as a minimum the AF Form 860 or core personnel document with performance element(s) and standard(s), and the AF Form 860A on which the rating of record is assigned.

Federal Wage Systems (FWS)—A statutory pay system covering employees in trades and crafts positions.

General Schedule (GS)—A statutory pay system covering employees in clerical, administrative, technical, and professional positions.

Mission—As used in this program, the expected output of the work unit or organization in which the

employee is located.

Opportunity Period—The time period following notification of unacceptable performance in one or more critical elements during which the employee may demonstrate acceptable performance before authorities decide whether or not to demote or remove the employee.

Performance Appraisal—A systematic comparison of an employee's performance of duties and responsibilities with performance standards.

Performance Award—A cash payment based on an employee's annual performance. A performance award does not increase basic pay.

Performance Plan—All of the written, or otherwise recorded, performance elements that set forth expected performance. A performance plan must include all critical elements and their performance standards.

Performance Standard—The management-approved expression of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectation(s) that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance. A performance standard may include, but is not limited to, quality, quantity, timeliness, and manner of performance.

Quality Step Increase (QSI)—An additional within-grade increase granted to a GS employee under Title 5 U.S.C. 5336 to recognize sustained high quality performance beyond normal expectations.

Rating Levels:
N — A rating of record at summary level 1, indicating unacceptable performance.
***R* –** A rating of record at summary level 3, indicating acceptable performance.

Rating Official—The supervisor who evaluates the performance of an employee and assigns the rating; the employee's first-level, immediate supervisor of record.

Rating of Record—A performance rating prepared at the end of the appraisal period for performance over the entire period and the assignment of a summary level and a performance rating prepared to support a within-grade increase action.

Reviewing Official—Normally, the supervisor in the chain of command at the next higher level above the rating official. A supervisor above that level may serve as the reviewing official. An immediate supervisor who is the highest level in the chain of command at the installation usually also serves as the reviewing official. The reviewing official approves the performance plan and the rating of record, as well as any recognition recommended by the rating official which results from the rating of record. The reviewing official has the authority to change the plan, rating, and award.

Scientific and Professional (ST—Positions above grade GS-15 that do not meet the SES criteria, and whose incumbents are engaged in research and development in the physical, biological, medical, or engineering sciences, or a closely-related field.

Senior Executive Service (SES)—Positions above grade GS-15 whose incumbents carry out significant managerial or policy-making functions.

Senior Level (SL)—Positions above grade GS-15 that do not meet either the SES or ST criteria.

Supervisor—An employee with authority to hire, direct, assign, promote, reward, transfer, furlough, lay off, recall, suspend, discipline or remove employees per 5 U.S.C. 7103(a)(10).

Unacceptable Performance—Failure to meet the requirements of any critical element of the

performance plan.

Unacceptable Rating—The summary rating assigned when an employee does not meet the requirements of one or more critical performance elements of the performance plan.

Within-Grade Increase (WGI)—A periodic increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the position's grade to the next higher step of that grade according to 5 U.S.C. 5335.

Addresses—
HQ USAF/DPF and HQ USAF/DPFM

1040 Air Force Pentagon

Washington DC 20330-1040

HQ AFPC/DPK

555 E Street West Suite 1

Randolph AFB TX 78150-4530

Attachment 1 (21SW)

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Terms

Awards Approving Official—NORAD/USNORTHCOM directors, AFSPC directors, wing commanders, tenant unit commanders, or designated appointees.

Peterson Complex Bargaining Unit Employees—Includes all non-supervisory General Schedule (GS) firefighters, all Wage Leaders (WL), and all Wage Grade (WG) employees serviced by 21 MSS/DPC.

Attachment 2

EMPLOYEE COVERAGE

Table A2.1. Employee Coverage Under the Air Force Appraisal Program.

Appointment--Pay Status	Performance Plan, Rating of Record, and Rating-based Performance Awards[3]	**WGI**	**QSI**
Consultants and Experts	No	No	No
Detailees	Yes	Yes	No
Excepted Service (no time limit)	Yes[4]	Yes[4]	Yes[4, 5]
Executives			
Career SES	No	No	No
Non-career SES	No	No	No
SL	Yes	No	No
ST—Scientific and Professional Personnel (5 U.S.C. 3104)	Yes	No	No
Federal Wage System (FWS) (no time limit)	Yes	Yes	No
Temporary—120 days or less	No	Yes	No
Temporary—121 days or more	Yes	Yes	No
Foreign National (Direct Hire)	No	No	No
General Schedule (without time limitation)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Temporary—120 days or less	No	No	No
Temporary—120-365 days	Yes	No	No
Temporary—more than 1 year	Yes	Yes[6]	Yes
Intermittent	Yes[5, 11]	Yes[7]	Yes[7]
IPA Assignment[1]			
Federal Employee	Yes[5]	Yes[7]	Yes
Non-Federal Employee	Yes[5, 12]	Yes[7]	No
Maximum Salary[2]	No	No	No
Maximum rate of the grade	Yes	No	No
At statutory pay limit	Yes	Yes[8]	Yes[8]
Overseas limited			
GS-indefinite appointment	Yes[4]	Yes[4]	Yes[4]
FWS-indefinite appointment	Yes[4]	Yes[4]	No
Part-time permanent	Yes[11]	Yes	Yes
Presidential Intern	Yes	Yes	Yes
Private Citizen	No	No	No
Reemployed Annuitants	Yes[5]	No[9]	No[9]
Schedule C, 5 CFR, part 213	No	Yes	Yes
Taper	Yes	Yes	Yes[7]
Term Appointment longer than 1 year	Yes[4]	Yes[4]	Yes[10]
Veterans Readjustment Appointment	Yes[4]	Yes[4]	Yes[4, 10]
Student Career Experience Program	Yes	Yes	Yes[10]
Student Temporary Employment Program	Yes[4]	Yes[4]	Yes[4, 10]

NOTES:

1. IPA means the Intergovernmental Personnel Act.

2. Defined by 5 U.S.C. 5102 (c)(25). Positions for which rates of pay are individually fixed or expressly authorized to be fixed at or in excess of the maximum rate for level V of the executive schedule.

3. Normally, don't grant the performance award if the individual received other cash recognition to adequately recognize the same contribution.

4. For temporary appointments, follow temporary GS or FWS rules.

5. Yes, if the number of work days exceed 120 in a calendar year. Otherwise, no.

6. Initial temporary appointment must be for more than 1 year. Employees who receive temporary appointments for 1 year or less and who are subsequently extended beyond 1 year are not eligible for within-grade increases.

7. Unless appointment is limited (for example, not to exceed one year).

8. Appropriate personnel may recommend and approve WGI or QSI, but these may not become effective until maximum salary limit increases.

9. Normally employed on a temporary basis. However, you may grant QSIs to those serving unlimited appointments under an OPM exception.

10. No, if serving in a FWS position.

11. Prorate the amount of a performance award according to time worked.

12. Yes, may receive an award if the person is serving under a temporary appointment in the federal government.

Attachment 3

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

A3.1. Purpose and Background. Specific provisions of law, regulation, and Department of Defense (DoD) policy require certain matters be considered in the performance evaluations of some employees. Except as provided below, this does not require the establishment of specific performance elements and standards addressing the individual's performance. Rating officials may just consider these requirements in the performance rating or provide narrative evaluations of progress in meeting these requirements (e.g., in a statement on the appraisal form).

A3.2. DoD Performance Evaluation Requirements.

A3.2.1. Audit Follow-Up. Performance evaluations of appropriate managers must reflect the degree of effectiveness in addressing audit findings and recommendations and implementing agreed upon corrective actions as required by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-50, "Audit Follow-up," 29 September 1982. This requirement applies to audits conducted by the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Inspector General, Department of Defense (IG, DoD). This requirement is established in paragraph E.2.g of DoD Directive 7650.3, "Follow-Up on General Accounting Office, DoD Inspector General, Internal Audit, and Internal Review Reports," 5 September 1989.

A3.2.2. Personnel Security Program**.** Performance evaluations of employees assigned to sensitive duties (or other duties requiring a trustworthiness determination) must on a continuing basis also have an evaluation of their security eligibility. This requirement is established in paragraph 9-102(d) of DoD 5200.2-R, "Personnel Security Program," January 1987.

A3.2.3. Internal Management Control**.** Performance evaluations of management who have significant Internal Management Control (IMC) responsibilities must reflect the accountability for the success or failure of IMC practices. This requirement is established in paragraph E.3.d of DoD Directive 5101.39, "Internal Management Control Program," 14 April 1987.

A3.2.4. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). Performance evaluations of supervisors, managers, and other personnel with EEO responsibility shall have a critical element on EEO. This requirement is established in paragraph E.2.f of DoD Directive 1440.1, "The DoD Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program," 21 May 1987.

A3.2.5. Inventory Management**.** Performance evaluation of individuals employed at Inventory Control Points shall give appropriate consideration to efforts made by these individuals to eliminate wasteful practices and achieve cost savings in the acquisition and management of inventory items. This requirement is established in title 10, section 2458.

A3.2.6. Acquisitions**.** Persons serving in an acquisition position in the same acquisition career field shall be provided an opportunity for inclusion of any comments on the performance of a person serving in an acquisition position. It should be routine practice to seek input from program managers when evaluating contracting personnel. This requirement is established in paragraph D.19 of DoD Directive 5000.52, "Defense Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development Program," 25 October 1991.

A3.2.7. Regulatory Reinvention**.** Performance measurements of persons who are frontline regulators, i.e., those who have the authority to order a corrective action or levy a fine on a business or other government entry, must focus on results, not process and punishment. Therefore, such measures should not be based on process (e.g., number of visits to a business or government entity) or punishment (e.g., number of violations found, number of fines levied on a business or other government entity). This requirement is established by a Presidential Memorandum for heads of federal departments and agencies, "Regulatory Reinvention Initiative," 4 March 1995.

A3.2.8. Classified Information Management**.** The performance ratings of civilian employees who are original classification authorities, security managers or security specialists, or significantly involved in the creation or handling of classified information must include the management of classified information as a critical element or item to be evaluated. This requirement is established in section 5.6(c)(7) of Executive Order 12958, "Classified National Security Information," 17 April 1995.

A3.2.9. Safety**.** Responsible DoD officials, at each management level, including first-line supervisors, shall, to the extent of their authority, comply with the Department of Defense Occupational Safety and Health Program guidance and regulations. Performance evaluations of these employees shall reflect personal accountability in this respect, consistent with the duties of the position, with appropriate recognition of superior performance, and conversely, with corrective administrative action, as appropriate, for deficient performance. This requirement is established in Enclosure 2 to DoD Instruction 6055.1, "DoD Occupational Safety and Health Program," 26 October 1982.