

# Interim Performance Management System for Positions Transitioning to the GS from NSPS

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## Department of the Navy *Handbook*

*Version 2.0*

September 2010





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## Introduction

Successful employee performance is key to accomplishing mission requirements and objectives and is a major part of the work that supervisors perform throughout the year. A successful performance management system ensures that work performed by employees accomplishes the goals and mission of the organization and that employees have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Benefits of a successfully adopted performance management system include an organization that is directly aligned behind its goals and objectives and a motivated workforce where every employee understands his or her importance and role in the organization.

Performance Management is the systematic process of:

- Planning work and setting expectations
- Continually monitoring performance
- Developing the capacity to perform
- Periodically rating performance in a summary fashion
- Rewarding good performance.

The Department of the Navy (DON) Interim Performance Management System is a two-level system for non-bargaining unit positions transitioning from the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) to the General Schedule (GS). This handbook is designed for Federal supervisors and employees and supplements the policy in the *DON Interim Performance Management System Covering Positions Transitioning to the General Schedule (GS) from the National Security Personnel System (NSPS)*.

## Background

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2010 repealed the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) in October 2009. NDAA 2010 required that all employees be transitioned from NSPS no later than 1 January 2012 and that no employee lose pay due to the transition. The law also required that the Department of Defense (DoD) submit to Congress a proposal for an enterprise-wide performance management system. For the period until the DoD-wide performance management system is implemented, the DON has developed the Interim Performance Management System for positions transitioning from NSPS to GS.

## Who is Covered?

The DON Interim Performance Management System applies to all non-bargaining unit **positions** in the DON that transitioned from NSPS to the GS. This system also covers positions that would have been covered by NSPS had NSPS not been repealed. This means that certain employees covered by this interim system may or may not have been covered by NSPS at some point – coverage is based on the **position** and not the employee occupying the position.

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## The Performance Management Cycle

Performance management in the DON consists of multiple steps taken over the course of an annual appraisal period. The **Planning** phase involves setting expectations and goals for individual employees that fit with the mission and goals of the organization. Ensuring employee involvement in this phase helps them to understand what the mission of the organization is and how their specific goals contribute to overall mission completion. The **Monitoring and Developing** phase involves providing ongoing feedback – both formally and informally – on progress in reaching employee goals. During this phase, development needs are addressed by providing training and ways to develop skills, by giving new assignments or higher levels of responsibility, or by improving work methods. The **Rating** phase involves summarizing employee performance. This process helps compare performance over time and provides a means for rewarding good performance. Finally, the **Rewarding** phase is the process for recognizing and rewarding employees for their contributions to the organization’s mission.

### Timeline

The DON Interim Performance Management System has a one-year appraisal period over which the phases described are completed. The appraisal period is from 1 October through 30 September of the following year. The following timeline shows an overview of what tasks should be completed at each month.

Month 1	<b>Create Performance Plan</b>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify critical elements for upcoming year</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify developmental and training needs</li></ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a plan for monitoring performance and communicating throughout the year</li></ul>
5	
6	<b>Conduct Progress Review</b>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check employee progress</li></ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide feedback on performance so far</li></ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adjust critical elements if necessary</li></ul>
10	
11	
12	<b>Rate and Reward</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss employee performance</li><li>• Provide the employee with a summary rating</li><li>• Determine if the employee is eligible for performance awards</li><li>• Explain grievance process if necessary</li></ul>

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## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Under the DON Interim Performance Management System, there are many roles to ensure that employees are rated in a fair and consistent manner. The following is a short description of each role.

### ***Performance Awards Review Board***

The Performance Awards Review Board will be established at each organization to review and approve awards for consistency, appropriateness, and adherence to merit system principles.

### ***Senior Rating Official***

The senior rating official for each employee is responsible for reviewing and approving performance plans and the recommended ratings of record. The senior rating official is generally an employee's second-line supervisor.

### ***Rating Official***

The rating official for each employee is responsible for establishing performance plans for his or her employees, carrying out required performance reviews with employees, taking action as necessary to correct unacceptable performance, and recommending a rating of record to the senior rating official. The rating official is generally an employee's first-line supervisor and must be a management official.

### ***Employee***

Employees are responsible for executing their performance plans to meet the objectives of the organization. Additionally, they are responsible for identifying and recording their accomplishments and results, participating in required conversations, and understanding the link between performance expectations, conduct, and organization mission and goals. Employees are strongly encouraged to be active participants in all phases of the performance management cycle.

## **Performance Management Phases**

As discussed above, the performance management cycle consists of four phases that are completed throughout the year. The following is an explanation of what is accomplished during each phase, including tips for successfully completing the tasks involved. For a more detailed description of the phases and the tasks required, see the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) *A Handbook for Measuring Employee Performance*.

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## Phase 1 – Planning

The first phase in the performance management cycle is **Planning**. During this phase, supervisors are responsible for setting and communicating critical elements with their employees. Involving employees in this phase is essential to their understanding of what needs to be accomplished during the year and why.

### *Creating a Performance Plan*

Within 30 days after the beginning of the appraisal period (normally 1 October), each employee must have an approved performance plan. A new performance plan must also be created within 30 days after an employee is permanently assigned to a new position or within 30 days after an employee is assigned to a detail or temporary promotion or reassignment that is expected to last more than 120 days. Each performance plan should have three to five defined **critical elements** that address individual objectives and expectations (a minimum of two is required). Critical elements must be clearly aligned to organizational goals, objectives, and strategic plans. Unlike in the NSPS performance management system, critical elements are not weighted – each one is as important as the others for rating purposes. Non-critical elements and additional performance elements may not be used.

### **What is a Critical Element?**

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

### *Required Critical Elements*

Performance plans for supervisors must contain at least one supervisory critical element that holds the supervisor accountable for how well they plan, monitor, develop, correct, and assess their employees' performance. Additionally, performance plans must include the critical elements required for specific types of positions, such as those with safety or security requirements. For additional information on required critical elements, see Appendix E of the *DON Interim Performance Management System Covering Positions Transitioning to the General Schedule (GS) from the National Security Personnel System (NSPS)*.

## Phase 2 – Monitoring and Developing

Monitoring performance means measuring performance and providing informal and formal feedback to employees. Developing means increasing an employee's capacity to perform by providing training and developmental opportunities in order to encourage good performance, strengthen job-related skills and competencies, and help employees keep up with changes in the workplace. Although at least one formal progress review is required, monitoring and developing take place throughout the appraisal period.

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### ***Rating Official Responsibilities***

During the year, rating officials should be:

- Tracking employee performance
- Having frequent conversations with employees and providing feedback about performance
- Reviewing the organization's mission and goals to determine if changes have occurred that impact the employees' critical elements
- Scheduling and participating in at least one formal progress review for each employee, and
- Identifying and approving developmental opportunities such as training, mentoring, or special assignments

### ***Conducting the Progress Review***

During the annual appraisal period, rating officials must conduct at least one formal progress review with each employee. The progress review is a good time to discuss employee performance thus far, including specific examples of performance behaviors, to adjust the performance plan as necessary, and to discuss whether training or assistance is necessary in order to meet the requirements of the critical elements. Critical elements are not rated at the progress review.

### ***Holding Performance Conversations***

Communication is key to successful Performance Management. Rating officials and employees are responsible for initiating and participating in informational performance conversations throughout the year. During these conversations, employees explain what they have accomplished and identify areas for which they require support. Rating officials provide feedback on what the employee is successfully accomplishing and what the employee needs to work on. These conversations are also a good time to identify any training needs.

### ***Adjusting Performance Expectations***

Critical elements may be modified, added to, or deleted as needed throughout the appraisal period as the organization's mission and goals change. However, critical elements may not be adjusted within 90 days of the end of the appraisal period, and critical elements must be achievable within the time remaining in the appraisal period. Additional reasons for adjusting performance expectations include conditions that change beyond the employee's ability to control or influence, the complexity of the assignment or the resources to complete the assignment were underestimated, changes to organizational mission or staffing

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structure, or assignment of new responsibilities or projects. Any adjustments must be promptly and clearly communicated to the employee.

### Phase 3 – Rating

During the **Rating** phase of the performance management cycle, rating officials and employees discuss the employee’s performance and contributions toward their critical elements over the previous appraisal period. During this phase, the rating official compares the employee’s actual performance on each critical element to the defined **performance standards** (see Appendix B). There are two types of appraisals in the DON Interim Performance Management System – Close-out and Annual. A description of both follows.

#### What is a Performance Standard?

Performance Standards are an expression of the performance thresholds, requirements, or expectations that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance.

#### *Close-out Appraisal*

A Close-out Appraisal is conducted when:

- An employee completes a detail or temporary promotion of more than 120 days under established critical elements;
- An employee changes positions, is promoted or moves to a new agency or activity after being under established critical elements for a minimum of 90 days; or
- The rating official leaves the position after the employee is under established critical elements for a minimum of 90 days (the employee may continue under the same performance plan unless it is changed by the new rating official).

The individual element levels on a Close-out Appraisal may be used to determine the rating of record if the employee has fewer than 90 days in the newly assigned position before the end of the appraisal period (see *summary level* below).

#### *Annual Appraisal*

An Annual Appraisal is conducted for each employee at the end of the appraisal period. Employees are required to provide their rating officials with narrative self-assessments of their accomplishments for each of their critical elements within 15 days after the end of the appraisal period (normally 30 September). Rating officials must consider the self-assessments of their employees and prepare written assessments of employee performance and contribution to mission within 30 days after the end of the Appraisal period.

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### ***Performance Standard***

A performance standard is an 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, for example, quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or manner of performance. When determining a summary level, the rating official will compare the actual performance on each critical element to the DON-defined performance standards given in Appendix B below. The performance standards included in Appendix B of this handbook are the only ones by which critical elements can be assessed; to ensure consistency across the DON, they may not be augmented or altered.

Performance standards are defined for three different stages in the advancement pattern of a positions or career – Entry, Journey, Expert. A single career stage will be used for each employee that addresses all critical elements within the

**Critical elements can be used to set expectations for performance at the individual level. For example, if an expert career stage employee receives a new assignment, the critical element, while still being assessed at the expert-level performance standard, could be written to reflect the steep learning curve of the assignment.**

employee’s performance plan. Additionally, the supervisory performance standards are used to determine a summary level for the supervisory critical element. Normally, the grade and progression pattern of the occupation will determine the career stage.

Rating officials must use their judgment in determining which term best describes the nature of the work for the position occupied by each employee. The following descriptions are meant as a guide for management officials to use in determining which performance standard may be appropriate for each employee:

**Entry** – A position for an employee who is new to or who needs to learn a particular type of work. Position requires close guidance and supervision.

**Journey** – A position requiring sufficient experience performing a particular type of work with less supervision than an entry-level position. Generally, the full performance level of a career ladder position.

**Expert** – A position requiring strong breadth and depth of experience in a particular type of work or career field. Position requires little supervision.

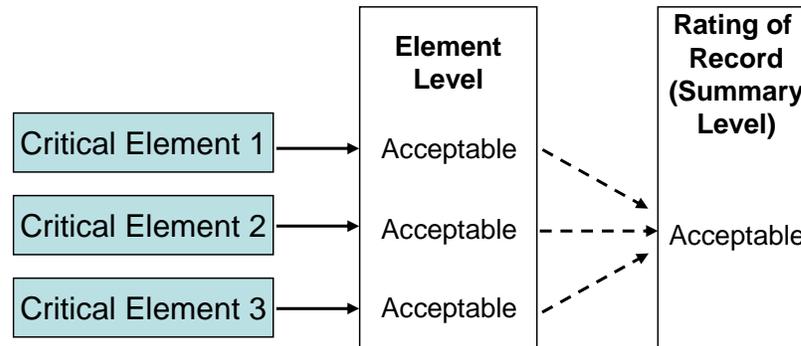
### ***Rating of Record (also ‘Summary Level’)***

There are two possible Ratings of Record under the DON Interim Performance Management System – “Acceptable” and “Unacceptable.” At the time of a Close-out or Annual Appraisal, the rating official will compare performance on each critical element to the appropriate critical element performance standard (see Appendix B) to determine whether each critical element will receive an individual

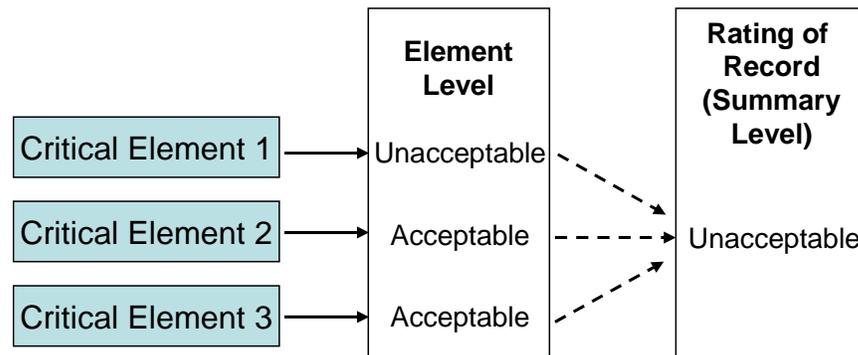
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element level of “Acceptable” or “Unacceptable.” After each critical element has been assigned a level, a rating of record is assigned to the performance plan. If all critical elements have been assigned an individual element level of “Acceptable,” then the rating of record is “Acceptable.” However, if any one or more critical elements were assigned an “Unacceptable” level, then the rating of record is “Unacceptable.” An example follows.

*Example 1 – All Critical Elements Assigned “Acceptable”*



*Example 2 – At Least One Critical Element Assigned “Unacceptable”*



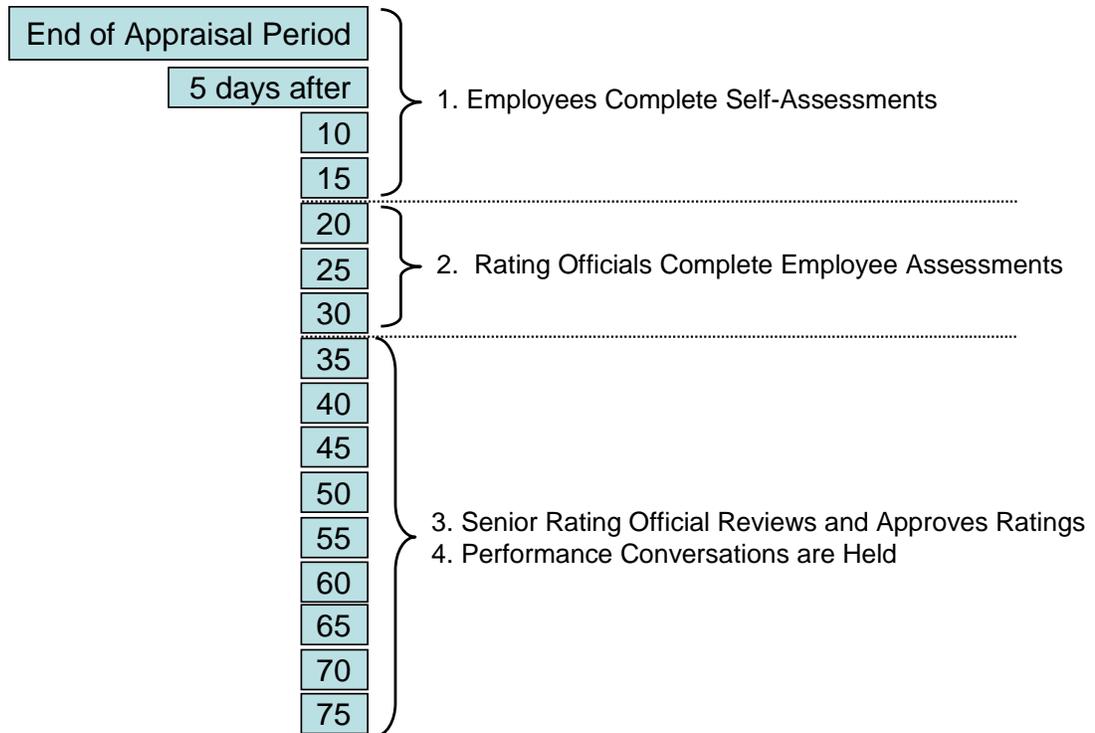
***Communicating the Results***

Rating officials are required to have a conversation with their employees to discuss the rating of record assigned and the narrative assessment within 75 days after the end of the annual appraisal period. This conversation may only occur after the senior rating official reviews and approves the rating official’s recommendations.

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### *Summary of the Annual Appraisal Process*

There are many steps involved in the annual appraisal process. The following is a timeline showing when the events should be completed.



### *Unacceptable Performance*

If an employee's performance is determined to be 'Unacceptable' in one or more critical elements at any time during the appraisal period, the rating official must take corrective action by speaking with the employee about the performance issue and suggesting ways to improve performance.

Within-grade increases (WGIs) cannot be granted while performance is at an unacceptable level. If performance is determined to be "Unacceptable" at the time a WGI is due to an employee, the rating official must take action to deny the WGI.

If unacceptable performance persists, the rating official should consider corrective action including, but not limited to, initiating a reassignment, a reduction-in-grade, a removal in accordance with 5 CFR 752 or a formal opportunity to improve through a performance improvement plan (PIP) in accordance with 5 CFR 432.

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## Phase 4 – Rewarding

To ensure that employees are recognized and rewarded based on their individual accomplishments and contributions, Commands will develop awards frameworks consistent with the following principles. All organizations will publish their adopted framework at least 30 calendar days prior to the end of the appraisal period (normally 30 September). Speak with your supervisor for additional information on your Command's recognition and rewards policy.

- Awards will be used as tools to acknowledge and motivate employees by recognizing and rewarding significant individual, team or organizational achievements or contributions.
- Organizations will ensure that there are clear distinctions in award amounts for different levels of performance and contribution to mission.
- All aspects of an individual's compensation profile will be considered when making award decisions (e.g., recent promotions, within-grade increases (WGI), and other salary adjustments).
- Similarly situated employees with like performance and contribution to mission will be rewarded in a consistent manner.
- Transparency is required in all steps of the recognition and rewarding process.
- Employees who receive an "Unacceptable" rating of record are not eligible for any form of recognition or reward and must have their within-grade increase (WGI) either denied or delayed, as appropriate.

## Grievances and Appeals

Employees may raise issues relating to the performance appraisal process either through the administrative grievance procedure or, where applicable, through a negotiated grievance procedure. Appealable issues may be submitted to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). The following items are grievable:

- Failure to inform employees of critical elements and standards within the required time frame; and
- Ratings on individual critical elements and summary level ratings.

The substance of an employee's critical elements and determinations concerning awards or additional step increases are not grievable. Performance-based demotions and

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removals may be grieved through the appropriate grievance procedure or appealed to the MSPB, but not both.

### **Performance Appraisal Form**

The DON Performance Appraisal Form must be used for the creation of performance plans and the evaluation of performance at all steps in the performance management cycle. The form is in fillable PDF format and can be found on the Readiness Tool and also at: <http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/nsps/Pages/default.aspx>.

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## APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY

The following is a glossary of the terms used in this Handbook.

**Acceptable Performance.** Performance that meets an employee's performance standard at a level of performance above “Unacceptable” in the critical element(s) at issue.

**Appraisal Period.** The established period of time for which performance will be reviewed and a rating of record prepared.

**Award.** Recognition for individual or team achievement that contributes to meeting organizational goals or improving the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the government or which is otherwise in the public interest.

**Basic Salary (also Basic Pay).** The rate of pay for the position held by a GS employee before any deductions, including a GS rate, a special rate, a locality rate, and a retained rate.

**Close-out Rating.** An appraisal conducted when an employee or first-level supervisor leaves a position or ceases to have rating responsibilities after the employee has been under established performance standards for at least 90 days or more but before the end of the appraisal period. Close-out ratings will be documented and used in deriving the rating of record and, in some cases, may become the rating of record.

**Critical Element.** A work assignment, goal, objective or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in a determination that an employee's overall performance is unacceptable. Only critical elements may be used in a two-level performance management system.

**Day.** Unless otherwise specified, calendar day.

**Individual Element Level.** The assessment of accomplishment and contribution to mission for each element in a performance plan as measured against performance standards.

**Performance.** Accomplishment of work assignments or responsibilities.

**Performance Plan.** All of the elements that describe the expected performance of an individual employee. A plan must include all critical elements and their related performance standards.

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**Performance Awards Review Board.** One or more groups in an organization whose responsibility it is to review and approve all performance awards at a strategic level for fairness, appropriateness and adherence to merit system principles.

**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.

**Position Description.** Officially documents management's assignment of major duties, responsibilities and organizational relationships to a position. Because it serves as the official record of the classification of the job, it can be used to make other personnel decisions, such as deriving critical elements.

**Progress Review.** One or more required conversations with an employee about performance as it relates to critical elements measured against applicable performance standards.

**Rating of Record (also Summary Level).** The performance rating prepared at the end of an appraisal period for performance over the entire period including the assignment of a summary level. The rating of record is the official rating for pay and retention purposes.

**Rating Official.** A rating official, generally an employee's first-line supervisor, is responsible for establishing performance plans for his/her employees based upon the parameters identified in this policy, carrying out required performance reviews with employees, taking action as necessary to correct less than satisfactory performance, and recommending a rating of record to the Senior rating official. The rating official must be a management official as described in reference (b) and is typically the immediate supervisor.

**Senior Rating Official.** Generally an employee's second-line supervisor, the senior rating official is responsible for reviewing and approving performance plans, recommended ratings of record and close-out ratings to ensure consistency and fairness within and across parts of an organization within that individual's span of control.

**Summary Level (also Rating of Record).** The final result of the performance evaluation process. The summary level is used to provide consistency in describing ratings of record. The two summary levels are "Acceptable" and "Unacceptable."

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**Unacceptable Performance.** Performance of an employee that fails to meet established performance standards in one or more critical elements.

## APPENDIX B – CRITICAL ELEMENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Critical element performance standards are an expression of the performance thresholds, requirements, or expectations that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance. The rating official will compare performance on each critical element to the appropriate standard below to derive a critical element rating. For a description of the how to use these performance standards, see *Performance Standards* above.

<b>Career Stage</b>	<b>Element Level</b>	<b>Performance Standard</b>
Entry	Acceptable	<p>With guidance and assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accomplished the stated critical element, achieving desired results that were sound, accurate, thorough or documented; met applicable authorities, standards, policies, procedures and guidelines.</li> <li>• Planned, organized, prioritized and scheduled own work activities to deliver the critical element in a timely and effective manner.</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to work well with others.</li> </ul>
Entry	Unacceptable	<p>Though guidance was provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failed to achieve all or part of the stated critical element by failing to provide products or services that were sound, accurate, thorough, documented and/or failed to meet applicable authorities, standards, policies, procedures or guidelines; or</li> <li>• Failed to plan, organize, prioritize and schedule own work activities to deliver the critical element in a timely and effective manner; relied on others to redo or complete work assignments; or</li> <li>• Demonstrated poor cooperation or inability to work with others.</li> </ul>

<b>Career Stage</b>	<b>Element Level</b>	<b>Performance Standard</b>
Journey	Acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed the stated critical element by achieving results that met applicable standards, policies, procedures, and guidelines.</li> <li>• In achieving critical elements and work assignments, adhered to work/project schedules; organized or prioritized own tasks to complete assignments; adjusted own work priorities to achieve desired results.</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to work well with others.</li> </ul>
Journey	Unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failed to achieve all or part of the stated critical</li> </ul>

		<p>element; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failed to provide products that were sound, accurate, thorough and documented, and regularly failed to meet applicable authorities, standards, policies, procedures and guidelines; or</li> <li>Failed to plan, organize, prioritize, and schedule own work activities to deliver the critical element in a timely and effective manner; relied on others to frequently assist with or redo work assignments; or</li> <li>Demonstrated poor cooperation or inability to work with others.</li> </ul>
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<b>Career Stage</b>	<b>Element Level</b>	<b>Performance Standard</b>
Expert	Acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered on each critical element with broad and significant impact that was in alignment with the mission and objectives of the organization as well as applicable authorities, standards, policies, procedures and guidelines anticipating and overcoming significant obstacles.</li> <li>Established priorities and coordinated work across projects, programs or people, balancing work demands and anticipating and overcoming obstacles to achieve a timely and positive outcome.</li> <li>Demonstrated high standards of professional conduct and represented the organization or work unit effectively.</li> </ul>
Expert	Unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failed to achieve all or part of the stated critical element; or</li> <li>Failed in the accomplishment of priorities and coordination of work across projects, programs or people; consistently failed to balance work demands resulting in an untimely and unproductive product or event; or</li> <li>Demonstrated poor cooperation or inability to work with others.</li> </ul>

<b>Career Stage</b>	<b>Element Level</b>	<b>Performance Standard</b>
Supervisory	Acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved expected results by effectively carrying out established supervisory responsibilities.</li> <li>Demonstrated adequate EEO and Affirmative Action awareness in areas of supervision and leadership.</li> <li>Supported use of Alternative Dispute Resolution to</li> </ul>

Career Stage	Element Level	Performance Standard
		<p>resolve conduct and performance concerns at the lowest level and early timeframe to ensure the workplace provided a harmonious climate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instituted measures to foster productivity and safety.</li> <li>• Provided timely performance feedback at a minimum of two times during the performance cycle; took appropriate corrective action to address instances of inappropriate conduct and/or unacceptable performance.</li> </ul>
Supervisory	Unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Failed in the accomplishment of priorities and coordination across projects, programs, and people; consistently failed to balance work demands of employees resulting in untimely or unproductive products or events; or</li> <li>○ Failed to demonstrate adequate EEO and Affirmative Action awareness in areas of supervision and leadership; or</li> <li>○ Failed to support the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution to resolve conduct and performance concerns to ensure the workplace provides a harmonious climate; or</li> <li>○ Failed to provide timely performance feedback as required during the rating cycle or to take appropriate corrective action to address instances of inappropriate conduct and/or unacceptable performance.</li> </ul>

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## **APPENDIX C – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Introduction**

#### **Q. Why is this system referred to as “interim”?**

**A.** As part of the law that repeals NSPS (NDAA 2010), Congress mandated that a DoD-wide performance management system be created. Until that system is operational, certain DON employees will be covered by the Interim Performance Management System.

#### **Q. Which employees are covered by the DON Interim Performance Management system?**

**A.** The DON Interim Performance Management System applies to all non-bargaining unit positions in the DON that transitioned from NSPS to the GS. This system also covers positions that would have been covered by NSPS had NSPS not been repealed. This means that certain employees covered by this interim system may or may not have been covered by NSPS at some point – coverage is based on the position and not the employee occupying the position.

#### **Q. How does the Interim Performance Management System sustain the rigor in performance management practices that was developed under NSPS?**

**A.** The DON’s leadership has expressed a strong desire to continue emphasis in the areas of performance-based recognition, tying performance plans to organizational mission and goals, and communication between employees and supervisors. The Interim Performance Management System provides a means to continue the positive gains made into the post-transition future. GS employees have been covered by 5 U.S.C. Chapters 43 and 45 since prior to NSPS implementation and so have been eligible for ratings and performance-based awards under the legacy two-level system in place in the DON prior to NSPS.

#### **Q. Can my organization choose to award employees not covered by the Interim Performance Management System in a similar manner as those covered employees?**

**A.** Yes, any employee covered by 5 U.S.C. Chapter 43 can be rewarded using performance-based awards. Special consideration should be given to bargaining unit employees as the policies would have to be bargained.

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## The Performance Management Cycle

### **Q. When will the appraisal period begin and end? Is it up to Commands?**

A. For all DON Commands, the normal appraisal period will be 1 October to 30 September of the following year.

## Transition

### **Q. If an organization transitions prior to 30 September 2010, when are the appraisal period beginning and end dates for the first appraisal period under the Interim Performance Management System?**

A. If an organization transitions after 2 July 2010 but prior to 2 January 2011, the appraisal period beginning date will be the date of transition and the appraisal period end date will normally be 30 September 2011. For these organizations, the first appraisal period under the Interim Performance Management System may be shorter or longer than the normal 12 months depending on the transition date.

### **Q. If an employee's transition date is prior to 3 July 2010, is the employee entitled to a close-out assessment under NSPS?**

A. If the employee's NSPS job objectives are transferred from the PAA into the Performance Appraisal Form as critical elements under the Interim Performance Management System, then no NSPS close-out assessment is necessary. If an employee's NSPS job objectives are changed upon transition, then an NSPS close-out assessment is necessary.

## Planning

### **Q. How does a rating official select whether an employee is entry, journey or expert? Does it correlate to the steps within each grade?**

A. Generally, the grade and progression pattern of the occupation will determine the career stage. For example, a budget analyst at a GS-9 can be considered at the entry level while a budget technician at a GS-9 will be considered an expert. Additional information on performance standards is contained in Appendix C of the Interim Performance Management System policy.

A single career stage will be used for each employee that addresses all critical elements within the employee's performance plan. Critical elements can be used to set expectations for performance at the individual level. For example, if an expert career stage employee receives a new assignment, the critical element, while still being assessed at the expert-level performance standard, could be written to reflect the steep learning curve of the assignment.

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**Q. Are there character limitations for critical elements and assessments?**

A. There are no character limitations for critical elements or assessments.

**Q. Can critical elements be weighted?**

A. No. Unlike job objectives under NSPS, critical elements may not be weighted.

**Rating**

**Q. Can a senior rating official change the rating recommended by the rating official?**

A. Yes, the senior rating official gets final approval of the individual element levels and summary rating submitted by the rating official.

**Q. If an employee is a supervisor, are all of his or her critical elements rated using the supervisory performance standards?**

A. No. Only the supervisory critical element is rated using the supervisory performance standard. All other critical elements are rated using the appropriate entry, journey or expert performance standards.

**Q. When are ratings under the Interim Performance Management System effective?**

A. Under 5 U.S.C. 430.208(a)(3), “a rating of record is final when it is issued to an employee with all appropriate reviews and signatures.” Therefore ratings under the Interim Performance Management System are final at the time of the required conversation between the rating official and the employee that occurs within 75 days of the end of the appraisal period.

**Q. Can a critical element be rated ‘NR’ (i.e., not rated)?**

A. Yes, a critical element can be rated ‘NR’.

**Q. Can individual critical elements be rated against different career stages?**

A. No. A single career stage will be used for each employee that addresses all critical elements within the employee’s performance plan.

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## Performance Appraisal Form

**Q. Are Commands required to use the DON Interim Performance Management System's Performance Appraisal Form for its transitioned NSPS employees for the performance cycle? Can Commands use the form typically used for GS reviews?**

**A.** For those employees covered by the DON Interim Performance Management System, the Performance Appraisal Form must be used for the creation of performance plans and the evaluation of performance at all steps in the performance management cycle. The Interim Performance Appraisal Form is in fillable PDF format. The form will be updated periodically, but use of any version of the form is acceptable.

**Q. Will performance management events be tracked using the Performance Appraisal Application (PAA)?**

**A.** No. The performance management events required by the policy will be tracked using the DON Performance Appraisal Form.

**Q. On the form, where does the rating official indicate if the entry, journey or expert performance standards were used?**

**A.** In Part B of the form, the rating official will paste the appropriate performance standards, including the career stage. If the employee is a supervisor, the supervisory performance standards will also be included in this section. The performance standards included in the policy are the only ones by which critical elements can be assessed; to ensure consistency across the DON, they may not be augmented or altered.

## Grievances and Appeals

**Q. How will employees be able to grieve their ratings?**

**A.** Employees may raise issues relating to aspects of the performance appraisal process either through the administrative grievance procedure or, where applicable, a negotiated grievance procedure. Ratings on individual elements (acceptable/unacceptable) and the summary level rating (acceptable/unacceptable) are grievable. Neither the reward recommendation score nor the amount of the award is grievable.

**Q. Will the NSPS reconsideration process be used under the Interim Performance Management System?**

**A.** No. Employees may raise issues relating to aspects of the performance appraisal process either through the administrative grievance procedure or, where applicable, a negotiated grievance procedure.



## WHERE TO GO FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information, the following resources are available:

- Speak with your rating official, senior rating official, or Performance Awards Review Board
- Contact your local HRO or HRSC
- Contact your Command Program Manager
- Email the DON Transition Management Program Office at [DONhrFAQ@navy.mil](mailto:DONhrFAQ@navy.mil)
- Visit the NSPS Transition website at:

<http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/nsps/Pages/default.aspx>

## Version Control

#	Date	Summary of Changes
1	4/20/10	Original document
1.1	5/3/10	Clarified Performance Standard and Performance Awards Review Board sections; added to Appendix C
1.2	7/12/10	Updated sections to comply with Operationalizing memo, dated 7 July 2010; added Frequently Asked Questions
2.0	9/2010	Updated to comply with Version 2.0 of policy.