

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding performance management systems.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory VA procedures on performance management. The pages in this issuance replace the corresponding page numbers in VA Handbook 5013. Revised text is contained in [brackets]. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5013 that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management Web site](#). Significant changes include:

a. Establishes the mandate for proficiencies to be completed and provided to employees 60 days prior to the end of the rating period. This excludes physicians and dentists whose proficiencies must be completed 60 days after the end of the rating period.

b. Removes a paragraph associated with supervisors under the proficiency rating system and places those requirements in Part I, Appendix F, regarding the Executive Career Field.

c. Adds a requirement for the proficiency rating of a physician and dentist who has been newly hired or transferred from another government agency to be delayed if the individual is not in the position for a minimum of 90 calendar days prior to the end of the rating cycle.

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Employee Relations and Performance Management Service (051), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.

**4. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Directive 5013, Performance Management Systems.

**5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/Roger W. Baker  
Assistant Secretary for  
Information and Technology

/s/Rafael A. Torres  
Acting Assistant Secretary for  
Human Resources and Administration

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e. **Processing Timelines and Deadlines.** Specific instructions covering the timeframes for processing ECF performance appraisals and award recommendations that are not covered in this handbook or appendix will be issued annually by the Under Secretary for Health, or designee.

## 6. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE FOLDER

a. **Establishment and Maintenance.** An electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) is established for employees and the servicing human resources offices will maintain the annual ECF performance ratings and awards in the performance folder located in the eOPF.

### b. Content and Retention

(1) Annual ratings of record documented on VA Form 3482e and all attachments to the form will be retained in the eOPF for 4 years after the date of the approved annual rating.

(2) At a minimum, the work plan and any written comments from the employee shall be attached to VA Form 3482e.

## 7. PERFORMANCE PLAN

a. The Rater is responsible for communicating proposed performance elements and requirements and consulting with the employee and, if appropriate, the higher level supervisory official, on the plan's content. The Rater will provide a written performance plan to the employee as soon as possible (or in accordance with instructions issued by the Under Secretary for Health, or designee), but no later than 60 days after the beginning of the appraisal period, assignment to a new ECF position, or when a plan is changed.

b. Directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), Chief Officers and Medical Center Directors will ensure that performance plans are in place for all ECF employees in accordance with the approved schedule for the rating period.

c. The performance plan will be based on the duties and responsibilities established for the position and will reflect responsibility for accomplishment of Departmental goals and objectives. The executive leadership's performance measures will cascade down to the ECF employees, as deemed applicable. Some ECF employees' performance standards may or may not include performance measures. However, all ECF employees' performance standards will address the HPDM core and key core competencies, along with any additional performance elements required at the Departmental level and/or developed locally.

d. [The performance plans of supervisors will include an evaluation of their performance in furthering equal employment opportunity, including employment of disabled veterans and other individuals with disabilities, minority groups, and women.

e]. The performance plan will adhere to the provisions set forth in VA Handbook 5013, Part I, paragraph 6.

## 8. MONITORING PERFORMANCE

a. **Progress Review.** The Rater shall hold a progress review for each employee at least once during the appraisal period. At a minimum, an employee shall be informed of his/her performance by

## PART II. TITLE 38 PROFICIENCY RATING SYSTEM

### 1. SCOPE

a. This part implements the Proficiency Rating System used to appraise the performance of full-time, part-time and intermittent Physicians, Dentists, Podiatrists, Optometrists, Chiropractors, Nurses, Nurse Anesthetists, Physician Assistants, and Expanded-Function Dental Auxiliaries appointed under 38 U.S.C., chapter 73 or 74.

b. This part excludes the following:

(1) The Under Secretary for Health

(2) Distinguished Physicians

(3) Individuals at the Director grade appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and individuals appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7306.

(4) Full-time, part-time and intermittent hybrid Title 38 employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(3) or 7405 (a)(1)(B).

(5) Title 38 supervisors and management officials covered by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Performance Appraisal Program are covered by this part for the purposes of poor performance and counseling only.

**2. REFERENCES.** Title 38 U.S.C., chapters 73 and 74

### 3. POLICY

a. The requirements for the Proficiency Rating System are regulations prescribed pursuant to section 7421 of Title 38, U.S. Code. The proficiency rating system is designed to assure the effective and efficient utilization of the covered employees and to furnish bases for assistance and guidance to them in the performance of their assignments and the development of their skills and abilities.

b. The proficiency rating system provides for planned, continuous, and systematic review, analysis and evaluation by all supervisors of the effectiveness of employees in their assignments.

[ ]

**4. PROCEDURES.** The Under Secretary for Health and designees will prescribe instructions for periodic counseling of employees, for regular annual proficiency ratings, for delays of these ratings, and for special ratings to be made as administratively required.

c. **Proficiency Ratings**

(1) The employee will be rated on elements which provide for consideration of proficiency and performance in terms of pertinent personal, professional, administrative and supervisory attributes, characteristics, skills, and service to the public as applied to the duties and responsibilities of the assignment. The employee will be informed in advance which elements will be considered in the rating process. The employee may submit a self assessment to his/her supervisor prior to the end of the rating period.

(2) Proficiency ratings will be assigned to an employee based on an objective appraisal of overall competency in the performance of duties and responsibilities. Normally, the overall evaluation should reflect an average of the rated categories and the narrative summary. In some instances, one or more rated categories which are critical to successful performance may form the basis for the overall ratings because their significance outweighs that of other categories rated, or the aggregate of other categories. For example, when an unacceptable level of performance has been demonstrated in one or more rated categories in which satisfactory performance is essential, an overall rating of unsatisfactory may be assigned.

(3) For a nurse, proficiency ratings will be used to summarize how the employee meets the criteria in the Nurse Qualification Standard and the appropriate functional statement. **(NOTE: Per the Nursing Commission recommendations, nurses who are not supervised by another nurse must have their evaluations reviewed by the Nurse Executive or his/her designee.**

(4) The five adjective ratings defined below will be used:

(a) **Unsatisfactory.** The employee has not met reasonable expectations of performance.

(b) **Low Satisfactory.** The employee usually met reasonable expectations, but performance was sometimes marginal.

(c) **Satisfactory.** The employee fully met and sometimes exceeded expectations.

(d) **High Satisfactory.** The employee usually exceeded reasonable expectations by a substantial margin.

(e) **Outstanding.** The employee consistently exceeded reasonable expectations to an exceptional degree.

d. **Annual Rating Dates**

(1) Rating periods for all but physicians and dentists will be the one year period beginning on the anniversary date of grade (or date of advancement to a higher level for nurses in Nurse I grade). [ ] Ratings must be completed and provided to employees no later than 60 calendar days [prior to] the end of the rating period.

(2) [Physicians and dentists will be rated on a fiscal year basis. Ratings must be completed and provided to employees no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the rating period.

(3) The Human Resources Management Office will send the Proficiency Report form to rating officials at least 110 days prior to the due date for occupations that are on the anniversary date of grade proficiency rating cycle.

e. **Delayed Annual Rating.** Regular proficiency ratings will be made annually as indicated unless delayed under the following provisions:

(1) [A regular rating will be delayed when a physician or dentist, who has been newly hired or transferred from another government agency, has not been in the position for a minimum of 90 days. A rating will be issued at the end of the 90-day period.

(2) A regular rating may be delayed where there has been failure to meet counseling requirements or other procedural requirements of the proficiency rating system (see paragraph 9); or when an employee is absent from duty for an extended period; or pending the results of VACO and facility investigations or other actions that may affect the employment status of an employee. A delayed rating will not extend the employee's probationary period or expiration of temporary appointment.

[(3)] A regular rating may be delayed in 90 day increments beyond the due date with the approval of the health care facility Director for facility employees; by the Network Director for VISN employees and chiefs of staff; or, by the Deputy Under Secretary for Health, or designee, for VACO employees.

[(4)] The employee will be notified in writing by the rating official of the reasons for delaying the rating. The Human Resources Management Officer will review the notice prior to issuance to ensure that provisions of this paragraph have been met.

[(5)] The date of the subsequent regular proficiency rating will not be affected by a delayed rating, and the next rating period will be shortened accordingly.

f. **Special Report.** Any Proficiency Report other than the regular annual report is considered a special report. A special report will be prepared as follows:

(1) As soon as possible before a Professional Standards Board review or a Disciplinary Appeals Board hearing under the provisions of VA Handbook 5021, if more than 3 months have elapsed since the last annual report. The absence of a special Proficiency Report will not prevent the initiation or completion of Board proceedings.

(2) When the rating official is assigned to another position or transfers to another VA facility or separates from VA employment, when the assignment of the employee being rated changes, or when an employee in a probationary period transfers to another VA facility, and when more than 90 days have elapsed since the last Proficiency Report was completed; or when an employee has been detailed for 3 months or longer. These reports will be designated as "interim" ratings. After being incorporated in the regular annual rating, the "interim" rating will be destroyed. Since employees will normally receive their first and subsequent ratings at any time within the 90 days prior to the due date, if more than 9 months have elapsed since the last Proficiency Report, the regular annual report will be completed when the event occurs. (This will not affect the due date of subsequent annual proficiency ratings.)

(3) On an employee's separation, if more than 90 days have elapsed since the employee's appointment or last annual rating. The approving official, after consulting with the rating official, will record the reason(s) for the separation, the employee's stated reason(s) if substantially different from the approving official's opinion, the effective date of separation, and a statement as to whether reemployment would be recommended. Human Resources Management staff will forward copies of the Proficiency Report and of the Standard Form (SF) 50B, Notification of Personnel Action, effecting the separation to the employee and will file copies in the personnel folder. It is preferable that the final Proficiency Report be completed and given to the employee prior to separation. Otherwise, a copy will be forwarded to the employee.