National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA Employee Performance Communication System
Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal

Employee _____ **Title** _____

Organization _____ **Center** _____

Appraisal Period: May 1, 2012 to April 30, 2013 **If other, from** _____ **to** _____

Performance Plan Development

Performance requirements for the above period have been established, discussed with, and provided to the employee.

Employee's Signature _____ Date: _____

Rating Official's Name/Signature _____ Date: _____

Progress Review

A minimum of one progress review must be conducted during the appraisal period, generally midpoint in the period. If performance requirements have changed, the plan should be modified accordingly.

A Progress Review has been conducted by the Rating Official with the employee.

Employee's Signature _____ Date: _____

Rating Official's Name/Signature _____ Date: _____

Development Discussion(s)

Both the progress review and the end of the appraisal period discussion provide opportunities to discuss an employee's training and development needs; such a discussion may be initiated by either the Rating Official or the employee.

Employee's Signature _____ Date: _____

Rating Official's Name/Signature _____ Date: _____

Individual Development Plan (IDP) offered. ☐ Yes ☐ No (Note: The offer of an IDP is optional unless required by Center policy.)

Employee's Initials/Date _____ Rating Official's Initials/Date _____

Performance Appraisal - Performance Summary Rating Level

RATING OF RECORD *(A Rating of Record must be supported by the narrative summary.)*

☐ DISTINGUISHED ☐ ACCOMPLISHED ☐ FULLY SUCCESSFUL ☐ NEEDS IMPROVEMENT ☐ UNACCEPTABLE

Rating Official's Signature _____ Date: _____

Performance appraisals at all summary rating levels must be reviewed and approved by a higher-level official; review process is established by each Center. Performance summary ratings of Unacceptable must be signed by the Reviewing Official.

Reviewing Official's Signature _____ Date: _____

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge receipt of this rating; however, my signature on this form does not imply agreement or disagreement with the rating received. I may request reconsideration of the rating within 15 calendar days.

Employee's Signature _____ Date: _____

I request reconsideration ☐ Employee's Signature _____ Date: _____

Disposition of Form: This form is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act. The original signed form must be retained in the Employee Performance File for 4 years.

NASA Employee Performance Communication System
Performance Planning and Appraisal
Instructions, Requirements, and Guidelines

OVERVIEW - The NASA Employee Performance Communication System (EPCS) establishes a systematic process for planning, monitoring, developing, assessing, and rewarding employee performance that contributes to achieving the Agency's Vision, mission, and goals. The EPCS ensures alignment with the Agency's goals, promotes a performance culture that focuses on two-way communication and accountability for results, and clearly differentiates between high and low performers.

PERFORMANCE PLANNING - The Rating Official (usually the immediate supervisor) must meet with the employee to discuss the performance requirements for the appraisal period and give the employee an opportunity to provide input into the performance plan. When finalized, both the Rating Official and the employee must sign and date the plan. Performance plans include the following components:

Critical Elements - A critical element is a work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance in that element would result in a determination that an employee's overall performance summary rating is Unacceptable. **Each plan must identify at least one critical element.**

Alignment - The employee's performance plan must show the linkage to projects up through the Agency's strategic goals/objectives (i.e., individual performance plan >projects >programs>annual performance goals>performance outcomes>strategic goals/objectives. **Therefore, the plan must identify *at least* one annual performance goal (APG) and/or organizational performance goal related to the APG to which the employee will contribute, linked to *at least* one of the employee's critical elements**. The goal(s) should follow the performance plans of the chain of authority within the organization (i.e., from senior executive to manager to supervisor to employee). Alignment should be obvious; however, it is the responsibility of the Rating Official to ensure that the employee understands how his/her performance supports the achievement of the Agency's goals/objectives.

Performance Standards - Performance standards are statements of performance thresholds, requirements, or expectations **written at the Meets Expectations performance level (Level 3) for each critical element**, commensurate with the knowledge and skills required for the position. Standards communicate what an employee *must* do or achieve to meet the performance element. Performance standards should be described in terms of clear, credible measures of performance and identify the expected results/accomplishments (not activities or tasks). General measures of performance are:

Quality -How well work is performed and/or how accurate or how effective the service or final product is.
Quantity -How much work is produced.
Timeliness -How quickly, when, or by what date the work is produced;
Cost-effectiveness -Dollar savings to the Government or working within a budget (may include such aspects as maintaining or reducing costs, reducing time it takes to produce a product or service, or reducing waste).

The performance standards must also be **SMART**:

Specific - What is being measured (i.e., the expected result) is easily understood.

Measurable - A target can be established; data to support the metric is available and quantifiable.

Aggressive yet Achievable - The target, established at the Meets Expectations rating level, is challenging and significant but not so challenging that it is not really achievable.

Results oriented - Identifies the expected accomplishments (a product or service) described as a noun (not an activity or task described as a verb).

Time based - Identifies a specific time frame for the achievement of the target.

Performance Indicators - **Performance indicators must be established at the Significantly Exceeds Expectations performance level (Level 5) for each element**; they may be required for other levels at Center discretion. Indicators are sufficiently objective and specific information/examples (not all inclusive) reflecting the types of performance that may meet expectations for the applicable level. Level 5 indicators must provide guidance and/or examples that distinguish achievable performance at higher than the Meets level from performance that merely meets the Level 3 standard.

NOTE: If an employee will be matrixed to one or more projects or detailed for 90 days or more during the appraisal period, the Rating Official must consult with Project Manager or detail supervisor to determine if additional critical elements and/or performance standards are needed to evaluate the detail/project work, and make appropriate adjustments to the performance plan.

PROGRESS REVIEW - At a minimum, one progress review must be conducted during the appraisal period, generally midpoint in the period; however, a progress review may be initiated at any time during the appraisal period by either the Rating Official or the employee. The primary purpose of the review is to discuss the employee's performance to date; provide feedback on his/her progress in accomplishing the performance requirements described in the performance plan; and provide, when appropriate, advice and assistance on how to improve his/her performance. If necessary, the performance plan should be annotated to document any new performance requirements or changes to existing performance requirements. The Rating Official must encourage the employee to provide a self-assessment; if provided, the employee's input must be retained as part of the appraisal documentation. Both the Rating Official and the employee must sign this form to indicate that the review was held.

DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION - Both the progress review and the end of the appraisal period discussion provide opportunities to discuss an employee's training and development needs; such a discussion may be initiated by either the Rating Official or the employee.

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PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - At the end of the appraisal period, the Rating Official must assess the employee's performance and prepare an annual appraisal (rating of record). Requirements for the Rating Official in conducting performance assessment:

- Ensure the employee has worked under a performance plan for at least 90 calendar days during the appraisal period. If not, extend the appraisal period and conduct the appraisal after the 90 days has concluded.
- Encourage the employee to provide a self-assessment relative to the performance elements and standards/indicators; if provided, the employee's input must be retained as part of the appraisal documentation.
- Consider the overall organization's performance, taking into account the results achieved in the organization's senior executive's mission-related or functional area of responsibility, as evidenced by the Agency's annual Performance and Accountability Report and/or other assessments/reports.
- When the employee has been detailed/matrixed for 90 days or more during the appraisal period, consult with the Project Manager or detail supervisor to obtain input regarding the employee's performance relative to the applicable critical elements, and consider such input in conducting the assessment. Detail supervisors must provide such input in writing; the Rating Official must retain this input as part of the appraisal documentation.
- Determine a rating for each critical element by comparing the employee's performance to the standards/indicators for that element. Determine the summary (overall) rating level based on the element ratings, using the descriptions below.
- Prepare a written narrative summary that documents the overall performance of the employee; it must clearly and completely justify the rationale for the performance summary rating assigned.
- Ensure that the Reviewing Official (normally the employee's second level supervisor) has reviewed all ratings, in accordance with his/her instructions or Center-designated procedures.
- Meet with the employee to discuss both the employee's accomplishments and the organization's achievements, and to communicate the final rating. The rating must be signed by both the Rating Official and the employee to indicate the appraisal was held.

Performance Element Rating Levels

SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS - Performance that consistently exceeds the performance standards to an exceptional degree.
EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS - Performance that consistently exceeds the performance standards to a high degree.
MEETS EXPECTATIONS - Performance that fully and consistently meets the performance standards.
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT - Performance that does not fully meet the performance standards.
FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATIONS - Performance that fails to meet the established performance standards.

NOT RATED - The employee has had an insufficient opportunity to demonstrate performance on the element - an element that is “Not Rated” does not Impact the summary rating level.

Performance Summary Rating Levels

DISTINGUISHED (Level 5) - Performance when all elements are rated "Significantly Exceeds Expectations."
ACCOMPLISHED (Level 4) - Performance when all elements are rated no lower than "Exceeds Expectations."
FULLY SUCCESSFUL (Level 3) - Performance when no element is rated below "Meets Expectations."
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Level 2) - Performance when any element is rated below "Meets Expectations."
UNACCEPTABLE (Level 1) - Performance when any critical element is rated "Fails to Meet Expectations."

PERFORMANCE RECOGNITION -

- An employee who receives a performance summary rating of "Distinguished," "Accomplished" or "Fully Successful" is eligible for a monetary or time-off performance award, based on his/her performance as reflected by the annual rating of record. An employee with a higher summary rating level must receive a greater monetary performance award, based on percentage of salary, than an employee with a lower summary rating level.
- An employee who receives a performance summary rating of "Distinguished" is eligible for a Quality Step Increase (QSI). A QSI is considered the highest monetary award an employee can receive; no other monetary or time-off award based on the rating of record may be granted in conjunction with a QSI.
- An award bestowed on an employee must be commensurate with the level of his/her performance, responsibility, and progress toward the achievement of the Agency's/organization's goals and objectives and relative to the performance of other employees in the organization. The process for determining the level of award and recognition must be fair, consistent, and transparent to others.
- All monetary and time-off performance awards and QSIs must be submitted and approved in the NASA Automated Awards System (NAAS)
- An employee who receives a "Needs Improvement" or "Unacceptable" performance summary rating is not eligible for a monetary or time-off award based on performance.

NASA Employee Performance Communication System
Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal – Critical Element

Critical Element #1

Example: Leads or contributes to research directed toward NASA strategic goals and maintains excellence in GSFC research activities.

Organizational Goal(s) and/or Objective(s) to which the critical element aligns, (must be identified for at least one critical element)

SG2 - Expand scientific understanding of the Earth and universe in which we live

SG3 - Create the innovative new space technologies for our exploration, science and economic future

Performance Standards for "Meets Expectations" (Level 3)

Communicates scientific and technical results through the submission of at least one new manuscript as the first or second author to the refereed scientific print literature. Builds and maintains cooperative working relationships both within and outside the organization. Demonstrates respect and trustworthiness in interactions with managers, customers, co-workers and other stakeholders; is considered flexible, approachable, reliable and consistent.

Performance Indicators for "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" (Level 5)

- Demonstrates unusually high initiative and autonomy
- Is a technical pioneer
- Produces results that are exceptionally accurate and precise
- Is viewed as the preeminent authority in the field
- Delivers work products that are superior/breakthrough in critical mission areas
- Demonstrates an exceptionally high degree of originality, innovation and creativity
- Is frequently sought out for opinions by peers and/or industry
- Is highly regarded for expertise
- Is widely recognized for achievements
- Builds strong and lasting collaborative relationships both internal and external to the Agency/Center
- Excels in written and oral communication of management expectations and/or strategic direction
- Anticipates and identifies potential issues that may impact completion of work; devises and carries out effective plans to manage such challenges, including adjustments to priorities and work schedules.

Critical Element Rating	☐ Significantly Exceeds Expectations (5)	☐ Exceeds Expectations (4)	☐ Meets Expectations (3)
	☐ Needs Improvement (2)	☐ Fails to Meet Expectations (1)	☐ Not Rated

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Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal – Critical Element

Critical Element #2
Organizational Goal(s) and/or Objective(s) to which the critical element aligns, **(must be identified for at least one critical element)**
Performance Standards for "Meets Expectations" (Level 3)
Performance Indicators for "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" (Level 5)

Critical Element Rating	☐ Significantly Exceeds Expectations (5)	☐ Exceeds Expectations (4)	☐ Meets Expectations (3)
	☐ Needs Improvement (2)	☐ Fails to Meet Expectations (1)	☐ Not Rated

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Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal – Critical Element

Critical Element #3
Organizational Goal(s) and/or Objective(s) to which the critical element aligns, **(must be identified for at least one critical element)**
Performance Standards for "Meets Expectations" (Level 3)
Performance Indicators for "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" (Level 5)

Critical Element Rating	☐ Significantly Exceeds Expectations (5)	☐ Exceeds Expectations (4)	☐ Meets Expectations (3)
	☐ Needs Improvement (2)	☐ Fails to Meet Expectations (1)	☐ Not Rated

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Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal – Critical Element

Critical Element #4
Organizational Goal(s) and/or Objective(s) to which the critical element aligns, **(must be identified for at least one critical element)**
Performance Standards for "Meets Expectations" (Level 3)
Performance Indicators for "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" (Level 5)

Critical Element Rating	☐ Significantly Exceeds Expectations (5)	☐ Exceeds Expectations (4)	☐ Meets Expectations (3)
	☐ Needs Improvement (2)	☐ Fails to Meet Expectations (1)	☐ Not Rated

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Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal – Critical Element

Critical Element #5
Organizational Goal(s) and/or Objective(s) to which the critical element aligns, **(must be identified for at least one critical element)**
Performance Standards for "Meets Expectations" (Level 3)
Performance Indicators for "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" (Level 5)

Critical Element Rating	☐ Significantly Exceeds Expectations (5)	☐ Exceeds Expectations (4)	☐ Meets Expectations (3)
	☐ Needs Improvement (2)	☐ Fails to Meet Expectations (1)	☐ Not Rated

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Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal – Critical Element

Critical Element #6
Organizational Goal(s) and/or Objective(s) to which the critical element aligns, **(must be identified for at least one critical element)**
Performance Standards for "Meets Expectations" (Level 3)
Performance Indicators for "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" (Level 5)

Critical Element Rating	☐ Significantly Exceeds Expectations (5) ☐ Exceeds Expectations (4) ☐ Meets Expectations (3) ☐ Needs Improvement (2) ☐ Fails to Meet Expectations (1) ☐ Not Rated

NASA Employee Performance Communication System
Employee Performance Planning and Appraisal
NARRATIVE SUMMARY

(Summarize the employee's achievements and result for the appropriate period.)