



**Section VII  
Critical Elements**

At the end of the appraisal cycle, indicate the level of performance for each critical element. Mark "5" for Extraordinary, "4" for Exceeds Expectations, "3" for Meets Expectations, "2" for Below Expectations, "1" for Fails to Meet Expectations. The rating for the critical element is determined by clearly meeting a specified level. Enter the overall rating for the critical element in the Element Rating box. The "Rating of Record" is determined by averaging the critical elements rated at a specific level (except that a rating of "Below Expectations" on a job specific critical element(s) will result in a summary rating of "Below Expectations" and a "Fails to Meet Expectations" summary rating on any one critical element will result in a summary rating of "Fails to Meet Expectations").

<b>1. Customer Satisfaction – Interacts with and responds to customer needs and requests. Customers receive quality services and products.</b>	<b>Element Rating</b>
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Delivers quality products and/or services that meet customer requirements; Communicates clearly, professionally and effectively; and, Anticipates, identifies, consults, and resolves potential or actual problems with no negative impact on office.

<b>2. Written Material (including Electronic Communications)</b> Drafts and/or produces or ensures written products are:	<b>Element Rating</b>
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Grammatically correct, clear, concise, accurate, thoroughly researched, reflects agency policies and priorities, and integrates with other affected agency offices.

<b>3. Job Specific.</b> Describe the critical element. Link this element to the President’s Management Agenda, Agency GPRA goals and/or office strategic plan, where possible. (Use separate sheet of paper.)	<b>Element Rating</b>
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Completes quality work that complies with established policies and procedures.  
 Completes required volume of work within established timeframes.  
 Responds timely and accurately to both written and/or oral requests, i.e., audits, reports, etc, on program matters.

<b>4. Organizational Representation -Represents the agency in a manner that supports SBA goals and objectives, and enhances SBA’s visibility</b>	<b>Element Rating</b>
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Establishes and maintains an effective working relationship with internal and external organizations.  
 Effectively represents and speaks for the organization by staying informed about agency policies and programs so that these are accurately reflected in speeches or meetings with external organizations.  
 Ensures that reports, memoranda, and other documents reflect the position and work of the organization in a clear, convincing, and organized manner.

<p><b>5. Leadership - Provides guidance, direction, and personal presence to SBA staff and programs. Executes SBA's vision, values, and mission in day-to-day decisions and interactions.</b></p>	<p><b>Element Rating</b></p>
<p>Executes the work of the organization in a manner that reflects agency priorities, policies and strategies. When priorities, policies strategies change, executes the new plan of action quickly and creatively.</p> <p>Executes program or organizational responsibilities in a manner that balances the needs and perspectives of external/internal customers, stakeholders, and employees with the need to achieve measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Develops and executes program plans to include human capital strategies, policies, and/or procedures that are cost-effective, realistic, and responsive to organizational needs.</p> <p>Maintains financial and program integrity by assuring objectives, costs, and program implementation comply with applicable laws, regulations and polices.</p> <p>Establishes systems to effectively safeguard resources against waste, loss, theft and unauthorized use or misappropriation.</p> <p>Uses monitoring/reviewing procedures that ensure outputs are of good quality and timely, and ensures appropriate changes are executed after review of outputs.</p> <p>Improves the efficiency of the Federal government by being innovative and creative and addressing the needs of customers, whether small businesses or internal clients.</p> <p>Reaches conclusions and makes timely decisions that demonstrate effective, sound technical knowledge and independent judgment.</p>	
<p><b>6. People Management Responsibilities - Makes management/supervisory decisions and actions in compliance with EEO/HR requirements and programs. Utilizes human resources as a capital investment.</b></p>	<p><b>Element Rating</b></p>
<p>Ensures that EEO principles prevail in the management of human resources.</p> <p>Successfully applies Merit System Principles to develop, select, and manage a productive and diverse workforce.</p> <p>Recognizes and rewards superior accomplishment by subordinates.</p> <p>Fosters and promotes equality &amp; diversity in all facets of personnel management.</p> <p>Establishes and communicates performance plans in accordance with regulations, and provides ongoing constructive feedback as required.</p> <p>Evaluates performance fairly, equitably, and timely.</p> <p>Assigns work equitably.</p> <p>Provides clear direction, guidance, and expectations.</p> <p>Identifies and works toward resolving performance/conduct problems and takes timely action to remove poor performers or correct misconduct.</p> <p>Fosters an environment of open communication and respect for employees and co-workers.</p> <p>Approves leave for employees in a manner that ensures the work of the organization continues to be effectively executed.</p> <p>Keeps staff timely informed of administrative, organizational, and work issues that affect them.</p> <p>Takes an active role in coaching or mentoring subordinate staff.</p> <p>Effectively adjusts/reallocates resources in response to workload, resources, or priority changes.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INSTRUCTIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the beginning of the appraisal cycle, the supervisor, in conjunction with the employee, will meet and establish a Personal Business Commitment (PBC) Plan which will be communicated to the employee. Where applicable, the supervisor may identify a job specific critical element and performance measures. The employee acknowledges receipt of the PBC plan by signing and dating Section I – Planning Discussion. The supervisor gives the employee a copy of the approved PBC plan and maintains the original.</li> <li>During the quarterly reviews, the supervisor discusses the employee's progress on each critical element, and the supervisor and employee will initial and date the PBC plan in the appropriate column under Section II indicating a quarterly review was held. If the employee declines to initial a quarterly review, the supervisor will annotate in Section II that the employee declined to sign. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NOTE:</b> If performance is determined to be at the "Fails to Meet Expectations" level anytime during the appraisal cycle, the supervisor must give the employee an opportunity to improve performance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>At the end of the appraisal cycle, the employee may submit a Statement of Accomplishments (SOA) to the supervisor. The SOA is the employee's description of activities and results in achieving the PBC plan. The supervisor will consider the SOA in determining the final rating.</li> <li>The supervisor will indicate the overall level achieved on the critical element in the element rating box under Section VII. The rating of record is determined by averaging critical elements rated at a specific level (except that a rating of "Below Expectations" on a job specific critical element(s) will result in a rating of "Below Expectations" and a "Fails to Meet Expectations" rating on any one critical element will result in a rating of "Fails to Meet Expectations"). The supervisor must obtain the reviewing official's concurrence in Section IV on overall ratings of "Fails to Meet Expectations" and "Extraordinary."</li> <li>The supervisor must prepare a narrative summary of the employee's performance in Section III for all ratings. The reviewing official must provide a narrative justification in Section IV if the rating is changed.</li> <li>Complete Section V – Recommendation for Performance Award, if appropriate.</li> </ol>	

**Section VIII  
Rating Level Definitions**

**Level 5 – Extraordinary.** An employee who receives this rating is proactive, anticipates programmatic or administrative issues/problems and, within the scope of their authority, executes in a manner that resolves those issues/problems independently. He/she is viewed as a resource to the Agency and may perform work not immediately related to his/her principle area of responsibility. When the opportunity exists, he/she may serve as a member on task forces, work groups, or integrated work teams. He/she demonstrates an extraordinary degree of initiative and self-reliance in resolving problems or requirements of the work situation, developing, recommending or executing innovative solutions to successfully accomplish tasks ahead of target; works independently to accomplish program objectives, in difficult and complex situations; is extremely adaptable in adjusting to, and resolving, any new or unusual situation or problems; or is extremely capable of preparing difficult material.

*The employee will have received an Extraordinary (Level 5) when critical element(s) are averaged at or between 4.6 and 5.0. No critical element may be rated below Exceeds Expectations (Level 4). A written justification and concurrence by the reviewing official is required.*

**Level 4 – Exceeds Expectations.** An employee who receives this rating performs all of the requirements of the position, and demonstrates a willingness to accomplish additional work outside their usual scope of responsibility. This employee anticipates problems and issues and when necessary, reacts successfully and in a timely manner to assignments made by the supervisor. He/she demonstrates a high level of skill and abilities in developing and executing sound solutions; meets all requirements of the position throughout the appraisal cycle; produces a more than satisfactory volume of work within established timeframes; works relatively independently in accomplishing program objectives (or requires minimal guidance); is capable of adjusting to, and/or resolving most new or unusual situations or problems; or is capable of preparing relatively difficult material in a well coordinated manner.

*The employee will have received an Exceeds Expectations (Level 4) when critical elements are averaged at or between 3.6 and 4.59. No critical element may be rated below Meets Expectations (Level 3).*

**Level 3 – Meets Expectations.** The employee independently performs the requirements of the position and produces a set volume of work within the required timeframes and in accordance with established policies, procedures, or supervisory instructions. The employee accomplishes the full range of job-related requirements through the appraisal cycle. Develops and implements solutions to supervisor-identified or routine and/or recurring problems with guidance from the supervisor, or independently in areas within delegated authority of job responsibility.

*The employee will have received a Meets Expectations (Level 3) when critical elements are averaged at or between 3.0 and 3.59. No Job Specific critical element may be rated lower than a Level 3. No critical element may be rated “Fails to Meet Expectations” (Level 2).*

**Level 2 – Below Expectations.** The employee demonstrates limited ability in producing an acceptable volume of work within established timeframes; limited sense of personal responsibility and accountability in some work assignments, or requires frequent guidance and assistance from supervisor or others; experiences difficulty in adjusting to, coping with, or resolving, most new or unusual situations or problems under normal pressure and within their area of responsibility; or experiences difficulty in preparing material in a well-organized, logical, precise, and concise manner.

*The employee will have received a Below Expectations (Level 2) when critical elements are averaged at or between 2.0 and 2.99. However, a “Below Expectations” rating on the job specific element will result in a summary rating at a Level 2. No critical element may be rated below “Below Expectations” (Level 2).*

**A rating at this level or below requires that the supervisor deny an employee’s within-grade increase, if applicable.**

**Level 1 – Fails to Meet Expectations.** The employee demonstrates a lack of ability to produce an acceptable volume of work within established timeframes; a lack of personal responsibility and accountability in most work assignments, or requires constant guidance and assistance; experiences frequent difficulty in adjusting to, coping with, or resolving most new or unusual situations or problems under normal pressure; or has great difficulty in preparing material in a well-organized, logical, precise, and concise manner.

*The employee will have received a Fails to Meet Expectations (Level 1) rating on one or more critical elements. A written justification and concurrence by reviewing official is required.*

**A rating at this level requires that the supervisor place the employee on a performance improvement plan (PIP).**

**Awards Delegation Authority**

Not exceeding \$2,000 Quality Step Increase	Management Board Members District Directors	Not exceeding \$5,000	Deputy Administrator Inspector General
Not exceeding \$3,500	ADA/M&A	Not exceeding \$10,000	Administrator

With the exception of the Administrator and the Inspector General, approving officials may not approve awards for their immediate subordinates.

**Statement of Accomplishments**  
(Continue on plain bond paper if more space is needed)