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Employee Performance Management System

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1 Summary

The Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) policy sets forth the policy and procedures by which the job performance of probationary and covered employees of Lander University is appraised, pursuant to State Human Resources Regulations Section 19-715 and South Carolina Code of Laws Section 8-11-230 (6).

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Covered Employee:** A full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of an established full-time equivalent (FTE) position who has completed the probationary period and has a "successful" or higher overall rating on the employee's performance evaluation and who has grievance rights.
- 2.2 **Universal Review Date:** October 1 marks the beginning of a new review period for all covered employees. (Exceptions: "Probationary" periods.)
- 2.3 **Probationary Period:** The performance of each new employee will be appraised prior to the completion of the initial 12 months of service in the position.

- 2.4 **Short Year Review:** A performance appraisal that evaluates an employee's performance for a period of time less than 12 months. (Exception: Performance Improvement Plan review.)
- 2.5 **Short Year Planning Stage:** Any performance planning stage document for a period of time less than 12 months.
- 2.6 **Rater:** The employee's immediate supervisor who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed.
- 2.7 **Reviewer:** The employee's next higher level supervisor (generally the rater's supervisor).

3 General Information

- 3.1 All performance appraisals shall be made in writing by the employee's supervisor (the rater) who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed.
- 3.2 The appraisal shall be reviewed by the next higher level supervisor (the reviewer), unless the rater is the university president, prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee.
- 3.3 The reviewer may attach additional comments to the appraisal, and in the attachment may take exception to the rater's appraisal. In addition, the reviewer has the authority to change the appraisal completed by the rater. If the reviewer elects to change the rating, the change and associated justification should be noted on the appraisal document.
- 3.4 Whenever an employee's job responsibilities change significantly, the appraisal document should be revised to reflect those changes.
- 3.5 The final appraisal must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer, and the employee, if possible. If any party refuses to sign the appraisal, a notation of the refusal shall be made on the performance appraisal. If possible, a witness should sign to acknowledge that the party refused to sign the appraisal.
- 3.6 All performance appraisals will become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file.
- 3.7 Upon request, the university shall furnish the employee with a copy of the performance appraisal (with copies of all pertinent attachments), including the form completed at the time of the planning stage and the final appraisal form.
- 3.8 Employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act may also be given annual performance appraisals.

4 Training

4.1 Training is encouraged for all employees in regard to EPMS.

5 Levels of Performance

5.1 The levels used to rate an employee's performance of each job function and objective and to rate overall performance include:

5.1.1 **Exceptional:** Work that is above the criteria of the job function and objective throughout the rating period.

5.1.2 **Successful:** Work that meets the criteria of the job function and objective.

5.1.3 **Unsuccessful:** Work that fails to meet the criteria of the job function and objective.

5.2 Performance characteristics shall not be rated by the three levels of performance but shall be given a rating of pass or fail. Examples of employee performance management system performance characteristics can be found in Appendix (Section 14).

5.2.1 **PASS:** Meets requirements.

5.2.2 **FAIL:** Fails to meet requirements.

6 Weighted System

6.1 In order to reduce subjectivity in an evaluation, a numerical value will be assigned to each level of performance of the job function and objective. The supervisor and the employee will determine the weight to be assigned for each individual job function and objective. Performance characteristics will not be given a numerical score but will be given a rating of pass or fail.

Performance Level	Point Values	Overall Range for Final Score
Exceptional	2	1.5 to 2.0
Successful	1	1.0 to 1.49
Unsuccessful	0	.99 and below

- 6.1.1 The percentage of time for all job functions (if applicable) must total 100%.
- 6.1.2 Each rating is multiplied by the percentage of time assigned to job functions.
- 6.1.3 All sums are added together and divided by 100 to reach a final numerical rating.

7 Planning Stage

- 7.1 Each employee shall have a planning stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. The employee's job functions (which include job duties and success criteria), objectives, and performance characteristics for the next rating period will be discussed at this time. The rater and employee should participate in drafting the planning stage document. The reviewer and the rater should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage. A rater may incorporate a team activity into the planning stage document. The team performance being evaluated could constitute a job function, an objective, or one criterion for a particular job function or objective. A rater may also link the employee's training plan to the planning stage document.

- 7.1.1 Job Functions

- 7.1.1.1 The rater and the employee shall determine the job functions, which include job duties and success criteria, by reviewing the employee's position description. If the position description is not up-to-date, or if there is no position description, one should be prepared and submitted for approval. In any instances where the rater and employee cannot agree upon the job functions, the rater's decision shall be final. The statement outlining the job function should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater by which the rater would determine how well the employee has met performance requirements. Each job function and objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the three levels of performance. It shall be mandatory for all raters to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal.

- 7.1.2 Objectives

- 7.1.2.1 Objectives shall be optional for all employees. An objective should be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included in the employee's position description. The statement outlining the objective(s) should also include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to meet

successful performance requirements. Each objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the three levels of performance.

7.1.3 Performance Characteristics

- 7.1.3.1 Each performance characteristic shall be defined in the planning stage and rated as "pass" or "fail" in the evaluation stage. The performance characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and meeting the objectives included in the planning document. The performance characteristics section shall not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating.

8 Ongoing Performance Management

- 8.1 A rater should continue to provide performance feedback to employees throughout the review period. An unofficial mid-year review is encouraged to facilitate this communication between raters and employees. In addition, various options are available to the rater in conducting performance management. A rater may gather feedback to prepare the appraisal document and/or conduct unofficial appraisals more frequently than required in this policy.

9 Probationary Period

- 9.1 Each new employee in probationary status shall be rated prior to the completion of a 12-month probationary period for non-instructional personnel and of the academic year duration for instructional personnel. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to his or her performance review date, the employee will receive a "successful" rating by default and obtain covered status as a state employee and permanent status in the class.
- 9.2 The probationary period may not be extended. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, an employee may receive a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee to the universal review date. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee shall be terminated before becoming a covered employee. Until an employee has completed the probationary period and has achieved a "successful" or higher overall rating on the employee's evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act. Therefore, an agency is not required to follow the "Substandard Performance Process" to terminate a probationary employee. The "successful" rating is the equivalent to the "meets" performance rating referenced in the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

10 Annual Performance Reviews

- 10.1 All employees shall be given an annual appraisal no more than 90 calendar days prior to the employees' performance review date. If an employee is on approved leave with or without pay for more than 30 consecutive workdays, the employee's performance review date may be advanced up to 90 days. A covered employee who receives a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" may have the performance review date advanced to coincide with the "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" dates.
- 10.2 The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee shall receive a "successful" rating by default. A covered employee may not be issued either an overall "unsuccessful" appraisal or an "unsuccessful" rating on any essential job function or objective that significantly impacts performance without following the "Substandard Performance Process." Should the review date advance, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review period in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.

11 Substandard Performance Process for Covered Employees

- 11.1 A covered employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving an "unsuccessful" rating and being removed from the position. To ensure that this notice occurs, the following procedures shall be followed:
 - 11.1.1 A rater shall issue a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" prior to issuing an "unsuccessful" rating to a covered employee. If, during the performance period, an employee is considered "unsuccessful" in any essential job function or objective that significantly impacts performance, the rater shall provide the employee with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee's review date. However, the review date may be advanced to coincide with the "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" date. Should the performance review date be advanced and the employee receive a "successful" or above rating on all essential job functions/objectives that significantly impacts performance noted in the warning notice, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.
 - 11.1.2 The rater and the employee should participate in drafting a work improvement plan. The work improvement plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance-related recommendations. In those instances where the rater and employee cannot agree upon the content of the work improvement plan, the rater's decision shall be final.

- 11.1.3 During the warning period, the employee and the rater shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they shall discuss the employee's progress. Documentation is required to verify that these counseling sessions were held. Copies of this documentation shall be placed in the employee's official personnel file and given to the employee, upon request.
- 11.1.4 If the employee's performance is rated "successful" or above on all essential job functions/objectives that significantly impact performance noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated "unsuccessful" on any essential job function or objective that significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, the employee shall be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned or demoted).
- 11.1.5 Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written appraisal prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a "successful" rating by default.
- 11.1.6 If an employee has been issued two warning notices within a 365-day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function/objective that significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365-day period, the employee shall be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the "unsuccessful" appraisal. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.

12 Warning Notice of Substandard Performance

12.1 The requirements of a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" are:

- 12.1.1 The notice shall be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance," and signed by the employee (witnessed, if employee refuses to sign).
- 12.1.2 The notice shall list the job function(s) and/or objective(s) included on the employee's planning document on which the employee's performance is considered "unsuccessful," with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.
- 12.1.3 The notice shall include the time period for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., termination, demotion, or reassignment).
- 12.1.4 The notice shall include a plan for meetings to discuss the employee's progress during the warning period.

- 12.1.5 A copy of the notice shall be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file.

13 Policy Revision History

- Drafted and/or Revised by Lander University Office of Human Resources on 9/29/2020.
- Approved by the South Carolina Division of State Human Resources on 10/14/2020.
- Reviewed by Board of Trustees Policy Committee on 4/23/2021.
- Revised by Human Resources and Policy Coordinator on 4/28/2021.
- Awaiting review and approval by Board of Trustees on 5/10/2021.
- Revised by Human Resources on 5/27/2025.
- Approved by the South Carolina Division of Human Resources on 5/29/2025.

14 Appendix: South Carolina Department of Administration EPMS Characteristics

The following reference to the South Carolina Department of Administration's Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) Performance Characteristics is provided here as a reference that was last updated June 2019.¹

Functional Qualities

- *Self-Management*: Works with minimal supervision, manages own time effectively, maintains control over all current projects/responsibilities. Follows up on all relevant issues.
- *Technical Competence*: Possesses necessary knowledge to effectively perform job and able to apply what he/she has learned about his/her job. Acquires new knowledge, skills and abilities as required by the job.
- *Quantity of Work*: The extent to which the employee produces an acceptable amount of work in order to meet schedules and deadlines.
- *Quality of Work*: The extent to which the employee neatly, thoroughly, and accurately completes job assignments according to established standards of quality. Continuously improves quality of work.
- *Problem Analysis*: Able to identify problems and relevant issues and breaks problem into components. Sees relationships and alternative solutions and arrives at sound conclusions through a logical process.
- *Accuracy of Work*: The degree to which the employee makes mistakes or errors that require corrections.
- *Time Management*: Employee is prompt in reporting for work and effectively and efficiently uses his/her time to accomplish his/her job tasks.
- *Safety*: Follows established safety practices and corrects unsafe work practices on the job.
- *Concentration*: Able to put aside distractions and stays with a job until complete. Able to "stick to" assignments and get results in spite of difficulties.
- *Responsibility*: Asks for work after completing assignments and does not make excuses but addresses problems squarely. Offers action plans to resolve problems and suppresses "self-forgiving" tendencies regarding so-called "uncontrollable elements."

Personal Qualities

- *Judgment*: Able to reason, compare, understand, and think rationally on the job. Makes quality work-related decisions based on sound conclusions/data. Able to separate facts from opinions.
- *Leadership*: Employee can be relied upon to guide others to the accomplishment of objectives/responsibilities, to promote teamwork, and to resolve problems.
- *Initiative*: Starts assignments without prompting and independently contributes ideas and projects. Sees and acts upon new opportunities. Thinks and acts independently and promptly addresses problems.
- *Dependability/Reliability*: Employee can be relied upon to meet work schedules and fulfill job responsibilities and commitments. Meets deadlines and follows instructions.

Interpersonal Qualities

¹ https://admin.sc.gov/sites/default/files/state_hr/EPMS%20Performance%20Characteristics.docx

- *Customer Service*: To effectively and efficiently meet the needs of those served by continually assessing performance based on customer feedback.
- *Listening Skills*: Asks meaningful questions and listens closely and respectfully before offering comments.
- *Acceptance*: Gains confidence of others and earns respect of subordinates, peers and superiors. Values diversity and respects opposing opinions.
- *Teamwork*: Degree to which one works effectively and cooperatively with others and other departments in achieving organizational goals. Degree of responsiveness to organizational needs.
- *Adaptability*: Employee can adapt to job or organizational changes. Readily accepts new responsibilities and assignments.
- *Communication Ability*: Ability of employee to present accurate information to other employees, peers, and superiors.

Management Functions

- *Planning and Organizing*
 - Organizes department's work to meet the mission of the agency. Establishes a course of action for meeting an objective.
 - Allocates resources and personnel for best effect within budget limits.
 - Develops schedules for activities and projects.
 - Sets and observes priorities in order to avoid backlogged work.
 - Effectively matches short-term goals to contribute toward longer-range plans.
- *Controlling*
 - Monitors, regulates and facilitates employee's activities. Establishes and maintains effective procedures to monitor and control activities within the employee's responsibility. Monitors the progress and results of delegated assignments and keeps informed of developments in area of responsibility.
- *Delegating*
 - Allocates responsibilities to employees to help develop their career potential.
 - Uses staff members effectively by allocating decisions and other responsibilities to the appropriate employees.
 - Provides clear instructions and leadership so delegated tasks are properly completed.
 - Establishes and empowers teams, where appropriate, to improve work systems and processes.
- *Motivating*
 - Creates an organizational environment or climate in which employees can perform to the best of their ability.
 - Establishes employee motivation by giving employees timely and regular recognition and feedback for work performed.
 - Ensures that employee is aware of the possibility of advancement and growth.
 - Develops a sense of trust, respect and responsibility.
- *Developing*
 - Develops a learning environment for both employee and supervisor by continuing education and training to stay abreast of the current state of the art in one's field. Makes training projections based on current trends and future goals.
 - Determines learning and training needs. Allocates resources to provide necessary training.
 - Selects appropriate learning activities.



Management Skills

- *Quality Focus*
 - Fosters culture of continuous improvement through ongoing assessment of agency processes and systems.
 - Focuses on customer service.
 - Promotes teamwork.
 - Strives for quality work products.
- *Internal Environment Focus*
 - Knows the impact of decisions and actions on individuals and other parts of agency.
 - Maintains open communication with peers in other departments.
 - Understands the agency's organization and methods. Knows and accepts agency's mission, goals and objectives.
- *External Environment Focus*
 - Knows and allows for influences outside the agency. Anticipates factors that may alter the agency's mission. Stays abreast of events in government that could affect agency.
 - Regularly reads news and business-related publications to stay abreast of information which impacts the agency.
- *Independence*
 - Acts on the basis of own thoughts, not the influence of others.
 - Works without close supervision.
 - Seeks approval and advice in situations outside personal authority and expertise.
- *Tenacity*
 - Overcomes obstacles to the attainment of a goal through sound problem-solving techniques.
 - Pursues goals until they are achieved or their attainment is no longer reasonable.
- *Initiative*
 - Initiates action.
 - Actively attempts to influence events that can affect the achievement of goals.
 - Does not readily accept circumstances that interfere with the attainment of goals.
 - Regularly originates ideas and activities.
- *Self-Control*
 - Maintains composure under provocative circumstances.
 - Responds constructively to challenges and criticism.
 - Maintains professional demeanor while dealing with difficult situations.
- *Stress Tolerance*
 - Performs well under pressure.
 - Maintains composure, good judgment and adequate performance level under pressure caused by deadlines, work load, opposition, and other causes.
- *Versatility*
 - Well-informed about a broad range of job-related interests.
 - Keeps informed about other parts of the agency.
 - Is aware of changes in the agency.
 - Readily embraces appropriate changes to agency processes and systems.
- *Creativity*
 - Adopts innovative, imaginative solutions to work-related problems.
 - Regularly generates innovative solutions and ideas.
 - Encourages and acknowledges ideas from employees, co-workers and other

sources.

- *Decisiveness*
 - Is ready to make decisions, judgments and commitments.
 - Identifies decisions that require research and deliberation.
 - Effectively establishes priorities based on agency needs.
 - Seeks necessary information and advice.
 - When possible, allows ample time for fact-finding and deliberation.
 - Makes decisions within the time limits required by the situation.
 - Rejects tendencies to make premature decisions.
- *Judgment*
 - Makes realistic and rational decisions.
 - Bases decisions on logical assumptions, relevant facts and accurate data.
 - Develops and analyzes alternative courses of action.
 - Seeks advice and input of superiors, employees and other appropriate sources.