

ENCLOSURE 3

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. OVERVIEW. Individual performance objectives against which employees work are critical to linking the individual employee to the mission, goals, and objectives of an organization.

a. From the perspective of the organization, each individual performance objective assigned to an employee, if prepared thoughtfully, accomplishes one element of the organization's strategic goals and objectives. Taken in sum, the aggregate accomplishment of goals assigned to the organization's workforce, from the file clerk who ensures organizational records are properly accounted for and retrievable to the senior executive responsible for leadership of a major mission area, produce mission success for the organization.

b. From the perspective of the personnel management system, the performance objective as an element of the performance system provides the means by which the individual employee understands his or her role in the organization. It also provides the means by which the supervisor is able to observe, measure, and intercede as necessary as employees work against their individual and collective performance objectives. As accomplishments are aggregated upward through the organization, the collective accomplishments against all performance objectives provide organizational leaders with direct measures of the achievements of their organizations.

2. THE SMART OBJECTIVE

a. For most supervisors and managers, providing employees with written performance objectives and a formal performance plan as part of the performance expectations discussion at the beginning of the evaluation period may seem to be a new requirement. Historically, however, supervisors generally have told employees orally what they were expected to do and achieve during the evaluation period. In some cases, this may have involved providing the employee a copy of his or her job description that laid out the duties of the position. In other cases, supervisors provided specific expectations such as production and quality standards. Such expectations most often were used in jobs that involved repetitive processing such as voucher examining, insurance claims processing, or security adjudications.

b. For DCIPS employees, performance objectives are the most important element in the pay-decision process and also influence the promotion and assignment selection processes. Consequently, employees and managers must have confidence that performance objectives are written and evaluated in a manner that ensures equity and fairness within every organization and across all career groups.

c. DCIPS employees, managers, and oversight bodies shall judge both the quality and fairness of objectives in an employee's performance plan in terms of how each objective is structured in accordance with sections 3 and 4 of this enclosure.

3. WRITING SMART OBJECTIVES FOR EMPLOYEES. For there to be a common understanding between the supervisor and employee on what the employee is expected to achieve during the performance evaluation period, individual employee objectives must be clearly identified.

a. Performance Objectives are not Duty Statements. A performance objective is significantly different from a duty statement in a position description. The duty statement sets boundaries within which an employee is expected to carry out his or her responsibilities. It is intentionally vague with regard to individual assignments because it is designed to provide a durable framework within which employees will be assigned work over time. For example, a duty statement might specify that an employee will “conduct substantive analyses of the economies of the Middle Eastern countries, providing written predictive analyses of leadership responses to existing or changing economic conditions within the region.” Such a statement provides sufficient information to judge the experience and qualifications of the type of analyst who might hold the position. It also establishes the types of work assignments that the employee in the position should expect to be assigned. However, it does not provide specificity on the priorities of the organization or on the manner in which specific analytic assignments are to be selected, carried out, or assigned. It also does not provide conditions under which the assignment shall be undertaken (as a member of a team, as leader of a team, as an individual contributor, or other conditions) or other details necessary to establish clear understanding of expectations between the supervisor and employee.

b. Performance Objectives are Specific. Performance objectives must be more specific than general duty statements. However, they should also be durable. Supervisors should strive to provide employees with three to six performance objectives for the evaluation period, with fewer generally being more effective. For example, an objective derived from the duty statement in the example in paragraph 3.a. of this enclosure would be sufficiently specific for an experienced analyst to understand the expectations for one of his or her work products during the evaluation period. The restated objective might read: “The employee shall complete by August 31 an analysis of the effects of U.N.-imposed sanctions on the Iraqi industrial sector and present the results of that analysis in a finished and appropriately coordinated intelligence report for release to the policy-making community.”

c. Performance Objectives are Measurable. Employees must be provided the criteria against which their accomplishments will be evaluated. In the example in paragraph 3.b. of this enclosure, the work product has been described in terms sufficiently specific for an experienced analyst to understand. However, the supervisor has not yet described the criteria against which the completed work product will be reviewed to determine the extent to which it is responsive to the requirement (i.e., whether the employee has achieved or exceeded expectations). The supervisor might expand on the objective above by stating: “To achieve expectations on this objective, the completed product will make use of available intelligence from all relevant sources; will reflect engagement with other analysts, customers, and stakeholders in the subject of the analysis; will have incorporated the coordinated views of those other analysts and collectors throughout the IC; will be presented in the product style appropriate to the question; and will be timely.” For an experienced employee, the standards outlined should be sufficient to

establish the standard review methods that will be applied and any extraordinary expectations that may be added.

(1) During the planning discussion of the performance objective with the employee, it is appropriate that the supervisor discuss the specific relationship between the evaluation of the extent to which the employee has met or exceeded expectations on the objective and relevant performance elements. For example, in this critical thinking, communication and engagement and integration would all be significant in the achievement of the objective.

(2) Employees should be advised that the performance elements will be rated in their own right but will also affect the supervisor's rating official's judgment of the degree to which expectations have been met for the objective.

d. Performance Objectives are Achievable. All performance objectives should be appropriate to the experience, skill, and pay level of the employee. In the example in paragraph 3.b. of this enclosure, the objective may be appropriate to a full-performance or senior analyst. Supervisors may refer to duties described in employee job descriptions or other documentation describing responsibilities for analysts, or in other employee occupational categories, as the basis for establishing the appropriate difficulty for a performance objective. The employee must also have access to the necessary resources to complete the work product. For example, the analyst assigned this objective would require access to the appropriate intelligence on the issue including translation support if applicable, other analysts working the issue, supervisory guidance and feedback as appropriate to his or her experience, and appropriate production support resources. During the performance-planning phase of the evaluation period, the supervisor and employee should establish the level of support necessary to ensure that the objective is achievable.

e. Performance Objectives are Relevant. To be relevant, DCIPS performance objectives must be derived from the NIS, Defense Intelligence Guidance, and the mission objectives of the employee's organization.

f. Performance Objectives are Timely or Time-Bounded. Performance objectives must specify the period during which the objective is expected to be achieved. In the example in paragraph 3.b. of this enclosure, the period has been specified as requiring completion and delivery of the work product by August 31 of the evaluation period.

4. WRITING SMART OBJECTIVES FOR SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

a. The underlying principles for writing objectives for supervisors and managers are the same as those for non-supervisory employees. However, the objectives themselves differ because the work products of the supervisor or manager are the work products of the unit, produced through the leadership of subordinate non-supervisory employees, increased workforce capability through supervisory development of subordinates and marshalling of the resources necessary to the success of the unit, and the strategic integration of the work unit into the broader Defense Intelligence and IC leadership activities.

b. Supervisory and managerial objectives are specific to the leadership roles of those holding these types of positions. The objectives for supervisors also differ from those of managers, with supervisors being more intimately involved in shaping individual work products in the unit and developing the skills of the subordinate workforce through individual interactions and coaching. At the managerial level, work activities are more focused on developing the leadership skills of subordinate supervisors, integrating the work of the unit into broader organizational contexts, and obtaining the resources (people, money, equipment) necessary to perform the mission of the work unit.

(1) Using the example for the individual analyst contributor developed in section 3 of this enclosure, the complete SMART objective for the analyst would, following from the managers' objectives through the unit supervisor to the individual employee analyst, be: "The employee shall complete by August 31 an analysis of the effects of U.N.-imposed sanctions on the Iraqi industrial sector and present the results of that analysis in a finished and appropriately coordinated intelligence report for release to the policy-making community. To achieve expectations on this objective, the completed product will make use of available intelligence from all relevant sources, will reflect engagement with other analysts and stakeholders in the subject of the analysis, will have incorporated the coordinated views of those other analysts and collectors throughout the IC, will be presented in the product style appropriate to the question, and will be timely."

(2) For the manager of this unit, the objectives would follow from NIS Mission Objective #5.

(3) If the analyst in the example in subparagraph 4.b.(1) of this enclosure were located in a joint information operations center (JIOC) responsible for Middle Eastern intelligence operations, his or her objectives would follow from Defense Intelligence guidance and from the JIOC manager's objectives, which might include such leadership objectives as: "Develop and implement a strategy for accessing all-source intelligence relating to the JIOC area of operations, integrating the military and civilian workforce within the JIOC, and establishing JIOC objectives that will drive individual performance against the joint national and military intelligence mission, establish success measures against all JIOC objectives, and complete an initial assessment of progress against those measures by the end of the evaluation period."

(4) At the supervisory level, the employee's objectives would again follow from Defense Intelligence guidance but also from managerial objectives. For the supervisor of the analyst in the example in paragraph 3.a. of this enclosure, an objective might include such supervisory objectives as: "Develops the annual operating plan for the unit, developing and communicating specific performance objectives to all subordinate employees, establishing success measures for each objective, and conducting ongoing feedback throughout the evaluation period such that all organizational objectives are met, end-of-year performance feedback is provided to all subordinates in accordance with established guidelines, and reports of accomplishment are provided to JIOC management by the completion of the evaluation period."

GLOSSARY

DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions apply to this Volume of this Instruction and serve as the basic performance management taxonomy for DoD Components with DCIPS positions.

closeout performance evaluation. A narrative description and numeric evaluation of an eligible employee's performance under an approved performance plan when there is a change in the rating official. The closeout performance evaluation is completed by the supervisor or rating official and conveys information regarding the employee's progress toward completion of performance objectives and performance against the performance elements. A closeout performance evaluation is not an evaluation of record, but shall be used to inform the rating official of employee accomplishments and/or needed improvement for the period covered by the evaluation. A closeout performance evaluation may become the final evaluation of record where the final evaluation of record can not be completed.

evaluation of record. The summary performance rating, derived from the employee's ratings on his or her performance elements and performance objectives, assigned during the annual evaluation of employee performance that is used for official purposes, including decisions on pay increases as part of the DCIPS annual pay-decision process.

evaluation period. The annual period from creation of the employee performance plan through completion of the annual performance evaluation and evaluation of record. For DCIPS, the evaluation period covers the period from October 1 through September 30 each year. The effective date of the performance evaluation will be the date on which the reviewer approves the rating, but not later than November 15 each calendar year.

IDP. A document prepared jointly by the supervisor and employee as part of the annual performance planning process that outlines development objectives for the employee. IDPs may include training, education, individual coaching, work assignment, or other activities designed to improve the employee's capability within his or her career field.

interim or temporary assignment report of performance. A narrative description of an employee's accomplishments prepared by a supervisor other than the rating official during an employee's interim or temporary assignment or deployment, generally for periods of 90 days or less.

performance element. A standard set of behaviors for all DCIPS positions, derived from analysis of the work being performed by employees, that are necessary for successful performance of that work.

performance evaluation. The written or otherwise recorded evaluation of performance and accomplishments rated against DCIPS performance elements and objectives.

performance feedback. Management or supervisory communication with an employee throughout the evaluation period to convey employee performance levels and progress against the employee's performance plan.

performance objectives. Information that relates individual job assignments or position responsibilities and/or accomplishments to performance elements and standards and to the mission, goals, and objectives of the DoD Component.

performance plan. All of the written or otherwise recorded performance elements, standards, and objectives against which the employee's performance is measured.

performance standards. Descriptors by performance element of "Successful" performance thresholds, requirements, or expectations for each career path and pay band.

PM PRA. A senior employee or board within the chain of supervision of employees included in the rating and performance management processes for the organization, responsible for oversight of performance management processes. The PM PRA provides merit system oversight of the ratings under its purview, ensures compliance with merit principles, and resolves individual employee requests for reconsideration of ratings. Except where the PM PRA is the Head of the DoD Component, the PM PRA should be at a level higher within the organizational hierarchy than the most senior reviewing official participating in the performance decision process. Where separation is not possible, the PM PRA shall be established as a senior employee or panel not in the chain of supervision for the performance evaluations under consideration.

rating official. The official in an employee's chain of supervision, generally the supervisor, responsible for conducting performance planning, managing performance throughout the evaluation period, and preparing the end-of-year evaluation of record on an employee.

reviewing official. An individual in the rating official's direct chain of supervision designated by the Head of the DoD Component with DCIPS positions to assess supervisor preliminary performance ratings for accuracy, consistency, and compliance with policy. The reviewing official is the approving official for each performance evaluation within his or her purview.