National Guard Bureau
Office of Technician Personnel

Technician Personnel Regulation 430
Performance Appraisal Program
Train-the-Trainer Course

"The Five Rating Level Evaluation Method"

Participant's Guides

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TAB 1

National Guard Bureau
Office of Technician Personnel

Technician Personnel Regulation 430
Performance Appraisal Program
"Five Rating Level Evaluation Method"

Writing Effective Critical Elements

Participant's Guide

Writing Effective Critical Elements
Participant's Guide - Table of Contents

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Courseware adapted from Office of Personnel Management and Civilian Personnel Management Service materials.

Writing Effective Critical Elements Using the SMART or MARST Formats

Overview

- Performance Appraisal Program – The "Five Rating Level Evaluation Method"
- Performance Appraisal Process
- What Changes
- What Does Not Change
- Writing Effective Critical Elements

Workshop Introduction

Learning Goals and Objectives

- Review mission and goals statements then write two (2) critical elements for an employee using Workcenter Descriptions or Position Descriptions.
- Weight each critical element as appropriate.
- Evaluate whether or not the critical elements satisfies either the SMART or MARST criteria by collaborating with teammates to review, revise, and finalize critical elements.
- Able to describe the role of critical elements within the broader concept of performance management.

TPR 430, Performance Management

- Prescribes a Five Rating Level Evaluation Method
- Clarifies the procedures, and requirements for documentation of the Performance Appraisal system
- *Prescribes the use of the NGB Form 430, Performance Appraisal, to be used with MyBiz & MyWorkplace

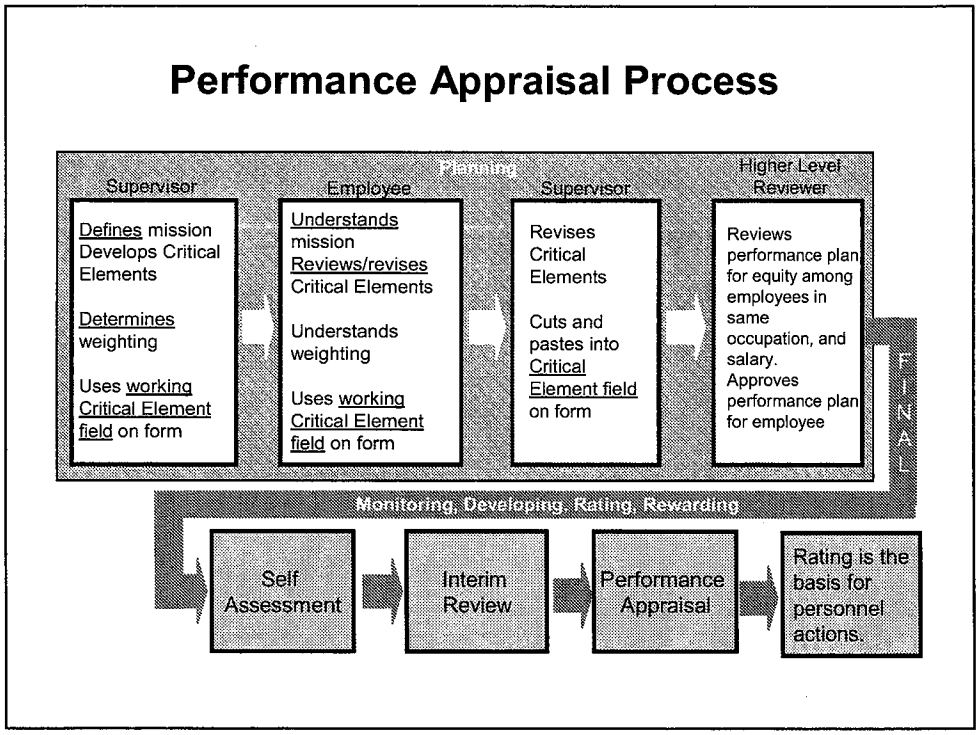
Five Rating Level Evaluation Method
What Changes

- Annual Appraisal Cycle: 1 Oct – 30 Sep*
- New Terms
- Summary Pattern: Level 1 thru Level 5
- Mandatory Interim Review
- Mandatory Supervisory "Critical Element"
- Close Out Assessments
- New NGB Form 430
- PAA accessed through MyBiz and MyWorkplace

Five Rating Level Evaluation Method
What Does Not Change

- Trial/Probationary Ratings
- Postponement of Annual Rating of Record
- Communicating Performance Plans
- Below Fully Successful/Unacceptable Performance
- Performance Improvement Plans
- Appeal Process

Overview of Performance Management



The performance rating is a basis for personnel actions to include:

a. Within Grade Increases/Step Increases (5 CFR Parts 531 and 532).

b. Incentive Awards (5 CFR Part 451)

c. Reassignments, Reductions in Grade or Removals (5 CFR Part 430).

d. Promotions (5 CFR Part 335 and TPR 300(335)).

e. Reduction in Force (TPR 300 (351)).

Employee's Responsibilities

Employees are encouraged to:

- Participate in development of critical elements
- Identify and record their accomplishments
- Participate in interim reviews and the end-of-year assessments, including the self-assessment
- Understand the link between their performance expectations and conduct, and organization mission and goals

Rater's Responsibilities

- Ensure employees attend performance management training
- Develop critical elements aligned to mission objectives
- Communicate performance expectations to employees and hold them accountable for achieving them
- Provide employee feedback—at least one interim review
- Foster and reward excellent performance
- Address poor performance
- Make meaningful performance distinctions among employees

Higher Level Reviewer Responsibilities

- Be involved in the performance management process throughout the rating period
- Ensure organizational goals are communicated to subordinate supervisors and employees
- Ensure equitable and consistent application of, and compliance with, performance management requirements by all subordinate raters

Requirements for Critical Elements

- Critical elements must be linked to the mission
- Minimum of 2 critical elements; key responsibilities must be captured as critical elements to define performance expectations
- Mandatory Supervisory Critical Element
- Critical elements must be in either the SMART or MARST format
- Critical elements may be weighted

Critical Elements are not Task Descriptions

Critical Elements:

- Focus on the results and contribution
- Describe "what" the person will accomplish
- Employee responsible for outcome

Task Descriptions:

- Focus on the tasks or activities completed
- Describe "how" the person will do the work
- Manager ultimately responsible for the outcome

Additional Considerations for Writing Critical Elements

- Articulate Expected Results
- Absolute Standards
- Totality Approach
- Length of critical elements

Articulate Expected Results - critical elements communicate the accomplishments expected of the employee during the rating period. The critical elements are not task lists; supervisors should consider using "accomplish" or "complete" to phrase an critical element instead of using "prepare, provide, plan, etc.", if it is workable.

Absolute Standards – *Normally, avoid absolute standards*, although there are times that absolute standards are necessary (e.g., Accomplish safety checks of Blackhawk helicopters with 100% accuracy at all time). When absolute standards are used (e.g., work must be completed within 7 days), it is difficult to assign any other rating level besides Level 3 (met the critical element) or Level 1 (failed the critical element). Since critical elements are written at Level 3, using 5-7 days as Level 3 (e.g., work must be completed within 5-7 days) would allow supervisors to use 3-4 days as the standard for assigning a Level 4 rating score, etc.

Totality Approach – When developing critical elements, keep in mind that each element will be rated in its totality as opposed to individual phrases. *If taken apart, a portion of the critical element may not meet the SMART criteria or offer an absolute standard, but that should not be a concern.* However, the critical element as a whole should provide enough specificity of the expected outcomes for the rating period.

Length of Critical Elements – Critical Elements should not be a lengthy list of tasks with every finite detail of expectations. Supervisors and employees are expected to have continuing communication during the rating cycle to discuss expectations of any particular task/project as needed. Maximum field size for each critical elements is 1000 characters.

Develop Critical Elements for an Employee Using the SMART Format

- **SMART** is a framework for developing (and evaluating) Critical Elements

  Specific
  Measurable
  Aligned
  Realistic/Relevant
  Timed

Critical Elements Are Specific

- Define an observable action, behavior, or achievement
- Link to a level of performance, frequency, percentage, or other number
- Are specific regarding the description of the result (not the activities to achieve that result)

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Example: "Specific" Critical Element

Provides accurate and timely advice and guidance on an "as needed basis" to headquarters staff and managerial accountants in the field – resolving normal issues/inquiries in 5 – 7 business days, *for more complex situations an initial response should be given* in 5 – 7 business days and updated until resolved. *Provides responses to questions and inquiries covering a variety of policies and directives that require the* correct application of accounting principals, theories, concepts and practices *to financial processes to produce* accurate results and meet legal requirements.

- **Specific:** What do you want your employee to accomplish? Make it as clear and specific as you can, so there is no ambiguity about the result. At the end of the year, can you answer the question, "Has he or she achieved this goal?"

Critical Elements are "Measurable"

- Provide a method to allow tracking, recording, and validation of quality of a specific behavior, action, or outcome
- Define:
  - Quantity (how many)
  - Time (how long)
  - Quality (how good)
  - Resources (how much)

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Example: "Measurable" Critical Element

Provides *accurate and timely advice* and guidance on an "as needed basis" to headquarters staff and managerial accountants in the field – resolving normal issues/inquiries *in 5 – 7 business days,* for more complex situations an initial response should be given *in 5 – 7 business days and updated until resolved.* Provides responses to questions and inquiries covering a variety of policies and directives that require the *correct application of accounting principals, theories, concepts and practices* to financial processes to produce *accurate results and meet legal requirements.*

Measurable: What are you going to measure? If you don't know what you are going to measure, and how you will measure, it is pointless to be specific.

Critical Elements Are Aligned

- Line of sight is drawn between the employee's work, unit's goal, and the organization's mission
- Critical Elements ensure all are working toward shared goals
- All critical elements in the organization pull in the same direction
- Managers/supervisors need understanding of their own goals, objectives and critical elements before they can work with their employees to establish theirs

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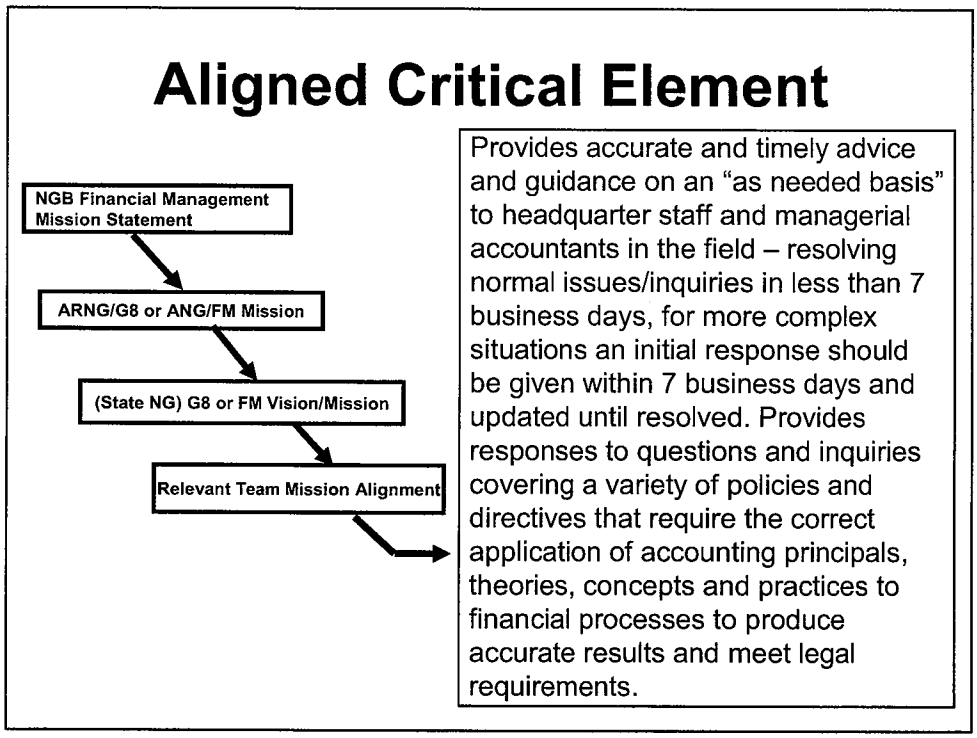

Aligned: Does this critical element fit with your organization's objectives and/or the organization's overall mission? If not, the critical element may need adjusting. If you have your organization's mission statement, include the goal number or other identifier to which this critical element applies.

EXAMPLE: Mission Statement – The Army trains, mobilizes, deploys, sustains, transforms, and reconstitutes conventional forces, providing relevant and ready land power to Combatant Commanders world wide in defense of the nation both at home and abroad.

NGB Financial Management Mission – Secure resources to support combat-ready forces and transform the operational force institutional processes. Provide professional resource management services and facilitate better business practices while caring for our people…our most precious resource.

Resource Integration Division Vision/ Mission – Be the Best Resource Management Team: Responsive, Innovative, Open, Professional and Caring. Provide professional Resource Management Support and Advice for Financial Policy and Systems.

Relevant Team Mission Alignment – Provides professional resource management support and advice for financial policy and systems

Aligned Critical Elements – Provides accurate and timely advice and guidance on an "as needed basis" to headquarters staff and managerial accountants in the field – resolving normal issues/inquiries in 5 – 7 business days, for more complex situations an initial response should be given in 5 – 7 business days and updated until resolved. Provides responses to questions and inquiries covering a variety of policies and directives that require the correct application of accounting principals, theories, concepts and practices to financial processes to produce accurate results and meet legal requirements.

Critical Elements Are Realistic/Relevant

- Realistic: Goals and objectives achievable with the resources and personnel available, and within the available time
- Relevant: Goals and objectives are important to the employee & organization
- Responsibility must be appropriate to employee's grade

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Realistic/Relevant Examples

- **GS07** – Under limited supervision provides accurate and timely advice and guidance on an "as needed basis" to headquarters staff and managerial accountants in the field – resolving normal issues/inquiries in 5 – 7 business days. Prepares responses for supervisor's review, to questions and inquiries covering a variety of policies and directives that require the correct application of accounting principals, theories, concepts and practices to financial processes to produce accurate results and meet legal requirements.

- **GS11** – Provides accurate and timely advice and guidance on an "as needed basis" to headquarters staff and managerial accountants in the field – resolving normal issues/inquiries in 5 – 7 business days, for more complex situations an initial response should be given in 5 – 7 business days and updated until resolved. Independently prepares responses to questions and inquiries covering a variety of policies and directives that require the correct application of accounting principals, theories, concepts and practices to financial processes to produce accurate results and meet legal requirements.

Make meaningful performance distinctions among employees.

Realistic/relevant: Is it realistic and relevant? "Realistic" questions whether the critical element is doable and whether it is within the employee's control. "Relevant" asks whether it is a high priority.

Critical Elements Are Timed

- Established start and/or end dates are defined
- Specific dates (e.g., March 15) are preferred over relative descriptions of time (e.g., 6 months)
- Milestones can be included

Examples:

- Specific Time – by December 10
- Relative to another event – 6 months after…
- Recurring – quarterly, bi-weekly

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Timed Example

Provides accurate and timely advice and guidance on an "*as needed basis*" to headquarters staff and managerial accountants in the field – resolving normal issues/inquiries in 5 – 7 business days, for more complex situations an initial response should be given in 5 – 7 business days and updated until resolved. Provides responses to questions and inquiries covering a variety of policies and directives that require the correct application of accounting principals, theories, concepts and practices to financial processes to produce accurate results and meet legal requirements.

Timed: Put in the timeline for expected results. For long-term projects that require more than one rating cycle to accomplish, critical elements should identify what results are expected within the rating cycle.

Example - SMART Critical Elements

- Complete the installation of 150 new computers in the DOIM Office, by the second week of September.
- Provide a monthly progress report, with information on completed work and anticipated obstacles, in the last week of each month.
- Ensure that the DA Form 2062 issuing the new computer to the PC user is signed by the user and forwarded to the Property Book Officer in 2-3 workdays of signature.

Weighting Critical Elements

- Each critical element may be weighted to indicate importance and effort
- Weighting is entered as a percentage in increments of 5%
- At the end of the performance cycle, the percentages are multiplied to the individual objectives' rating to produce the overall performance rating
- If values aren't entered, all critical elements are weighted equally

- Critical Element 1 — 35%
- Critical Element 2 — 20%
- Critical Element 3 — 15%
- Critical Element 4 — 15%
- Critical Element 5 — 15%

Total Weighting = 100%

Weight critical elements – Critical elements may be weighted to reflect relative priority, contribution to mission, complexity, importance, etc. Weighting critical elements enables supervisors and employees to identify and focus on the most important expected accomplishments for the rating period.

When choosing to weight critical elements, weights must be applied to an entire work group not an individual.

Weighted Critical Elements

Job Obj.	Rating	Weight	Obj. Rating
1	3	10%	0.30
2	3	25%	0.75
3	3	65%	1.95
	3.00	**100%**	**3.00**
Job Obj.	Rating	Weight	Obj. Rating
1	4	10%	0.40
2	2	25%	0.50
3	5	65%	3.25
	3.67	**100%**	**4.15**
Job Obj.	Rating	Weight	Obj. Rating
1	4	10%	0.40
2	4	25%	1.00
3	2	65%	1.30
	3.33	**100%**	**2.70**
Job Obj.	Rating	Weight	Obj. Rating
1	3	10%	0.30
2	3	25%	0.75
3	2	65%	1.30
Disadvantaged	**→2.67**	**100%**	**2.35 ←**

When the Overall Weighted Rating is .51 or higher, the rating is rounded to the next higher whole number. When the Overall Weighted Rating is .50 or lower, the rating is rounded down to the next lower whole number. The following table summarizes the conversion of Overall Weighted Rating to (or Final) Rating of Record:

OVERALL WEIGHTED RATING	RATING OF RECORD	RATING OF RECORD DESCRIPTOR
4.51 to 5.00	5	Outstanding
3.51 to 4.50	4	Excellent
2.51 to 3.50	3	Fully Successful
2.00 to 2.50	2	Marginal
1 on any critical element	1	Unacceptable

Consider These Questions When Reviewing the Performance Plan

- Are the critical elements vague?
- Can the critical elements be measured or verified?
- Are the critical elements too complex or unnecessarily long?
- Does each critical element have a timeline?
- Do the critical elements emphasize appropriate aspects of the work?
- Are there too many or too few critical elements?

Questions

Go to Page 34

At this point the slide presentation ends, and each participant should follow along in their participant's guide.

Table Top Exercise

Critical Elements in the SMART or MARST Format

The purpose of the exercise is to develop critical elements for an employee. You may use materials you have brought with you or what you have developed using in class.

In preparation for writing critical elements you should have the following items readily available:

- Organization's Mission, Goal statement
- Branch/Section Mission, Goal statement
- Sample Work Center Description – provide critical element title headings, and lists key tasks under the title heading
- Position Description – provide key functions and duties and responsibilities

  REMINDER: Critical Elements focus on results and contribution not the specific task or activities completed.

1. **Instructions: Write two critical elements** using the Writing Critical Elements Worksheet, on pages 46-47, and using the Critical Elements Writing Guide, on page 36, and the sample critical elements provided during the course.

2. Identify the mission and goals that the employee's critical elements should align to.

3. Review the materials provided for writing critical elements.

Section Headings	Page
Critical Elements Writing Guide	Page 36
Mission, Goals, and Strategic Plan	Page 37
Components for Critical Elements	Page 38
Standard Supervisory Performance Critical Element	Page 44
Writing Critical Elements Worksheets	Page 46-47

4. You may choose to use one of critical element formats (SMART or MARST). Use the worksheets applicable for each critical element type to develop each component and then pull everything together into one complete critical element.

- In writing the critical element, you may choose to write in "bullet point" format, using clauses to highlight summarized requirements.
- There are 1000 characters available on the performance plan for each critical element. Or, you may choose to use the narrative format or bulleted format. **Best Practice:** use the narrative format to save character spaces.

5. Review each critical element by using the questions to evaluate the effectiveness of the critical element:

   - Is the element challenging to the employee?
   - Will the element require the employee's focused attention to achieve it? Will it require extraordinary effort to achieve? If so, it is too challenging.
   - Will it be easily exceeded? If so, it is not challenging enough.
   - Does the level of challenge align to the employee's position description?)
   - Is the element in the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Aligned, Relevant and Realistic, Timed) or MARST format?

6. If your employee is a supervisor, the critical elements must include at least one critical element related to supervision. Review to Standard Supervisory Performance Critical Element, page 44.

7. Weighting the critical elements is optional. Refer to "Components for Critical Elements", page 38. Record the weighting for all elements on the critical elements worksheet.

8. Prepare to discuss the selected mission/goals statements for the occupation, critical element, and weighting with another participant in the role play. Be prepared to:

   a. Explain how the critical element aligns to the mission and goals

   b. Discuss the expectations of the employees contribution as defined in the critical elements

   c. Justify the weighting, if used, given to each critical element

Critical Element Writing Guide

Purpose: The purpose of this guide is to provide supervisors and employees with reference material and examples for developing meaningful critical elements. Critical elements are the core of the performance management program and therefore play an important role in the successful implementation and execution of the five level evaluation method.

General functions of Critical Elements:

- Establish a link between the employee's work and the organization's mission and goals
- Communicate the major work assignments to be accomplished
- State expected outcomes and results
- Establish the basis on which employee's performance will be rated

Fundamentals of Critical Elements:

- **Link to mission and organizational goals** - Critical elements should draw a line of sight between the organization's mission and goals and the employee's work. It is important to organizational performance that employees understand this relationship. The critical elements of the employees should drive organizational performance and accomplishments. Supervisors and higher level reviewers will ensure that critical elements support the organization's mission and goals.

- **Aligning Mission and Goals to Performance Expectations:** IAW TPR 430, para 2-8(a). Aligning Performance Expectations and Strategic Goals. Performance expectations shall support and align with the DoD mission and its strategic goals, organizational program and policy objectives, annual performance plans, and other measures of performance. The DoD mission and goals cascade to the organization, and resulting organization mission and goals are the basis for individual performance expectations.

Mission, Goals, and Strategic Plan

The below HRO Mission Statement is a sample mission statement. For the purpose of this activity, you may use this mission statement as a template, or list the organizational goals of your organization.

Sample HRO Mission Statement
(From HRO Work Center Descriptions)

Provide a full range of quality personnel support to the full-time work force which is divided into several different and distinct personnel systems. These services are provided to ensure that our forces can meet the needs of their respective missions both in peace and in war.

Hire quality personnel, train and mentor them providing them a meaningful and productive career and retire them with dignity, having a well trained cadre of personnel from which to select their replacement in order to meet missions both in peace and war.

Describe the expected results - Critical elements are results-oriented; they must clearly identify what performance results and/or products are expected of the employee.

Cover the major responsibilities - Critical elements communicate the major responsibilities and most important work activities; they are not intended to cover all tasks. There are usually 2 to 5 major responsibilities (**key functions**) for a job.

Example: an Administrative Assistant may have three key functions - office management, correspondence, and travel coordination. A set of good critical elements should cover the key functions in a job and address the key tasks and expected outcomes associated with those functions. Supervisors and employees should identify these functions first and then write the critical element(s) to describe the key tasks to be accomplished during the rating period.

Components for Critical Elements

Each Critical element has three mandatory components, and one optional component.

1. Number
2. Title (limited to 80 characters)
3. Text in SMART or MARST format. (limited to 1000 characters)
4. Optional - Weight

EMPLOYEE NAME: *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*		APPRAISAL YEAR:
PART F - JOB OBJECTIVES (Duplicate this page for each job objective)		
JOB OBJECTIVE NO.	TITLE: (Limited to 80 Characters)	LAST MODIFIED ON:
JOB OBJECTIVE (Limited to 1,000 Characters)		
WEIGHT: %	OBJECTIVE RATING:	

Figure 1. NGB Form 430

Critical Element No. 1

- **Title:** Property Book Unit Supply-Enhanced (PBUS-E) Management (Property Control)
- **Critical element:**

Critical Element No. 2

- **Title:** Program and Budget
- **Critical element:**

NOTES:

1. IAW TPR 430, para 2-8(f)(1): Each eligible employee shall be assigned at least two and generally three to five critical elements.
2. IAW TPR 430, para 2-8(f)(3): Mandatory critical element(s) for Supervisors. A supervisor's performance plan, shall include at least one supervisory critical element. This critical element may require accountability for the effective administration of (if applicable), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and/or other National Guard specific requirements in addition to applicable policies for which supervisors will be held accountable. Those included in this regulation and supplemental guidance issued by National Guard Bureau as well as those in other laws or regulations.

3. Reference Figure 1: The paper version of the NGB Fm 430 is only a pictorial representation of the automated appraisal form used in the Performance Appraisal Application Tool.
4. When using the automated NGB Form 430, accessible in the Performance Appraisal Application Tool, via MyBiz and MyWorkplace, critical elements should be documented in the Job Objectives block. When using a locally developed appraisal form, use local procedures.

Weight critical elements (Optional) - Critical elements may be weighted to reflect relative priority, contribution to mission, complexity, importance, etc. Weighting critical elements enables supervisors and employees to identify and focus on the most important expected accomplishments for the rating period. Assigned weights are communicated to the employee by the supervisor. It is the employee's responsibility to ask for clarification if there are any questions.

No critical element can be weighted less than 10 percent and all weighted critical elements must total 100 percent. This does not preclude equal weighting of critical elements if appropriate. Typically, weights will not change during the rating period unless the number of critical elements are changed (added or deleted) which will require weights to be redistributed, or unless mission priorities dictate such a change.

Weighting Parameters

- Minimum weight for any one critical element is 10%.
- Weight of all critical elements must add up to 100%.
- Weights must be assigned in increments of 5%.
- If a "no rating" is given on any critical element, supervisors must re-weight the remaining critical elements to obtain a total of 100%.
- Weights are assigned by the supervisor to each critical element at the beginning of the rating period
- Weighted Critical Element Rating Process: If critical elements were weighted, the weights are applied to the adjusted rating. These weighted scores shall be added together to obtain the overall average score. Again, however, if a Level 1 has been assigned to any critical element, the overall rating of record shall be a Level I regardless of the rating or weighting on any other critical element, e.g., the critical element has a 10% weight.

Establishing Critical Elements:

- Supervisors need to have a clear understanding of leadership expectations on the work unit supervised before establishing critical elements for the employees. The critical elements of the employees should drive organizational performance and accomplishments.
- Critical elements are established at Level 3, Fully Successful rating.
- Supervisors and employees should have a meaningful dialogue on performance expectations and critical elements at the beginning of the rating cycle.
- Supervisors are encouraged to involve employees in the development of their critical elements and weighting, although final decisions are the supervisor's.
- Identify the major responsibilities of the job and develop, typically, 2 to 5 critical elements that reflect those responsibilities using the fundamentals described above. Although the automated tool will allow up to 10 critical elements, establishing ten initially will limit flexibility to add critical elements during the rating period.
- Each employee will have a minimum of two (2) critical elements.
- Evaluate the critical elements against the SMART or MARST format.
- Critical elements may be adjusted (modified, added, or deleted) as needed during the performance cycle. Supervisors will discuss adjustments and expectations with employees as soon as the need for the change is known. When new critical elements are assigned, critical elements must communicate that portion of a major performance expectation that can be accomplished within the time remaining in the appraisal period (TPR 430, para 2-9). New/revised critical elements have to be approved, and in place for a minimum of 120 days before assigning an official rating.
- Employees in supervisory positions must, include the standard supervisory critical element.
- The automated performance appraisal form allows a maximum of 1000 characters for each critical element.

S-M-A-R-T Format:

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Aligned, Realistic/Relevant, and Timed. It is a framework for developing and evaluating critical elements.

Specific. Clearly state the expected accomplishment that can be observed. To be specific, a critical element must define an observable action, behavior, or achievement; link to a level of performance, frequency, percentage, or other number. Specific is related to the result, not the activities to achieve that result.

Measurable. State the criteria for measuring accomplishments. Provide a method to allow tracking, recording, and validation of quality of a specific behavior, action, or outcome. Define quantity (how many), quality (how good), resources (how much), and time (how long, how often).

Aligned. Draw a line of sight between the work of the employee, the goals of the work unit, and mission of the organization. Critical elements ensure all employees are working toward the organization/mission goals.

Realistic and Relevant.

- Realistic - the expected results can be achieved with available resources and time (e.g., if a new employee reports six months into the rating cycle, can the expected results be accomplished during the remaining of the rating cycle?) and are under the employee's control. The critical element should be sufficiently complex to challenge the individual but not so complex that it cannot be accomplished.

- Relevant – Expected accomplishments should be commensurate with the major responsibilities and salary of employee.

Timed.

State the timeline for expected results. For long-term projects that require more than one rating cycle to accomplish, Critical elements should identify what results are expected within the rating cycle. The time component can be specific (*by 1 July*, *end of 4th quarter*), relative to another event (*six months after…*), or recurring (*quarterly*). The minimum rating period is 90 days.

M-A-R-S-T Format:

Instead of following the order of S-M-A-R-T there is a another method for writing critical elements:

1. First, decide what you are going to Measure. ***If you do not know what you are measuring and how to measure it, it is a wasted effort to be specific.*** Do not rush through step M.

- Provide a method to allow tracking, recording, and validation of quality of a specific behavior, action, or outcome

- Define:
  - Quantity (how many)
  - Time (how long)
  - Quality (how good)
  - Resources (how much)

2. Next address Aligned. Ask whether the critical element fits with your managers'/supervisors' critical elements and the organization's mission. If not, the critical element may need to be readjusted.

3. Then move to the Realistic/Relevant. Is it realistic and relevant? "Realistic" questions whether the critical element is doable and within your control. "Relevant" asks whether it is a high priority.

4. Then comes the Specific. Once you have established the criteria you can detail what you want to accomplish. Make it as specific as it can be so that there is no ambiguity about the result. At the end of the year you have to be able to answer the question, "Did the employee achieve the critical element?"

5. The timeline is the Timed. Finally, enter the timeline.

6. Before attempting to write the entire critical element in a sentence, collect the key points that address the five dimensions of SMART or MARST.

Considerations for Writing Critical Elements (helpful hints):

- **Articulate Expected Results** - Critical elements communicate the accomplishments expected of the employee during the rating period. Critical elements are not task lists; supervisors should consider using "accomplish" or "complete" to phrase a critical element instead of using "prepare, provide, plan, etc.", if it is workable.

- **Absolute Standards** – Normally, avoid absolute standards, although there are times that absolute standards are necessary:

    - **Example 1**: Accomplish safety checks of Blackhawk helicopters with 100% accuracy at all time.

    - **Example 2**: When absolute standards are used (e.g., work must be completed within 7 days), it is difficult to assign any other rating level besides Level 3 (met critical) or Level 1 (failed critical). NOTE: Since critical elements are written at Level 3, the Fully Successful level, using 5 to 7 days as Level 3 (e.g., work must be completed within 5-7 days) would allow supervisors to use 3-4 days as the standard for assigning a Level 4, Excellent rating score, etc.

- **Totality Approach** – When developing critical elements, ***keep in mind that critical elements are rated in its totality as opposed to individual phrases.*** If taken apart, a portion of critical element may not meet the SMART criteria or offer an absolute standard, but that should not be a concern. However, the critical element as a whole should provide enough specificity of the expected outcomes for the rating period.

- **Length of critical elements** – Critical elements should not be a lengthy list of tasks with very finite detail of expectations. Supervisors and employees are expected to have continuing communication during the rating cycle to discuss expectations of any particular task/project as needed. Maximum field size for each critical element is 1000 characters.

Standard Supervisory Performance Critical Element

In accordance with TPR 430, para 2-8(f)(3). A supervisor's performance plan shall include at least one supervisory critical element. This critical element may require accountability for the effective administration of (if applicable), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and/or other National Guard specific requirements in addition to applicable policies for which supervisors will be held accountable. Those included in this regulation and supplemental guidance issued by National Guard Bureau as well as those in other laws or regulations.

> **Sample Supervisory Critical Element:** Execute the full range of human resources (including performance management and fiscal responsibilities within established timelines and in accordance with applicable regulations. Adhere to merit principles. Develop a vision for the work unit; align performance expectations with organizational goals. Maintain a safe work environment and promptly address allegations of noncompliance. Ensure EEO/EO principles are adhered to throughout the organization. Ensure continuing application of, and compliance with, applicable laws, regulations and policies governing prohibited personnel practices; promptly address allegations of prohibited discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

NOTE: To meet the EEO portion of this critical element, supervisors must comply with those applicable provisions of the DoD Civilian Equal Employment Opportunity Program, DoDD 1440.1, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Management Directive 715. Communicate EEO policies and ensure adherence throughout the work unit. Seek early dispute resolution through Alternate Dispute Resolution techniques, promptly address accommodation requests, and ensure that EEO-related training requirements are met.

The Standard Supervisory Performance critical element above may serve as the basic supervisory element. ARNG/ANG organizations may add unique requirements as appropriate. ARNG/ANG organizations may establish policies for adding requirements to the standard supervisory critical element. More than one supervisory critical element can be used to rate employees who are assigned to a supervisory position.

Table Top Exercise

Critical Element Exercise with Handouts

You will have 30 minutes, and no more than 45 minutes to independently write two critical elements (One GS and One FWS). Weighting is optional. At the end of the activity, you should have at written two critical elements and are prepared for class discussion.

Courseware adapted from Office of Personnel Management and Civilian Personnel Management Service materials.

Table Top Exercise - Writing Critical Elements Worksheets

Writing Critical Elements #1:

S (specific) What do you want your employee to accomplish? Make it as clear and specific as you can, so there is no ambiguity about the result. At the end of the year, can you answer the question, "Has he or she achieved this goal?"

M (measurable) What are you going to measure? If you don't know what you are going to measure, and how you will measure, it is pointless to be specific.

A (aligned) Does this critical element fit with your organization's goals and objectives and/or the organization's overall mission? If not, the critical element may need adjusting. If you have your organization's mission statement, include the goal number or other identifier to which this critical element applies.

R (realistic/relevant) Is it realistic and relevant? "Realistic" questions whether the critical element is actually doable, and whether it is within the employee's control. "Relevant" asks whether it is a high priority.

T (timed) Put in the timeline.

Record final Critical element below:

Table Top Exercise - Writing Critical Elements Worksheets

Writing Critical Elements #2:

M (measurable) What are you going to measure? If you don't know what you are going to measure, and how you will measure, it is pointless to be specific.

A (aligned) Does this critical element fit with your organization's goals and objectives and/or the organization's overall mission? If not, the critical element may need adjusting. If you have your organization's mission statement, include the goal number or other identifier to which this critical element applies.

R (realistic/relevant) Is it realistic and relevant? "Realistic" questions whether the critical element is actually doable, and whether it is within the employee's control. "Relevant" asks whether it is a high priority.

S (specific) What do you want your employee to accomplish? Make it as clear and specific as you can, so there is no ambiguity about the result. At the end of the year, can you answer the question, "Has he or she achieved this goal?"

T (timed) Put in the timeline.

Record final critical element below:

TAB 1A

Technician Supervisor's Course

Sample Critical Elements – The Rater's Responsibilities

- Develop Critical Elements aligned to mission objectives

- Communicate performance expectations to employees and hold them accountable for achieving them

- Make meaningful performance distinctions among employees
  - The primary objective of assigning duties and responsibilities to individual positions is to provide the basis for orderly, efficient, and economical accomplishment of work.

- Factors that should be considered when developing critical elements:
  - The technician's knowledge, skill, or abilities
  - Is the work supervisory or production
  - Higher-level duties may require special skills or training
  - Delegated authority commensurate with assigned responsibilities
  - The distinction between "Duties" and "Responsibilities" is as follows:

    - "Duties" cover the difficulty aspects of work. They are concerned with what is done and how it is done. Duties are statements of job content and reflect tasks assigned to an employee by responsible management authority.

    - "Responsibilities" are less tangible. They concern an individual's accountability. Examples are the responsibility of a supervisor for meeting deadlines and the responsibility of a supply officer for seeing that adequate stocks are maintained.

    - Note: All positions have both duties and responsibilities. Lower-grade positions are usually "long" in duties and "short" in responsibilities, while high-level positions are "short" in duties but "long" in responsibilities.

Technician Supervisor's Course
Sample Critical Elements – The Rater's Responsibilities

Table Top Exercise

The purpose of the exercise is to review sample critical elements, and based on the above "***factors to be considered when developing critical elements***", make a meaningful distinction between the expected performance levels for each occupational series. Also determine if the critical element best fits an Assistant, Specialist, Supervisor, or Manager.

GS-0201- Human Resources Specialist	**GS-0201- Human Resources Specialist**	**GS-0201- Human Resources Specialist**
Effectively develop and revise HR policy guidance and instructions in accordance with prescribed objectives and implementation timeline. Work products may include (fill in functional area examples). Work is reviewed to ensure products are well researched, technically sound, thorough (e.g., considered scenarios), properly staffed, clear, aligned with legislative and regulatory authorities, timeliness, and impact on achieving organizational goals.	Effectively accomplish assigned special projects in accordance with established project objectives, achieve expected results, and meet stated milestones/timeliness. Projects include (fill in functional area examples). Projects are reviewed for accuracy, compliance with applicable legal, regulatory, and policy guidelines, timeliness, and results achieved.	Effectively plan and execute implementation tasks/actions on a continuing basis to achieve timely and successful conversion/implementation of (name the program) within National Guard in accordance with established component timelines. Contributions include actions to develop and field a variety of communication tools to inform the workforce and leadership on (name of program), answer program related questions; briefings, on-site subject matter expert staff support, and leading (Battalion, Wing, Group, Squadron) level work groups. Proactively and timely issue quality implementation guides and resolve problems that contribute to successful implementation of ANG/ARNG (name of program) program.

Technician Supervisor's Course
Sample Critical Elements – The Rater's Responsibilities

GS-0303- Administrative Support	GS-0303- Administrative Support
Effectively accomplish office administration responsibilities such as keeping office calendar, administering time and attendance, and screening visitors and phone calls. Complete review of office correspondence assuring formats and packages are in compliance with the ANG/ARNG correspondence manual and other applicable standards (e.g., official memorandums, signature block). Accomplish staff support responsibilities such as managing office suspense's (Tracker System), compiling status reports, and coordinating travel. Work products will be accurate and complete within the timeline established by supervisor. Accomplish work with good judgment (e.g., screening phone calls) and demonstrate professionalism (e.g., tactful and courteous).	Effectively complete special projects such as coordinating conferences, workshops, in accordance with project objectives and timelines as established by supervisor. Work products (results) will be accurate (e.g., name/number, rank/grade of attendees, all needed information is in the packages), well organized, and timely. Accomplish assigned work in a professional manner such as courteous and tactful. Manage workload in accordance with priorities and suspense's established by supervisor. Respond to all customer inquiries in a timely manner (as established by supervisor).

GS-0343- Management Analyst	GS-0343- Management Analyst
Accomplish independent, collaborative, and cross-functional analyses for assigned programs. Initiate timely action during fiscal cycle to schedule briefings and present recommendations to (XYZ committee), identifying and verifying key resourcing challenges and providing meaningful recommended solutions in accordance with established ANG/ARNG resources strategy	Complete analysis of civilian manpower program, for all structure and budget sensitive elements of assigned commands, programs, or projects. Independently utilize common-use analytic tools, such as web-based applications, and other analytical software to generate data and analysis within established timelines. Organize and present results/reports in established format to senior analysts for incorporation into strategic ANG/ARNG objectives. As directed and with senior analyst supervision, apply principles of manpower program management to special circumstances that require such evaluation.

Technician Supervisor's Course
Sample Critical Elements – The Rater's Responsibilities

GS-0510- Staff Accountant	GS-0510- Staff Accountant
Effectively accomplish accurate and on-time (by employee/customer agreed-upon suspense date), professional accounting work for [fill in organization] requiring the application of accounting principles, theories, concepts and practices to ensure that accounting systems produce accurate results, meet legal requirements, and support the mission of [fill in organization].	Effectively deliver [provide] accurate and timely advice and guidance on an "as needed basis" to headquarters staff and managerial accountants in the field - resolving normal issues/inquiries in 3-4 business days, for more complex situations an initial response should be given in 3-4 business days and updated until resolved. Complete responses to inquiries that require the correct application of accounting principles, theories, concepts and practices to financial processes to produce accurate results and meet legal requirements.

GS-0560- Budget Analyst	GS-0560- Budget Analyst
Accomplish resource management support and budget analysis functions on a daily basis or as needed, for the G-3/5/7 staff, in order to keep the G-3/5/7 staff aware of execution that is in accordance with phased obligation plan. Support/analysis is given on the day it was sought for most situations, and within 5-7 days for more complex situations (as determined by supervisor), based on an accurate, timely and thorough analysis in accordance with generally accepted principles and practices.	Assist Senior Analysts with Execution of Budget Priorities (As required) – With significant supervision execute the budgets for assigned areas of responsibility. Prepare, coordinate, submit, and present accurate budget products to senior budget analysts. Work products, communicated orally or written, are evaluated for completeness, clear, accurate and in accordance with established timelines, and guidance.

Technician Supervisor's Course
Sample Critical Elements – The Rater's Responsibilities

GS-0560- Budget Analyst	GS-0560- Budget Analyst
Effectively defend Resource Requirements – With limited supervision accurately manage, analyze, coordinate, justify, and defend budget submissions. Complete justification and respond to various inquiries for assigned programs in a precise and timely manner. Ensure budget details communicated orally or in writing are consistent, accurate, and in accordance with established timelines, guidance, and priorities.	With significant supervision effectively conduct timely trend analysis. Monitor current and prior year execution levels for assigned areas of responsibilities. Monitor and accurately document current and historical program execution using established generally accepted principles and methodologies and accomplish tasks in accordance with assigned timelines.

GS-1712- Training Instructor	GS-1712- Training Instructor
Complete updates and development of course material for the assigned training program in accordance with established standards and timelines, and course material is consistent with applicable manuals and regulations. The course materials include lesson plans, practical exercises, and competency tests. This standard requires that 25% to 30% of all training material must be updated within the performance rating cycle.	On a regular basis, conduct research in responsible discipline to determine possible training applications. New information is distributed to all "in need" of the knowledge when new learnings are discovered, and briefs are presented to leadership and peers on a semi-annual basis (twice during the rating cycle) as a minimum.

Technician Supervisor's Course

Sample Critical Elements – The Rater's Responsibilities

GS-2210- Information Technology	GS-2210- Information Technology
Effectively identify, justify, and defend automation funding requirements, which include capturing, tracking, and reporting costs for automation requirements. Funding requirements should be thoroughly and accurately documented, and available to meet internal and external suspenses for Program Objective Memorandum (POM) submissions, weekly budget status meetings, occasional budget reviews by the Resource Management Office, and adhoc request. Critical thinking should be applied to the analysis of funding impacts and justifications in defense of civilian HR automation funding. Comprehensive impact statements will be developed and provided in time to meet internal and external suspenses.	Accomplish assigned projects in accordance with established project objectives, achieve expected results, and meet stated milestones/timelines. Results must be technically sound (e.g., in compliance with applicable legal and regulatory provisions), accurate (e.g., validated data, cited references), and in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, and guideline.

Technician Supervisor's Course
Sample Critical Elements – The Rater's Responsibilities

GS-0346- Logistics Management	GS-0346- Logistics Management	GS-0346- Logistics Management
Accomplish the review, analysis and evaluation of current or projected logistics programs in accordance with established timelines and applicable laws, regulations, agreements and policies (as it relates to specific program). Coordinate with representatives of the ANG/ARNG, other services, and DoD components in developing, monitoring and evaluating joint logistics programs. Based on these reviews and analysis, complete program enhancements in a timely manner per published guidance.	Complete assigned review of policy and procedural information, identifying problems, and initiates cost-effective alternatives to current policies and programs using current metrics of evaluating cost-effectiveness. Complete documentation and reports on such reviews and cost-savings, and provide recommended solutions within supervisor determined timeline.	As required, effectively leads evaluation/inspection teams and study groups formed to evaluate logistics readiness support to ANG/ARNG units/activities. Based on inspections, review and studies, prepares and submits detailed analyses and/or reports with technical evaluation and recommendations for policy, process, and procedural change (reviewed by supervisor for quality, accuracy, and completion) within supervisor established suspense date.

TAB 1B

Measuring Hard-to-Measure Work

Engineer or Contract specialist: Some work seems hard to measure. For example, some supervisors and employees find it difficult on an annual basis to measure the accomplishments of a civil engineer, or contract specialist— especially when the final result of the civil engineer, or contract specialist's efforts may not occur for 2-5 years or more. How can supervisors and employees develop a results-focused annual performance plan for a civil engineer, or contract specialist who has complex, long-term projects? One example is to use measures derived from work flow charting.

Measures Derived From Work Flow Charting. Supervisors and employees can organize long-term, complex projects into interim accomplishments by charting the flow of the work. A work flow chart maps the major steps in a project by beginning with the first step, defining each successive step, and ending with the result. If a result does not occur annually, at least supervisors and employees can measure interim accomplishments. By analyzing the activities of a civil engineer, or contract specialist who may have multiple projects to complete during the next few years, the following interim and final accomplishments become evident:

Work Flow Chart for civil engineer, or contract specialist

Step 1 - Project Plan(s)
Activities that produce this interim accomplishment include:

1. Identifying avenues of project research;
2. Gathering initial information;
3. Completing analysis; and completing design.

Step 2 - Research Milestones
Activities that produce this interim accomplishment include:

1. Conducting project research;
2. Performing experiments; and
3. Recording findings.

Step 3 - Written and/or Verbal Report(s)
Activities that produce this final accomplishment include:

1. Publishing results; and
2. Preparing verbal presentation.

Example Critical Element. By using the method described above and focusing on employee accomplishments, supervisors and employees might develop a performance plan that includes the following job objectives:

Critical Element 1: Project Plan(s)

Fully Successful Standard: The supervisor typically finds that the employee completes project plans by established deadlines and the plans usually include:

1. A clear, understandable objective;
2. A description of how the project aligns with the agency's strategic goals;
3. Realistic proposed costs;
4. A logical statement of the problem;
5. A thorough description of the proposed approach;
6. A reference to applicable recent results; and
7. Realistic milestones.

Critical Element 2: Project Research Milestones

Fully Successful Standard: The supervisor typically finds that the employee completes research according to the specifications described in the project plan, and that the employee consistently follows safety regulations. The employee consistently completes established milestones.

Critical Element 3: Research Report(s)

Fully Successful Standard: The supervisor typically finds that written and oral presentations are clear, understandable, demonstrate an expertise in the field and a proactive and innovative approach to advancing the field of research, and meet the deadlines established in the project plan.

Measuring Hard-to-Measure Work

Administrative Assistant or Secretary: Several supervisors have told us they have difficulty measuring the results of their executive administrative assistants, or secretaries' work rather than the activities they perform. The method for measuring work that better fits the secretary's role is a customer-focused method.

Focusing on Customer Expectations. The first step to a customer-focused method is to ask the following questions:

- Who are the secretary's customers?
- What products and/or services do the customers expect?

By asking these questions, a supervisor and secretary could develop the following list of customers and their expectations. Note that we list customer expectations as products or services, not activities:

Customers - Expected Products and Services

Supervisor and Staff

- An easy-retrieval file system
- A calendar
- Travel reservations and vouchers
- Correspondence in draft

Other Agency Offices and the Public

- Information
- Messages

Administrative Officer

- Time and attendance records

Example Critical Element: By using a customer-focused method, and by describing the results of the secretary's activities rather than the activities themselves, supervisors and secretaries might develop a performance plan that includes the following job objectives:

Critical Element 1: Administrative Support. Products or services include a file system, time and attendance records, a calendar, travel arrangements, and draft correspondence. Files are easily retrievable, logically organized, clearly labeled, and neat, with documents usually filed within 3-5 days of receipt; Time cards correctly reflect information provided by employees, comply with established procedures, are successfully entered into the automated system, and submitted to the Administrative Officer by established deadline, with no more than three noted errors per quarter; Calendar is consistently accurate with proper additions and deletions, reflecting realistic scheduling, with changes made quickly, and a hard copy provided to supervisor in accordance with personal preference, with no more than three noted errors per quarter; Travel arrangements are realistic, meet the traveler's expectations in terms of timeliness and accommodation to extent possible, and confirmation is received prior to travel. Travel orders and vouchers are completed in accordance with regulations, policy, and automated procedures. Vouchers are completed usually within 3 days of receipt of traveler's documentation; and Draft correspondence is clear, logical, follows Plain Language guidelines, and is presented to supervisor generally 1-3 working days before due date or 3-5 days after receipt of initiating event.

Critical Element 2: Office Information. Messages are given to appropriate persons usually within 3 working hours of receipt or when the person returns to the office, and contain the caller's name, organization, phone number, date, time, and subject of the call; and information provided is generally accurate, meets the customer's requirements, and is given from 6 hours to 3 working days after the request is made.

Measuring Hard-to-Measure Work

Supervisor: Writing a supervisor's performance plan can be very challenging. One way to center the plan on what is important is to focus on results. The results of the work of a supervisor include the work unit's products or services as well as the smooth operation of the work unit. The work unit's performance becomes the central measure of the supervisor's performance plan. Getting results requires good management, supervisory, and human resources management skills on the part of the supervisor.

1. **Cascading Organizational Goals to the Work Unit.**
2. **Example.**
3. **Elements and Standards.**

Cascading Organizational Goals to the Work Unit. The first step in developing a supervisor's performance plan is to determine which organizational goal(s) his or her work unit supports or can affect. The next step is to determine the work unit's products or services that support organizational goal achievement. The supervisor can be held responsible for those products or services.

Example. The Supply Management Officer of a military organization wanted to develop job objectives for his/her supervisors that align with organizational goals and that hold the supervisors responsible for their work units' expected accomplishments. He/she also wanted the elements and standards to reflect the supervisors' general management and human resources management skills. By using the goal-cascading method, he/she completed the following steps:

Step 1. Look at the big picture. The manager referred to his/her agency's annual performance plan and targeted the goals that each of his/her supervisors and their work units affect. Specifically, for the supervisor of the widget production work unit, he/she aligned the performance plan with the following organizational goals:

1. The Supply facility will maintain last year's high customer satisfaction with the timeliness and quality of the supply warehouse's products, which include widgets.
2. The supply warehouse will provide a safe working environment for its employees.
3. The supply warehouse will promote effective leadership and employee productivity.

Step 2. Describe the products and services the work unit provides to help the organization reach its goals. For the widget production work unit, the manager determined that the product of the work unit, of course, was widgets. In addition, in order to produce widgets, the work unit must have a safe and productive working environment and good leadership.

Step 3. Develop work unit measures and set standards for performance. The Supply Manager determined that the following measures were important to include in the supervisor's performance plan:

1. The quality, quantity, and timeliness of the widgets produced by the work unit;
2. The safety of the workplace; and
3. The quality of supervisory leadership shown, which results in productive subordinates.

By cascading organizational goals to the widget production work unit, the manager wrote the following job objective for the supervisor of that work unit:

Critical Element 1: Widget Production

Fully Successful Standard:

1. Usually 90 to 95 percent of the work unit's pallets have no defects;
2. With few exceptions, the work unit has no more than 1.5 to 2 hours of down time per week;
3. Normally, the work unit meets its production schedule 5 out of 7 days; and
4. Normally, the work unit meets its shipment schedule 5 out of 7 days.

Critical Element 2: Safe Work Environment

Fully Successful Standard:

1. The supervisor corrects or improves safety problems usually by agreed-upon date;
2. The supervisor routinely holds one safety audit per week; and
3. The work unit rarely has any lost time hours.

Critical Element 3: Effective Leadership

Fully Successful Standard:

1. The supervisor periodically initiates ways to reduce costs;
2. Most of the supervisor's decisions benefit the organization and are generally satisfactory;
3. The supervisor provides discipline fairly and consistently;
4. Work unit training requirements are met;
5. Most work unit members understand the department's goals and how their performance affects these goals;
6. Work unit members understand how they are performing against their individual elements and standards; and work unit members receive rewards for good performance.

TAB 2

National Guard Bureau
Office of Technician Personnel

Technician Personnel Regulation 430
Performance Appraisal Program
"Five Rating Level Evaluation Method"

Writing Effective Self Assessments

Participant's Guide

Writing Effective Self Assessments

Overview

- **What is a Self Assessment?**
- **Getting Started**
- **Writing the Self Assessment**
- **Characteristics of Significant Accomplishments**
- **Helpful Hints** - Things Not to Do
- **Helpful Hints** - Things to Do
- **Performance Appraisal Application (PAA) Tool**

What is a Self Assessment?

- A self assessment is your description of accomplishments related to the critical elements and performance standards identified in your performance plan.
- The self assessment should provide the supervisor with a clear picture of your performance and accomplishments.

Getting Started

- Review your organizational goals and critical elements
- Review records of your work (emails, memos, project files, productivity records)

Establishing a Recording System

- Create a system for recording accomplishments. This can be hard copy or electronic, depending on what works best for you. Some suggestions include:
  - Files of Work Products
  - Statistical data or other metrics
  - E-mail Folder (Create separate folder for performance related items)
  - Letters, memos, or email correspondence. *Word Document, updated as needed
  - Notes on Planner or Calendar
  - File Folder(s) to maintain copies of documents
  - Establish a process for reviewing and recording your accomplishments on a regular basis, e.g., once a week. Make a note of significant items, or put a copy into your file. Identify the critical element which is linked to the accomplishment.

Characteristics of Significant Accomplishments

Competing priorities

- High visibility
- High level of difficulty
- Represent the Org/Unit in inter/intra agency forum(s)
- Require innovation
- Require problem solving skills

Org/Unit-wide impact

- Lead special group/project
- Short deadlines
- Wide scope of coordination
- First time

Self Assessments Using the STAR Format

The S.T.A.R. format is an easy and short way to capture performance activities and accomplishments.

The STAR Format

- **S**ituation: Describe the conditions under which you achieved your critical elements
- **T**ask: Describe what you did during the year to create the results you achieved.
- **A**ctivity/**A**ction: Include additional activities you completed, or actions you took that contributed to your results
- **R**esult: Describe what you accomplished.

STAR Examples

For each Critical Element…
answer the following questions

- **Situation:** What was the situation I faced?
- **Task:** What was my task in that situation?
- **Activity:** What activity/action did I take?
- **Result:** What result(s) did my action(s) produce?

The Self Assessment Is Optional

However, you are your First and Best Advocate!

- Enter your self assessment for both your interim and annual appraisal into the automated Performance Appraisal Tool.
  - Begin by reviewing your critical elements.
  - Review your record of accomplishments
  - Determine which accomplishments are the most significant in terms of contribution to mission and organizational goals.
  - Be sure that you have at least one accomplishment for each critical element.

Key Point: You must have at least one accomplishment for each critical element otherwise it would be difficult to assign any other rating level besides Level 1 (Unacceptable). A Level 1 rating in any critical element will result an overall failure for the entire rating period.

Writing the Self Assessment

- Draft and save as a "Word" document
- Address each critical element
- Focus on the results; your contributions to the mission and accomplishments
- Be specific, factual, clear, and concise
- Check grammar and spelling
- Use action verbs, active voice

Helpful Hints - Things Not to Do

- Do not use the task oriented language from your position description
- Do not list accomplishments without referencing the critical element
- Do not use terms or acronyms that others may not know
- Do not assume that your supervisor or reviewing official is familiar with every detail of your job

Helpful Hints - Things to Do

- Be Aware of Limited Space in the Automated Tool
  - Interim Review Self Assessment, limited to 2000 characters
  - Annual Appraisal Self Assessment, limited to 2000 characters

Performance Appraisal Application Tool

- Electronic support tool accessed by ***My Biz*** and ***My Workplace*** via DCPDS
- Helps employees and managers/supervisors manage performance
- Streamlines processes
- Automates documentation requirements
- DCPDS requires CAC Card to access
- User guide available with sections for the employee and the rating official

Performance Appraisal Application Tool

MyBiz (Employee's Access):

- Initiate or participate in developing your performance plan.
- View and edit information related to your plan.
- Enter critical elements, self-assessments, and other information related to your performance plan and annual appraisal.
- Route information to your rating official.
- Acknowledge that performance-related results have been communicated to you.

Note:

1. Critical elements and performance standards are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, in the Job Objectives block. Limited to 1000 characters.

2. Employee's Self Assessments are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, Employee Self Assessment block. Limited to 2000 characters.

Performance Appraisal Application Tool

MyWorkplace (Rating Official's access):

- Initiate and edit information related to your employee's performance plans.
- Enter critical elements, assessments, and other information related your employee's performance plan and appraisal.
- Route plan and appraisal information to your employees.
- Submit final ratings.
- Edit ratings.
- Change rating official assignments.

Note:

1. Critical elements and performance standards are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, in the Job Objectives block. Limited to 1000 characters.

2. Rater's Official Assessments are documented on the automated NGB Form 430, Rating Official's block. Limited to 2000 characters.

Questions

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Participant's Guide
for Table Top Exercise

At this point the slide presentation ends.

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Writing Effective Self Assessments

Introduction

The Performance Management program establishes a link between the organization's mission and goals and the individual employee's contribution to mission and goal accomplishment.

As part of the performance appraisal process, you have an opportunity to prepare self assessments of your performance and achievements during the rating period. Your self assessment is considered by your rating official in evaluating your performance and is taken into consideration for other personnel actions.

Every employee has the opportunity to describe how his or her performance met their critical elements and performance standards, and what results or accomplishments contributed to the achievement of the organization's mission and goals.

Many employees have expressed concern about how to identify significant accomplishments and write self assessments which accurately reflect the employee's contribution. The purpose of this guide is to provide suggestions for identifying significant accomplishments, recording those accomplishments and writing self assessments which accurately reflect your performance and achievements and their impact on organizational mission and goals.

Purpose

The Employee Self Assessment is part of the Performance Appraisal process. The self assessment is your opportunity to emphasize your performance and accomplishments which contributed to the overall success of your organization's mission and goals.

Though self assessments are optional or voluntary, you are encouraged to submit a self assessment at the interim performance review (usually at the midpoint of the rating cycle) and at the end of the rating cycle as part of your annual performance appraisal. You are your best and first advocate!

Continued on next page

Purpose Continued

Your self assessment does not relieve your supervisor of the responsibility for writing an assessment of your contributions during the interim review and end of the annual appraisal cycle. Your self assessment serves to remind your supervisor of your significant accomplishments, and can provide an opportunity for further discussion between you and you supervisor about your performance.

You will not be rated based on your writing skills. However, it is important that your self assessment reflect the substance of what you accomplished during the rating period. This guide will help you:

1. Identify accomplishments which contributed to the achievement of your organization's mission and goals;

2. Record those accomplishments in a systematic manner; and

3. Write an assessment of your performance accomplishments which accurately reflects your contribution to the organization during the rating period.

Getting Started

Before you begin to record your performance accomplishments, you must have a clear understanding of what your supervisor expects of you. The performance plan includes not only your written critical elements and performance standards, but also other regulations, policies, procedures, guidelines, processes that you are expected to follow in performing your assignments. Be sure that you understand your critical elements and performance standards. Ask questions if you do not.

Continued on next page

Establishing a Recording System

Create a system for recording accomplishments. This can be hard copy or electronic, depending on what works best for you. Some suggestions include:

- E-mail Folder (create a separate folder for performance related items)
- Word Document, updated as needed
- Notes on Planner or Calendar
- File Folder(s) to maintain copies of documents

Establish a process for reviewing and recording your accomplishments on a regular basis, e.g., once a week. Make a note of significant items or put a copy into your file. Identify the critical element which is linked to the accomplishment.

What to Keep

It is not necessary to keep a running log of day to day work. When you do something that is different, difficult or demanding in some way, that type of accomplishment should be recorded. Make a note of any special challenges or difficulties you encountered and how you handled them.

Maintain a **file of work products** which meet the characteristics described above. These could be copies of reports, studies, advisories, operating procedures, training materials or other documents you developed.

Maintain a log of **statistical data or other metrics** which apply to your work. There may be an automated system for tracking productivity data for your organization, but you should also be aware of your personal productivity level and how you work compares with the standard.

Maintain copies of **letters, memos or email correspondence** which express thanks or praise for a service or product you provided. Correspondence which documents your role in resolving a complex or controversial issue should be maintained. Keep copies of appointments to special projects or teams.

What are Significant Accomplish-ments?

The following are characteristics of significant assignments:

- **Competing priorities**
- High visibility
- High level of difficulty
- Represent the Org/Unit in inter/intra agency forum(s)
- Require innovation
- Require problem solving skills

- **Org/Unit-wide impact**
- Lead special group/project
- Short deadlines
- Wide scope of coordination
- First time

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Writing Your Self Assessment

You will enter your self assessment for both your interim and annual appraisal into the automated Performance Appraisal Application Tool (PAA) via My Biz. You have a limited amount of space in which to enter your self assessment so it is important to focus on your most significant accomplishments for each of your critical elements.

- Begin by reviewing your critical elements and performance standards.
- Review your record of accomplishments and determine which are the most significant in terms of contribution to mission and organizational goals.
- Be sure that you have at least one accomplishment for each critical element. It is also possible that a single accomplishment may apply to more than one critical element.
- Use action verbs to describe what you did.
- Describe the results of your accomplishment.
- Describe the impact on mission or organizational goals.
- Note challenges you faced and how you met them.
- Be concise and specific—you are highlighting the significant contributions you made, not reporting on your daily work activities.

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Example:

- **Instead of stating**: I made six site visits during the rating period.

- **State**: I made six site visits which resulted in better communications between our office and the field on the Keystone Project.

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Example: I developed a new review procedure which was adopted by our division and has reduced the amount of time required to process contracts. **Key Point:** Describe what you did—not what was done by the entire team. Focus on results and impact on mission.

Continued on next page

Sample Self Assessment

1. Begin by reviewing your SMART Critical Element.

Critical Element. #1 Special Projects– Action Officer for the Annual Regional Director's Conference, scheduled 15 August 2009. Responsible for planning and organizing the annual Regional Director's conference for 100 executives. Responsible for independently researching and coordinating with internal and external agencies to procure lodging, conference facilities, IT audio/media support, an administrative team, and transportation; ensuring requirements do not exceed planned 15K budget. Develops a conference planner to bimonthly (Oct – Mar 09); biweekly (May – Jul 09); daily 1-14 Aug 09, update supervisor of progress. Report or refer complex situations or problems to supervisor within 2 days of incident, and daily email updates until resolved. Prepares and submits a written project after-action report within 5 workdays after the end of conference, and contract close-outs.

2. Write your Self Assessment.

Critical Element. #1 Special Projects – Action Officer for Annual Regional Director's Conference. I led the team which planned the annual regional directors' conference. I negotiated with the hotel for a reduced room rate and free meeting room. I drafted the meeting agenda which was approved by the Director. I arranged for guest speakers and assigned sponsors for each of them. I reviewed all materials prior to printing to ensure accuracy and proper format and arranged for reproduction despite reduced funding and a shortened deadline. I was publicly recognized during the conference and by a personal note from the Deputy Director for the outstanding administrative and logistical support provided by my team which contributed to the overall success of annual regional director's conference.

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Summary

- The employee self assessment is a critical part of the Performance Appraisal System.
- It provides an opportunity for you to highlight your significant accomplishments in terms of your critical elements and performance standards.
- The self assessment should focus on results, i.e., impact on organizational mission and goals.
- The substance of your self assessment is more important than your writing style.
- Your self assessment is reviewed by your rating official and is considered by your supervisor in preparing your annual assessment.
- The self assessment also provides an opportunity for communication between you and your rating official on your performance, on his or her performance expectations and on recommendations for improving your self assessment for the next rating period.
- If you have questions about writing your self assessment, contact your supervisor.

Attachment - SAMPLE ACTION VERBS

Self Assessments should always begin with an action. Most of the time, this action takes the form of a strong action verb. Below you'll find a short list of action verbs that can be used when writing your self assessment.

Accomplished	Compared	Ensured	Produced
Achieved	Compelled	Escalated	Projected
Acquired	Competed	Established	Promoted
Acted	Compiled	Exceeded	Prompted
Activated	Completed	Excelled	Propagated
Actuated	Composed	Expanded	Propelled
Adapts	Comprehend	Expedited	Quantified
Adhered	Computed	Exploited	Rallied
Adjusted	Conceived	Explored	Recognized
Administered	Concentrated	Fabricated	Rectified
Advised	Conducted	Facilitated	Refined
Agitated	Conformed	Focused	Reformed
Analyzed	Confronted	Forced	Regenerated
Anticipated	Considered	Formulated	Rehabilitated
Applied	Consolidated	Generated	Rejuvenated
Appraised	Consulted	Grasped	Renewed
Approved	Contacted	Helped	Renovated
Aroused	Continued	Honed	Reorganized
Arranged	Contract	Identified	Required
Articulated	Contributed	Ignited	Resolved
Assembled	Controlled	Impassioned	Revived
Asserted	Cooperate	Implemented	Sacrificed
Assessed	Coordinated	Improved	Scrutinized
Assigned	Created	Initiated	Sought
Assisted	Cultivated	Inspired	Solved
Assured	Delegated	Insured	Sparked
Attained	Demonstrated	Invigorated	Spearheaded
Attend	Deterred	Kindled	Stimulated
Authorized	Developed	Launched	Strengthened
Averted	Devised	Maintained	Strove
Bolstered	Displayed	Manipulated	Supervised
Brought	Dominated	Motivated	Supported
Build	Drove	Organized	Surpassed
Calculated	Elicited	Originated	Sustained
Capitalized	Embodied	Overcame	Transformed
Catalyzed	Emerged	Oversaw	Utilize
Chaired	Emulated	Performed	
Challenged	Encouraged	Perpetuated	
Clarified	Endeavored	Persevered	
Collaborate	Energized	Persuaded	
Collected	Enforced	Planned	
Commanded	Enhanced	Practiced	
Communicated	Enriched	Prepared	

In some cases, action verbs alone just cannot fully stress the strength or depth of someone's accomplishments. If you need to give action verbs an added boost, use an adverb to modify the verb. Most adverbs are real easy to pick out … they end with the last two letters "ly."

Actively	Creatively	Forcefully	Quickly
Aggressively	Decisively	Frantically	Relentlessly
Anxiously	Eagerly	Impulsively	Restlessly
Ardently	Energetically	Incisively	Spiritedly
Articulately	Enterprisingly	Innovatively	Spontaneously
Assertively	Enthusiastically	Intensely	Swiftly
Avidly	Expeditiously	Powerfully	Tenaciously
Boldly	Exuberantly	Promptly	Vigorously
Competitively	Feverishly	Prosperously	Vigilant
Compulsively	Fiercely	Provocatively	

Writing Self Assessment Worksheet

Based on one critical element, write a self assessment using the STAR format.

SITUATION: Describe the conditions under which you achieved your critical element.

TASK: Describe what you did during the year to create the results you achieved.

ACTION/ACTIVITY: Include actions/additional activities you completed that contributed to your results.

RESULT: Describe what you accomplished during this rating period to meet the stated goals and objectives of the critical element.

Record final self assessment narrative below:

TAB 3

NATIONAL GUARD TECHNICIAN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The proponent is NGB-J1-TN. The prescribing directive is TPR 430.

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ APPRAISAL YEAR: _____

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

1. AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. Section 430, Performance Management

2. PURPOSES: This form will be used for performance planning and results reporting documentation as required for the Performance Appraisal.

3. ROUTINE USES: This form will be used by employees, rating officials, and managers for documentation and communication purposes as required by the Technician Personnel Regulation 430.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF ANNUAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Cover Sheet: Complete the employee's name and the appraisal year.

PART A - Administrative Data.
1. Appraisal Period: Enter the start date and end date for the evaluation period. Typically this is the rating cycle start and end date; however, these dates can vary. Also enter the appraisal effective date usually one day after the close of the rating cycle.
2. Employee Name: Name of the employee (last, first, middle initial).
3. Social Security Number: Enter the last 4 digits of the SSN.
4. Position Title: Enter the title of the employee's position as of the appraisal period start date.
5. Pay Plan/Occupational Series/Grade/Step: Enter the employee's pay plan, occupational series, grade, and step as of the appraisal period start date.
6. Organization: Enter the name of the employee's organization.
7. Adjusted Salary: Enter employee's adjusted salary as of the date this form was generated or the appraisal period end date, whichever is earlier.
8. Duty Station: Enter the duty station where the employee works.
9. PAS Code/UIC: Enter employee's PAS Code or UIC

PART B - Performance Appraisal Documentation.
To be completed by all parties as appropriate to document the establishment of job objectives, interim review, closeout assessment, special purpose and annual assessment as required.

PART C - Performance Rating.
Rating computation based on the job objectives' optional weight, and objective rating. Used to determine the employee's final rating of record.

PART D - Relevant Organizational Mission/Strategic Goals.
Organizational Mission and Strategic Goals as they apply to an employee's performance.

PART E - Job Objectives.
List job objectives by which the employee will be evaluated during the appraisal period. Employees must have at least two ratable job objectives. Also document an employee's and rating official's written assessment of accomplishments for the interim and annual review based on the job objectives rating, and derived rating of record.**This page should be duplicated for each job objective given. Mark (x) the box to indicate type of appraisal. A form must be completed for the interim and annual assessments and closeout assessments when applicable. Complete a Special Purpose Rating when an employee receives an initial rating of record of 1 and has successfully completed a PIP and has brought the performance level to at least level 2.**

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

PART A – ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

1. APPRAISAL PERIOD: a. START DATE: b. END DATE: c. APPRAISAL EFFECTIVE DATE:	
2. EMPLOYEE NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial):	3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (Last 4 digits): XXX-XX
4. POSITION TITLE:	5. PAY PLAN/OCCUPATIONAL SERIES/GRADE/STEP:
6. ORGANIZATION:	7. ADJUSTED SALARY AS OF APPRAISAL PERIOD END DATE:
8. DUTY STATION:	9. PAS CODE OR UIC:

PART B – PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL DOCUMENTATION

	PERFORMANCE PLAN	INTERIM REVIEW	ANNUAL ASSESSMENT	OTHER ☐ Closeout ☐ Special Purpose
Employee Signature:	Click here to sign	Click here to sign	Click here to sign	Click here to sign
Date: (YYMMDD)				
Rating Official Printed Name:				
Signature:	Click here to sign	Click here to sign	Click here to sign	Click here to sign
Date: (YYMMDD)				
Communication Method (face-to-face, telephone, other)				
Higher Reviewer Printed Name:				
Signature:	Click here to sign	Click here to sign	Click here to sign	Click here to sign
Date: (YYMMDD)				

Plan Date Last Modified:

EMPLOYEE NAME: *(Last, First, Middle Initial)* _____ APPRAISAL YEAR: _____

PART C- PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE	WEIGHT	OBJECTIVE RATING
1	%	
2	%	
3	%	
4	%	
5	%	
6	%	
7	%	
8	%	
9	%	
10	%	

AVERAGE SCORE

RATING OF RECORD

Note: If Weights are used, the average score is weighted.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

EMPLOYEE NAME: *(Last, First, Middle Initial)* _____ APPRAISAL YEAR: _____

PART D - RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION / STRATEGIC GOALS

EMPLOYEE NAME: *(Last, First, Middle Initial)* _____ APPRAISAL YEAR: _____

PART E - JOB OBJECTIVES (Duplicate this page for each job objective)

JOB OBJECTIVE NO. TITLE: (Limited to 80 Characters) LAST MODIFIED ON:

JOB OBJECTIVE (Limited to 1,000 Characters)

WEIGHT: % OBJECTIVE RATING:

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT: ☐ OF ☐ INTERIM REVIEW ☐ ANNUAL ASSESSMENT ☐ Closeout ☐ Special Purpose

EMPLOYEE SELF-ASSESSMENT (Limited to 2,000 Characters)

RATING OFFICIAL ASSESSMENT (Limited to 2,000 Characters)