

**SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

SECTION: Employee Relations	Section: VII
	Subject: G
SUBJECT: Employee Performance Management System (EPMS)	Effective: 06/05/09
	Revised: 05/29/09

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EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EPMS)

Policy

It is the policy of South Carolina State University that every employee be made aware of the responsibilities of his or her job and be given an ongoing, objective, constructive evaluation of his or her performance.

Purpose and Scope

South Carolina State University's Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) for non-faculty employees shall function as an effective management tool within the University and provide a sound process for the evaluation of the performance and productivity of these employees. The EPMS is to be used for communicating duties, evaluating performance and encouraging improvement. All employees must be evaluated at least annually. The provisions of this policy address the appraisal of both probationary and covered employees (those covered under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act). Although not mentioned specifically in this policy, employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act shall be given annual performance appraisals. The purpose of the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) is as follows:

- A. To enhance efficiency and productivity through the planning of job duties on an annual basis by providing employees prior knowledge of the expectations of his or her supervisor.
- B. To provide information to employees and supervisors for use in work-related decisions such as recommendations for salary increases, promotions, reassignments, demotions, and terminations.
- C. To assist management in assigning work and delegating responsibilities based on a mutual understanding of the classified/unclassified employee's skills and abilities.
- D. To encourage continued growth and development of all employees.
- E. To identify training needs.

All EPMS evaluations shall become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file.

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Definitions

- A. **Established Review Date** – The employee’s review date as established in accordance with State Human Resources Regulations.
- B. **Universal Review Date** – The date prior to which all staff employee’s performance reviews are due. January 1 will be the universal review date for South Carolina State University. (Exceptions: “probationary” employees and “trial” employees.)
- C. **Short Year Review** – Any performance appraisal that evaluates an employee’s performance for a period of time less than twelve months. (Exceptions: “trial” period reviews and “warning notice” reviews.)
- D. **Short Year Planning Stage** – Any EPMS planning stage document covering a period of time less than 12 months. (Exceptions: “trial” period planning stages.)

Training

The University will provide training in the application of the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) Policy to supervisors and employees.

Levels of Performance

- A. There shall be four levels of performance to rate each job function and objective, and to rate overall performance.
 - 1. Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements (SE)

Work that is characterized by exemplary accomplishments throughout the rating period; performance that is considerably and consistently above the criteria of the job function.
 - 2. Exceeds Performance Requirements (E)

Work that is above the criteria of the job function throughout the rating period.
 - 3. Meets Performance Requirements (M)

Work that meets the criteria of the job function.
 - 4. Below Performance Requirements (B)

Work that fails to meet the criteria of the job function.
- B. Performance characteristics shall not be rated by the four levels of performance, but shall be given a rating of acceptable or unacceptable.
 - 1. Acceptable - Meets requirements
 - 2. Unacceptable - Fails to meet requirements

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Procedures

Performance appraisals shall be completed in a fair and objective manner. The appraisal shall measure actual work performance in relation to the performance requirements of the positions to which employees are assigned. Whenever an employee's job responsibilities change significantly, the appraisal document should be revised to reflect that change. Any action associated with the Employee Performance Management System which may potentially result in the reassignment, demotion or termination of an employee must be approved by the University's Office of Human Resource Management prior to implementation.

Components of the EPMS

The components of the EPMS are the planning stage, ongoing performance management, and the evaluation stage. South Carolina State University has combined the Position Description and the Employee Performance Management System into one document (PD/EPMS Form).

A. Planning Stage

At the beginning of the rating period the supervisor and the reviewer shall discuss the employee's requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage interview with the employee. The supervisor and employee should then determine and discuss the job functions, objectives and competencies/performance characteristics on which the employee will be evaluated at the end of the review period, after which they shall complete the planning stage. The planning stage shall be completed no later than four weeks after the beginning of the universal review date or entry into a position.

1. Job Functions

The supervisor and the employee shall determine the job functions (which include job duties and success criteria) by reviewing the employee's job functions outlined on the PD/EPMS form. If the job functions are not up-to-date, or if there is no position description, a new PD/EPMS form should be prepared and submitted to the Office of Human Resource Management for approval. The statement outlining the job function should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the supervisor. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the supervisor for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each job function shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance. It shall be mandatory for all supervisors to be evaluated on the timely completion of performance appraisal on each of his or her employees.

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2. Objectives

An objective should be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included on the employee's position description. The assignment of objectives to an employee is optional. If an objective is assigned, descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the supervisor should be identified. The information should specify the expectations of the supervisor for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance.

3. Competencies/Performance Characteristics

The competencies/performance characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those qualities, traits, or individual characteristics which enable employees to perform tasks and accomplish desired outcomes that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning document. Each competency/performance characteristic shall be defined in the planning stage and rated as "acceptable" or "unacceptable" in the evaluation stage. Competencies/performance characteristics shall not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating. A listing of suggested competencies/performance characteristics and their definitions are included at the end of this policy.

It shall be mandatory for all managers and supervisors to be rated on the performance characteristic of "promoting equal opportunity." Promoting equal opportunity includes such areas as:

- a) hiring, promotion, or placement.
- b) level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity.
- c) progress toward achieving a fully integrated and representative work force.
- d) contribution toward minority programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.

In those instances where the supervisor and employee disagree upon any items in the planning stage, the supervisor's decision shall be final.

The completed planning document shall be retained by the department to use in monitoring performance and for recording performance appraisal notes. After the planning stage is completed, the employee and supervisor should communicate periodically to ensure performance expectations are being met. As situations change, it may be necessary to adjust the planning stage. If this occurs, the supervisor and employee should date and initial the change to be reflected later in the final appraisal.

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B. Ongoing Performance Management

Throughout the rating period, supervisors and reviewers of the employee's performance are encouraged to communicate regularly with the employee about his or her performance. An unofficial mid-year review is encouraged to facilitate this communication. A supervisor may gather feedback to prepare the appraisal document and/or conduct unofficial appraisals more frequently than is required in this policy.

C. Evaluation Stage

Prior to the review date, the appraisal form shall be completed by the employee's supervisor who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The appraisal shall be reviewed by the next higher level supervisor (the reviewer), unless the supervisor is the President, prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee. The reviewer may attach additional comments to the appraisal, and in the attachment may take exception to any of the supervisor's appraisal points; however, the reviewer may not change the appraisal completed by the supervisor.

The final appraisal must bear the signature of the supervisor, reviewer and the employee, if possible. The employee's signature is an acknowledgment that the employee has received a copy and that the appraisal has been discussed. It does not indicate the employee's agreement with the contents of the appraisal. If any party refuses to sign the appraisal, a notation will be made of this on the performance appraisal. If possible, another supervisory employee should sign as witness to acknowledge that the party refused to sign the appraisal.

The employee shall be furnished with a copy of the performance appraisal and copies of all pertinent attachments including the form completed at the time of the planning stage and the final appraisal form.

Types of Appraisals

A. Annual Performance Appraisals

1. The performance of each employee who has met performance requirements during the probationary or trial period shall be appraised prior to January 1, the universal review date. Thereafter appraisals shall be conducted annually prior to January 1, the universal review date. The performance appraisal shall be completed no earlier than 90 days before the review date. The performance appraisal shall reflect the employee's performance for the full appraisal year. If there is a change of supervisors prior to the end of the review period, the outgoing supervisor should complete an unofficial appraisal for the period of performance observed and leave it for the new supervisor to use when conducting the annual appraisal. If the employee is reassigned, promoted or resigns within 90 days of his or her performance review date, the supervisor should complete an appraisal for the period of performance observed for filing in the permanent personnel file.

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2. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee shall receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default. A covered employee may not be issued an overall “Below Performance Requirements” appraisal at any time during the annual review period without following the “Substandard Performance Process.”
3. An employee on approved leave without pay for more than 30 consecutive workdays shall have the performance review date advanced one calendar day for each calendar day on leave without pay after those first 30 workdays. Any day for which the employee is paid shall not be counted in determining the number of workdays the employee is on leave without pay. After the employee returns from leave without pay, a short year planning stage and review will be completed (if necessary) in order to move the employee back to the universal review date (January 1).
4. A covered employee who transfers from another state agency to South Carolina State University to a position in the same class within six months or less of his or her review date shall have the performance review date advanced six months from the date of the transfer to the University. After the six month review, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date (January 1).

Performance appraisals should be submitted to the University’s Office of Human Resource Management at least one week prior to the performance review date.

B. Trial Period Appraisals

1. A covered employee who has been promoted, demoted, reclassified, reassigned, or transferred to a position or experiences an unclassified State title change to a position in which he or she has not held permanent status in the class or unclassified State title shall have the performance review date reestablished six months from the date of the action. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default and obtain permanent status in the new class.
2. Once an employee has completed a successful trial period and obtained permanent status in a class, the employee retains permanent status in the class throughout his or her continuous service. The six month trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee and approval of the University’s Human Resources Director prior to the end of the six month trial period. A copy of the notice should be sent to the University’s Office of Human Resource Management for inclusion in the employee’s official personnel file. When a trial period is extended, the performance review date shall be advanced one calendar day for each calendar day such extension is in effect, not to exceed 90 days.

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3. After satisfactory completion of the trial period, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date (January 1).
4. “The Substandard Performance Process” is not required to demote or downwardly reclassify an employee in trial status to the same class or a class in an equal or higher pay band from which promoted if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The employee in trial status may not grieve such demotion. The employee in trial status may not be terminated or demoted to a class in a lower pay band than from which promoted for performance reasons without following the “Substandard Performance Process.”

C. Probationary Period Appraisals

1. Each new employee in probationary status shall be rated prior to the completion of a twelve month probationary period. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default and obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the class. The probationary period may not be extended.
2. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date (January 1).
3. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee shall be terminated before becoming a covered employee. Until an employee has completed the probationary period and has a “Meets Performance Requirements” or higher overall rating on his or her performance evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act. Therefore, it is not required that the “Substandard Performance Process” be followed to terminate a probationary employee. The University’s Human Resources Director or designee must be consulted prior to the termination of a probationary employee.

Substandard Performance Process for Covered Employees

The following procedures shall be followed to ensure that covered employees receive adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving a “Below Performance Requirements” rating and being removed from the position. Supervisors must counsel with the Office of Human Resource Management for specific guidance before initiating the substandard performance process and during the warning period conferences with the employee.

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- A. The supervisor shall issue a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” prior to issuing a “Below Performance Requirements” rating to a covered employee. If during the performance period an employee is considered “Below Performance Requirements,” in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the supervisor shall provide the employee with a written “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance,” ([Form P-28](#)). The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee’s performance review date. However, if the warning notice is issued less than 30 days prior to the employee’s review date, the review date shall be advanced one calendar day for each day the warning notice is in effect.
- B. If the warning notice is issued less than 30 days before the employee’s review date causing the review date to roll forward and the employee receives a “Meets Performance Requirements” or above rating on all essential job functions/objectives which significantly impact performance noted in the warning notice, the employee may require a short year planning stage and a short year review in order to move the employee back to the universal review date.

The requirements of a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance” are:

1. The notice shall be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a “Warning Notice of Substandard Performance,” and signed by the employee (witnessed, if the employee refuses to sign).
 2. The notice shall list the job function(s) and/or objective(s) included on the employee’s planning document that are considered “Below Performance Requirements,” with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.
 3. The notice shall include the time period for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., termination, demotion, reassignment).
 4. The notice shall include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.
 5. A copy of the notice shall be given to the employee and placed in his or her official personnel file.
- C. The supervisor and employee should participate in drafting a work improvement plan. The work improvement plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations. In those instances where the supervisor and employee cannot agree upon the content of the work improvement plan, the supervisor’s decision shall be final.
- D. During the warning period, the employee and supervisor shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they shall discuss the employee’s progress. The supervisor is required to document the counseling sessions. A copy of this documentation shall be placed in the employee’s official personnel file and a copy shall be given to the employee.

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- E. If the employee’s performance is rated “Meets Performance Requirements” or above on all essential job functions or objectives, which significantly impact performance noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated “Below Performance Requirements,” on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, the employee shall be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned, demoted).
- F. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written appraisal prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default.
- G. If an employee has been issued two warning notices within a 365 day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function or objective, which significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365 day period, the employee shall be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the “Below Performance Requirements” appraisal. A warning is not required on the third recurrence.

The intent of the warning notice is to communicate clearly the problem areas, suggest improvements, and evaluate the employee’s improvement during the time specified.

Method for Determining the Overall Rating

A weighted system is used to reduce subjectivity in the evaluation. Numerical values are assigned to each level of performance. The supervisor and the employee will determine a weight (percentage) for each individual job function and objective. Performance characteristics will not be assigned a weight or numerical score, but will be given a rating of Acceptable (A) or Unacceptable (U).

South Carolina State University EPMS rating will be determined by the following weighted methods:

- A. Each weight factor is multiplied by the point value that corresponds to the assigned rating for the appropriate job function.
- B. The products of all calculations are then totaled.
- C. The resulting total is then divided by the total weight factor of 100.

The established point values and ranges corresponding to the levels of performance are as follows:

Job Function and/or Objective	Score	Score Range
Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements (SE)	4	3.50 to 4.00
Exceeds Performance Requirements (E)	3	2.50 to 3.49
Meets Performance Requirements (M)	2	1.50 to 2.49
Below Performance Requirements (B)	1	Below 1.50

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Example

The following example depicts how an overall evaluation rating is derived from the weighted system.

SECTION IV – ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

Job Functions	Performance Points (1,2,3, or 4)	X	Weighted (%) Points	= TOTAL
Job Function # 1	3		30	90
Job Function # 2	2		20	40
Job Function # 3	3		25	75
Job Function # 4	2		10	20
Total Weighted Points			85	

SECTION IV –MARGINAL JOB FUNCTIONS

Job Function # 1	2		5	10
Total Weighted Points			5	

OPTIONAL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Objective # 1	4		10	40
Total Weighted Points			10	

GRAND TOTAL FOR ALL SECTIONS

100	275	÷	100	=	2.75*
	(TOTAL)		(TOTAL WEIGHTED POINTS)		

***OVERALL RATING: 2.75** (Exceeds Performance Requirements)

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GENERAL COMPETENCIES/PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

Functional Qualities

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

Personal Qualities

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

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Interpersonal Qualities

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

SELECTED MANAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Management Functions

- A. Planning and Organizing
 - Organizes department's work to meet the mission of the agency.
 - Establishes a course of action for meeting an objective.
 - Allocates resources and personnel for best effect within budget limits.
 - Develops schedules for activities and projects.
 - Sets and observes priorities in order to avoid backlogged work.
 - Effectively matches short-term goals to contribute toward longer-range plans.
- B. Controlling
 - Monitors, regulates and facilitates employee's activities.
 - Establishes and maintains effective procedures to monitor and control activities within the employee's responsibility.
 - Monitors the progress and results of delegated assignments and keeps informed of developments in area of responsibility
- C. Delegating
 - Allocates responsibilities to employees to help develop their career potential.
 - Uses staff members effectively by allocating decisions and other responsibilities to the appropriate employees.
 - Provides clear instructions and leadership so delegated tasks are properly completed.
 - Establishes and empowers teams, where appropriate, to improve work systems and processes.

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D. Motivating

- Creates an organizational environment or climate in which employees can perform to the best of their ability.
- Establishes employee motivation by giving employees timely and regular recognition and feedback for work performed.
- Ensures that employee is aware of the possibility of advancement and growth.
- Develops a sense of trust, respect and responsibility.

E. Developing

- Develops a learning environment for both employee and supervisor by continuing education and training to stay abreast of the current state of the art in one's field.
- Makes training projections based on current trends and future goals.
- Determines learning and training needs. Allocates resources to provide necessary training.
- Selects appropriate learning activities.
- Promoting Equal Opportunity (Promoting agency affirmative action goals in such areas as hiring, promotion, or placement; level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity; progress toward achieving a fully integrated and representative work force; and contribution toward minority programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.) *All management/supervisory employees are required to be rated on this characteristic.*

Management Skills

A. Quality Focus

- Fosters culture of continuous improvement through ongoing assessment of agency processes and systems.
- Focuses on customer service.
- Promotes teamwork.
- Strives for quality work products.

B. Internal Environment Focus

- Knows the impact of decisions and actions on individuals and other parts of the agency.
- Maintains open communication with peers in other departments.
- Understands the agency's organization and methods.
- Knows and accepts the agency's mission, goals and objectives.

C. External Environment Focus

- Knows and allows for influences outside the agency. Anticipates factors that may alter the agency's mission.
- Stays abreast of events in government that could affect the agency.
- Regularly reads news and business-related publications to stay abreast of information which impacts the agency.

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D. Independence

- Acts on the basis of own thoughts, not the influence of others.
- Works without close supervision.
- Seeks approval and advice in situations outside personal authority and expertise.

E. Tenacity

- Overcomes obstacles to the attainment of a goal through sound problem solving techniques.
- Pursues goals until they are achieved or their attainment is no longer reasonable.

F. Initiative

- Initiates action.
- Actively attempts to influence events that can affect the achievement of goals.
- Does not readily accept circumstances that interfere with the attainment of goals.
- Regularly originates ideas and activities.

G. Self Control

- Maintains composure under provocative circumstances.
- Responds constructively to challenges and criticism.
- Maintains professional demeanor while dealing with difficult situations.

H. Stress Tolerance

- Performs well under pressure.
- Maintains composure, good judgment and adequate performance levels under pressure caused by deadlines, work load, opposition, and other causes.

I. Versatility

- Well-informed about a broad array of job-related interests.
- Keeps informed about other parts of the agency.
- Is aware of changes in the agency.
- Readily embraces appropriate changes to agency processes and systems.

J. Creativity

- Adopts innovative, imaginative solutions to work-related problems.
- Regularly generates innovative solutions and ideas.
- Encourages and acknowledges ideas from employees, co-workers and other sources.

K. Decisiveness

- Is ready to make decisions, judgments, and commitment.
- Identifies decisions that require research and deliberation.
- Effectively establishes priorities based on agency needs.
- Seeks necessary information and advice.
- When possible, allows ample time for fact-finding and deliberation.
- Makes decisions within the time limits required by the situation.
- Rejects tendencies to make premature decisions.

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L. Judgment

- Makes realistic and rational decisions.
- Bases decisions on logical assumptions, relevant facts and accurate data.
- Develops and analyzes alternative courses of action.
- Seeks advice and input of superiors, employees and other appropriate sources.