

Policy Number/Title:	4.43 Employee Performance Management System (EPMS)
Effective Since:	04/01/2025
Last Revision Approved:	01/22/2025
Responsible Office:	Human Resources

1. Scope:

Applicability

The provisions set forth below apply to both probationary employees and covered employees assigned to established classified and unclassified staff positions. A covered employee is a full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of an FTE position, who has completed the probationary period and has an overall rating higher than “Unsatisfactory” on the employee’s performance evaluation, and who has grievance rights. If an employee does not receive an evaluation before the performance review date the employee shall receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” performance rating by default. This definition does not include employees in temporary, temporary grant, or time limited positions who do not have grievance rights. Employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act will also be given annual performance appraisals following a process and procedure determined at the discretion of the highest-ranking administrative officer within the division.

2. Definitions:

Probationary Employee– A full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of an FTE position in the initial working test period of employment with the State of 12 months’ duration.

Covered Employee– A full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of an FTE position who has completed the probationary period and has a “meets expectations” or higher overall rating on the employees’ performance review and who has grievance rights. This definition does not include rehired retirees, and employees in temporary, temporary grant, time-limited, academic, academic administrator, and unclassified employees in Athletics.

Universal Review Date– The date prior to which all employees’ performance reviews are due. Winthrop University’s universal review date shall be March 31.



Employee Performance Plan– A planning document presented to an employee at the beginning of a rating period that documents the performance expectations for the review period.

Short Year Review– Any performance review that evaluates an employee’s performance for a period of time less than 12 months. (Exception: Performance Improvement Plan reviews.)

Short Year Employee Performance Plan– Any Employee Performance Plan covering a period of time less than 12 months.

3. Policy:

The performance of each classified and unclassified employee applicable to this policy should be evaluated at least once each year. Each employee will be evaluated on their performance in meeting the defined standards established for the position, as described herein.

4. Procedures:

1. Each employee’s performance should be evaluated by the immediate rating supervisor. After completing the review form, the rating supervisor should review and discuss the information included on the review form with the next higher level rating supervisor, hereinafter referred to as the reviewing officer, unless the immediate rating supervisor is the President. The reviewing officer may include additional comments on the review form and may express exception to any of the rating supervisor’s comments. If the reviewing officer and the rating supervisor cannot agree, the reviewing officer will make the final decision. The review form must bear the signatures of both the rating supervisor and the reviewing officer.
2. After the review form has been signed by the reviewing officer, the immediate rating supervisor will review and discuss the evaluation with the employee. The employee will be asked to certify that the information included on the review form has been reviewed with them by signing the form in the space provided. If the employee refuses to sign the form, the rating supervisor will make a note of the refusal on the form and will also record the date of the meeting.
3. It is the responsibility of the department head to ensure that performance reviews are conducted for all employees in the department in a timely manner and that each review form is completed and returned to the Office of Human Resources, Employee Diversity and



Wellness (“Human Resources”) on or before the date indicated on the form. If a performance review is not completed, reviewed, and signed by all parties by the review date, the employee shall receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default. Rating supervisors are required to follow the procedures herein to provide performance reviews for direct reports.

4. All performance reviews shall be maintained by Human Resources as part of the employee’s official personnel record.

B. Employee Performance Plan

Each employee shall be provided an Employee Performance Plan at the beginning of each rating period. For current employees, the Employee Performance Plan should be completed no later than 30 days from the start of the new review period. For new employees, the Employee Performance Plan should be completed no later than 30 calendar days from the employee’s start date. The Employee Performance Plan must be documented in writing and sets the expectations for the applicable performance review period and provides a guide for the discussion of performance expectations between the employee and their supervisor. To the extent possible, the creation of an Employee Performance Plan should be a collaborative process between the employee and their supervisor. In those instances where the supervisor and employee cannot agree upon the content of the Employee Performance Plan the supervisor's decision shall be final.

Employee Performance Plan Components

- Job Purpose: The job purpose should align the job purpose in the position description and provide a general summary of the job. Supervisors are encouraged to include the employee in discussions regarding updates or changes to the job purpose. However, the supervisor is responsible for drafting the final job purpose.
- Essential Job Responsibilities: An employee’s job responsibilities should align with the job duties included in the employee’s position description. These responsibilities are the primary, fundamental tasks or responsibilities that are central to the job. These responsibilities are recurring, critical for the performance of the job, and without them, the job cannot be effectively carried out.
- Additional Recurring Job Responsibilities: Additional job responsibilities should align with the job duties included in the employee’s position description. These responsibilities may be considered secondary to the essential job responsibilities and can often be modified, reassigned, or omitted without significantly affecting the overall performance of the job.
- Additional Non-recurring Components

The rating supervisor may choose to include one of the following additional components in the Employee Performance Plan in a year when a non-recurring goal/project/special assignment is assigned. An additional non-recurring component will be rated on the Annual Performance Review and may affect the overall performance rating.

- o Professional Developmental Goal (Optional): A non-recurring professional developmental assignment or training opportunity that is not included on the employee's position description.
- o Project (Optional): A non-recurring project that is not included on the employee's position description. Example: Employee will complete the implementation of a new filing system.
- o Special Assignment (Optional): A non-recurring assignment that is not included on the employee's position description. Example: Employee will serve as the interim team lead for three months.

Rating supervisors will be asked to answer the questions below with input from the employee for each job responsibility/professional development goal/project/special assignment:

- What are the expected performance results for the employee to be successful in performing this job responsibility? (May include recurring goals specific to the job responsibility and/or non-recurring professional development goal/project/special assignment).
- Are there any specific expectations or instructions related to this job responsibility that will help the employee achieve these results?

Example:

Job Responsibility: *Serves as the office receptionist; greets and routes visitors to the appropriate staff member; answers incoming phone calls, responds to general inquiries, and routes calls as appropriate; receives and responds to emails to the general office email account, responds when applicable and routes questions to appropriate staff member when necessary.*

What are the expected performance results for the employee to be successful in performing this job responsibility? *The employee is expected to respond to visitors, callers, and emails in a professional and courteous manner, to respond to emails within 24 hours of receipt, and to provide accurate information.*



Are there any specific expectations or instructions related to this job responsibility that will help the employee achieve these results? The employee is expected to be familiar with departmental policies and procedures, including updates or changes in order to provide accurate information.

C. Competencies

Each competency shall be defined in the planning stage document and rated as “Consistently Observed,” “Sometimes Observed,” or “Seldom Observed” on the Annual Performance Review. The performance characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance characteristics that are important to the successful performance of the job functions and objectives included in the Employee Performance Plan. The performance characteristics section shall not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating. It shall be mandatory for all rating supervisors to be rated on the performance characteristic of “evaluation.” (Evaluation includes the timely completion of the Annual Performance Review for subordinates.) A listing of competencies is included at the end of this policy.

Whenever an employee's job responsibilities change significantly, or changes to developmental goals, projects, and special assignments are needed, the Employee Performance Plan should be revised to reflect that change.

The Employee Performance Plan must be acknowledged by the employee and the rating supervisor. If any party refuses to acknowledge the Employee Performance Plan, this refusal should be documented and attached to the Employee Performance Plan. If possible, a witness should sign to acknowledge that the party refused to sign the Employee Performance Plan. An electronic signature or similar documentation is acceptable.

D. Annual Performance Review

Employees will be given an Annual Performance Review no more than 90 calendar days prior to the universal review date (March 31). The universal review period for covered employees is April 1 through March 31. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the universal review date, the employee shall receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default.

Prior to the Annual Performance Review the supervisor has the option to provide the opportunity for the employee to conduct a self-evaluation of their performance. Employees should be given two weeks to complete this self-evaluation. Employees who are asked to complete a self-evaluation will not include a performance rating as part of the self-evaluation process. If the employee fails to complete the self-evaluation within the required timeline the review will move forward without their input.



Rating supervisors may choose to request internal/external peer feedback for employees covered by this policy and determined to be part of the administration of a division or department. Prior approval to include peer feedback in the review process must be granted by the highest-ranking administrative officer in the division. The rating supervisor may identify no less than 5 and no more than 10 internal/external peer reviews from which to request feedback on the employee's performance for the rating period. Rating supervisors must apply the peer review process consistently among similarly situated employees in their area.

If a covered employee is on approved leave with or without pay for more than 30 consecutive workdays, the employee's performance review date may be advanced up to 90 days. A covered employee who receives a Performance Improvement Plan may have the performance review date advanced to coincide with the Performance Improvement Plan dates. A covered employee may not be issued an "Unsatisfactory" rating on any essential job responsibility or additional component included in the Employee Performance Plan at any time during the annual review period without following the Performance Improvement Plan process. Should the review date advance, the employee may require a short-year planning stage and short year review period in order to comply with Winthrop University's universal review date.

Rating Job Responsibilities, Professional Development Goals, Projects, Special Assignments, and Overall Performance

The supervisor is required to rate each job responsibility, professional development goal, project, or special assignment that was incorporated in the Employee Performance Plan. In addition, the supervisor is required to provide an overall performance rating. There will be five levels of performance to rate each job responsibility, professional development goal, project, and special assignment and to rate overall performance:

- **Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements – (Equates to “Exceptional Performance” in the State Employee Performance Management System.)** Work or performance that is considerably and consistently above the requirements of the job functions, success criteria, and performance characteristics.
- **Exceeds Performance Requirements - (Equates to “Successful Performance” in the State Employee Performance Management System.)** Work or performance that is above the requirements of the job functions, success criteria, and performance characteristics.
- **Meets Performance Requirements – (Equates to “Successful Performance” in the State Employee Performance Management System.)** Work or performance of job



functions, success criteria, and performance characteristics that is routinely satisfactory.

- **Needs Improvement– (Equates to “Successful Performance” in the State Employee Performance Management System.)** Work or performance that requires improvement in certain areas while other job functions, success criteria, or performance characteristics may be satisfactory.
- **Unsatisfactory - (Equates to “Unsuccessful Performance” in the State Employee Performance Management System.)** Work or performance that fails to meet the requirements of the job functions, success criteria, or performance characteristics.

Rating Competencies

During the Annual Performance Review the rating supervisor may provide written comments concerning the employees’ demonstration of competencies. In addition to these written comments the rating supervisor must indicate one of the following concerning the employees’ demonstration of the competencies identified in the Employee Performance Plan:

- Consistently observed
- Sometimes observed
- Seldom observed

Summary Comments

Both the supervisor and the employee are provided the opportunity to provide summary comments concerning the employee’s performance during the review period.

Acknowledgements

The Annual Performance Review must be acknowledged by the employee, the rating supervisor, and the reviewing officer. If any party refuses to acknowledge the Annual Performance Review, the refusal should be documented and the documentation maintained with the Annual Performance Review.

All performance reviews will be maintained by Human Resources and will become a permanent part of the employees’ records. The employee may obtain a copy of the performance review from the online EPMS management system or from Human



Resources.

E. Additional Information

Establishing and Maintaining Review Dates and Plan Types

- **Annual Performance Review - Winthrop University's universal review date (March 31) is the date prior to which all Annual Performance Reviews are due, except those in probationary status.**
- Probationary Employee Performance Plan -Completed for new employee within 30 days of the hire date.
- Probationary Review - Completed prior to twelve (12) months from the date following an original hire.
- Short Year Employee Performance Plan – Completed immediately following satisfactory completion of the probationary review.
- Short Year Review – Completed prior to the universal review date (March 31).
- **A covered employee who transfers to Winthrop University from another state agency shall have the performance review date adjusted to Winthrop's universal review date (March 31). This may require a Short Year Employment Performance Plan and Short Year Review.**

Ongoing Performance Management

A rating supervisor is encouraged to continue to provide performance feedback to employees throughout the review period. An unofficial mid-year review is encouraged to facilitate this communication between rating supervisors and employees and to assess progress.

F. Probationary Period

Each new employee in probationary status shall be rated prior to the completion of twelve (12) months from the date following an original appointment. This twelve (12) month probationary period is a working test period which may be used to determine whether or not the employee is performing satisfactorily in the position. An employee who receives a rating above "Unsatisfactory" on all essential job responsibilities and additional components included in the Employee Performance Plan prior to the end of the



probationary period will obtain covered status as a state employee and permanent status in that classification. The probationary period may not be extended. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, an employee may receive a Short Year Employee Performance Plan and a Short Year Review in order to move the employee to the universal review date. A Short Year Employee Performance Plan and a Short Year Review will occur between the time a newly hired employee completes their initial 12-month probationary period and the next universal review date (March 31).

If a probationary employee does not receive a performance review prior to the end of the twelve (12) month probationary period, the employee will receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default and obtain covered status as a state employee and permanent status in the classification. 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 rating higher than “Unsatisfactory” on all essential job responsibilities and additional components included in the Employee Performance Plan, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act; therefore, the University is not required to follow the Performance Improvement Plan Process to terminate a probationary employee.

G. Performance Improvement Plan

A covered employee is entitled to a notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before being removed from the position. Rating supervisors must work with Human Resources for approval of and assistance with developing and issuing a Performance Improvement Plan for any covered employee. A covered employee may not be issued a rating of “Unsatisfactory” for any job responsibility, developmental goal, project, or special assignment that significantly impacts performance or an overall rating of “Unsatisfactory” without following the Performance Improvement Plan process. A formal Performance Improvement Plan should be issued when it becomes evident that feedback and coaching have been unsuccessful. A Performance Improvement Plan can be issued at any time during the review period.

Performance Improvement Plan Process

To ensure employees have adequate notice and opportunity to improve performance the following process shall be followed:

- 1. The written** Performance Improvement Plan will provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The Performance Improvement Plan may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the improvement period may not extend beyond the employee’s review date. However, the review date may be advanced to coincide with the Performance Improvement Plan dates. Should the review date advance



and the employee receives a rating of “Needs Improvement” or higher on all essential job responsibilities, developmental goals, projects, or special assignments that significantly impact performance noted in the Performance Improvement Plan, the employee may require a short-year planning stage and short-year review in order to bring the employee back to the universal review date.

2. The Performance Improvement Plan should include how to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance-related recommendations. In instances where the rating supervisor and employee cannot agree upon the content of the Performance Improvement Plan, the rating supervisor's decision will be final.

3. During the Performance Improvement Plan period, the employee and the rating supervisor will have regularly scheduled meetings during which they will discuss the employee's progress. Documentation is required to verify that these counseling sessions were held. Copies of this documentation will be placed in the employee's official personnel file in Human Resources and given to the employee upon request.

4. If the employee receives an "Unsatisfactory" rating on any essential job responsibility, developmental goal, project, or special assignment that significantly impacts performance as noted in the Performance Improvement Plan by the end of the improvement period, the employee will be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned, demoted). If the employee's performance is rated as “Needs Improvement” or higher on all essential job responsibilities, developmental goals, projects, or special assignments that significantly impact performance as noted in the Performance Improvement Plan by the end of the improvement period, employment will continue.

5. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written evaluation prior to the end of the Performance Improvement Plan period or the employee will receive a “Meets Performance Requirements” rating by default.

6. If an employee has been issued two Performance Improvement Plans within a 365-day period and performance drops to a unsatisfactory level on any essential job responsibility, developmental goal, project, or special assignment that significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365-day period, the employee will be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such unsatisfactory performance by issuing the “Unsatisfactory” rating. A Performance Improvement Plan is not required on the third occurrence.

7. Required Components of the Performance Improvement Plan:

- The notice must be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a Performance Improvement Plan, and signed by the employee. If the employee refuses to sign, the



employee's refusal must be documented and signed by a witness.

- The notice must list the job responsibilities, developmental goals, projects, or special assignments that significantly impact performance that are considered "Unsatisfactory" with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job responsibility, developmental goal, project, or special assignment determined to be "Unsatisfactory."
- The notice must include the time period provided for improvement and the consequences if improvement does not occur (i.e., termination, demotion, reassignment).
- The notice must include a plan for meetings to discuss the employee's progress during the improvement period.
- The notice must be approved by Human Resources.
- **A copy of the notice must be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file in Human Resources.**

Performance Improvement Plan for Periodic Job Responsibilities, Developmental Goals, Projects, or Special Assignments

If an employee exhibits poor performance in an essential job responsibility, developmental goal, project, or special assignment that is essential to their position, but is not ongoing, occurs only at specific times of the year, etc., a Performance Improvement Plan may be issued with a delayed start date.

Examples:

- *An employee is responsible for annual reporting that occurs in September of each year.*
- *The employee provides inaccurate information in the September 2024 reporting, but the reporting is not due again until September 2025. It is impossible for the employee to demonstrate improved performance until they begin the process of developing and submitting the 2025 reports.*
- *The employee is issued a Performance Improvement Plan with a delayed start date of July 2025 that coincides with the time frame the responsibility begins for which the employee exhibited poor performance.*

EPMS Performance Characteristics/Competencies

Functional Qualities



Self-Management: Works with minimal supervision, manages own time effectively, maintains control over all current projects/responsibilities. Follows up on all relevant issues.

Technical Competence: Possesses necessary knowledge to effectively perform job and able to apply what he/she has learned about his/her job. Acquires new knowledge/skills/abilities as required by the job.

Quantity of Work: The extent to which the employee produces an acceptable amount of work in order to meet schedules and deadlines.

Quality of Work: The extent to which the employee neatly, thoroughly, and accurately completes job assignments according to established standards of quality. Continuously improves quality of work.

Problem Analysis: Able to identify problems and relevant issues and breaks problem into components. Sees relationships and alternative solutions and arrives at sound conclusions through a logical process.

Accuracy of Work: The degree to which the employee makes mistakes or errors that require corrections.

Time Management: Employee is prompt in reporting for work and effectively and efficiently uses his/her time to accomplish his/her job tasks.

Safety: Follows established safety practices and corrects unsafe work practices on the job.

Concentration: Able to put aside distractions and stays with a job until complete. Able to stick to assignments and get results in spite of difficulties.

Responsibility: Asks for work after completing assignments and does not make excuses but addresses problems squarely. Offers action plans to resolve problems and suppresses self-forgiving tendencies regarding so-called uncontrollable elements.

Personal Qualities

Judgment: Able to reason, compare, understand, and think rationally on the job. Makes quality work-related decisions based on sound conclusions/data. Able to separate facts from opinions.

Leadership: Employee can be relied upon to guide others to the accomplishment of objectives/responsibilities, to promote teamwork, and to resolve problems.



Initiative: Starts assignments without prompting and independently contributes ideas and projects. Sees and acts upon new opportunities. Thinks and acts independently and promptly addresses problems.

Dependability/Reliability: Employee can be relied upon to meet work schedules and fulfill job responsibilities and commitments. Meets deadlines and follows instructions.

Interpersonal Qualities

Customer Service: To effectively and efficiently meet the needs of those served by continually assessing performance based on customer feedback.

Listening Skills: Asks meaningful questions and listens closely and respectfully before offering comments.

Acceptance: Gains confidence of others and earns respect of subordinates, peers and superiors. Values diversity and respects opposing opinions.

Teamwork: Degree to which one works effectively and cooperatively with others and other departments in achieving organizational goals. Degree of responsiveness to organizational needs.

Adaptability: Employee can adapt to job or organizational changes. Readily accepts new responsibilities and assignments.

Communication Ability: Ability of employee to present accurate information to other employees, peers, and superiors.

For Managerial Supervisory Personnel Only

Goal Accomplishment: quality and quantity of accomplishment toward set goals; also consider responsiveness to organizational goals.

Conceptualization and Flexibility in Problem Resolution: ability to conceive potential problem situations and take positive action. Consider situations not normally part of routine duties.

Supervision/Leadership: quality of leadership in obtaining employee cooperation and influencing leadership behavior.

Planning and Delegation: ability to plan and coordinate activities, manage personal and employee time effectively, distribute workloads, and delegate responsibility and authority



without loss of supervisory control.

Employee Development: provide guidance, counseling, and meaningful training and instruction in development of employee skills and potential.

Evaluation: timely completion of valid consistent evaluations of subordinates. Also consider attitude, preparedness, and approach to employee evaluation.

5. Resources:

Employee Performance Appraisals Guide:

<https://www.winthrop.edu/hr/employee-performance-appraisal.aspx>

6. History of Revisions:

06/02/2025	Minor Revisions
04/01/2025	Minor Revisions
01/22/2025	Minor Revisions
01/01/2015	Policy first established

7. Approvals:

Responsible Officer Signature/Date:

Vice President/Senior Administrator Signature/Date:

President Signature/Date: