

Explanation of Scoring for the Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool (SES-PAAT)

This document explains what is required for an agency to score well on the SES-PAAT and meet certification criteria. The information presented here defines and describes the highest point score possible for each SES-PAAT question and criterion.

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In addition to the SES-PAAT itself, agencies also must submit a certain number of performance plans so OPM can verify statements made by the agency regarding evaluation techniques, alignment, measurable results, balanced measures of employee and customer perspectives, and accountability. For agencies with systems with provisional certification or for first-time requests for certification, agencies are to provide with its submission 10 percent of its performance plans, or 20 plans, whichever is more. Agencies with fewer than 20 covered executives must submit all performance plans. For agencies with systems with full certification, the number of plans agencies must submit to OPM with their SES-PAAT is—

- 5 plans when the agency has less than 100 SES members,
- 10 plans when the agency has 100 through 1,000 SES members, and
- 20 plans when the agency has over 1,000 SES members.

To assist agencies with the review of the various documents that inform the SES-PAAT, we have created subparts as follows:

- Subpart I — those questions that address the system description,
- Subpart II — those questions that address the content of the performance plans, and

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Note: For agencies with full certification, if **one or more** of the performance plans in the small sample provided with the SES-PAAT does not meet a criterion, no points will be assigned for the response to the applicable certification question

- Subpart III — those questions that address the other documentation required.

Subpart I

Accountability (2 points possible)

6b. Does the appraisal system require executive performance plans to include a critical element that holds executives accountable for the performance management of subordinates?

- The agency earns full points if the appraisal system requires executive performance plans include a critical element that holds them accountable for aligning subordinate performance plans with organizational goals **AND** for rigorously appraising employee performance (for example, employees were appraised realistically against clear, measurable standards of performance and within established time frames).

Alignment (2 points possible)

7a. Does the system description require SES member performance plans to clearly link to the agency's mission, GPRA strategic and annual performance goals, program and policy objectives, and/or budget priorities?

- The agency earns full points if the system description requires executive performance plans link to agency goals, etc.

Measurable Results (2 points possible)

8a. Does the system description require that each executive's performance plan counts measurable results as at least 60% of the summary rating? (1 point possible)

- The agency earns the point if the system description includes a statement requiring executive performance plans to include results as at least 60% of the summary rating.

8b. Does the system description include a summary rating derivation formula such that each SES member's performance plan counts measurable results as at least 60 percent of the summary rating, or a derivation methodology where measurable results clearly drive the summary rating? (1 point possible)

- The agency earns the point if the system description includes a derivation formula that counts measurable results as at least 60% of the summary rating or a derivation methodology where measurable results drive the summary rating.

Balanced Measures (2 points possible)

9a. Does the appraisal system require executive performance plans to take into consideration both customer and employee perspectives?

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- The agency earns full points if the system description requires executive performance plans to include a critical element(s) that incorporates both customer and employee perspectives.

Note: Employee or customer perspective is evident if there is some kind of requirement for or emphasis on two-way communication with employees and customers, so that these perspectives are heard by the executives.

Consultation (3 points possible)

10a. Does the appraisal system require executives to be consulted in the development of the executive's performance plan?

- The agency earns full points if the appraisal system description requires that executives be consulted in the development of their performance plans.

Training (2 points possible)

13a. Does the appraisal system description require executives to receive training on the requirements and operation of the agency's pay-for-performance system?

- The agency earns full points if the appraisal system requires executives be trained on the operations of the system.

Subpart II

Methodology (5 points possible)

6a. Reviewing Performance Plans.

- The agency earns full points if it conducted a review of a **representative** sample of performance plans that includes —
 - 100% of the plans for agencies with less than 100 SES members,
 - at least 50% of all plans for agencies with 100-1,000 SES members, or
 - at least 25% of all plans for agencies with greater than 1,000 SES members

Note: A representative sample is one that includes performance plans that represent the entire SES population, including performance plans from across the entire agency and across all locations and components, plans that cover a large number of executives, and plans for positions at various levels of responsibility and for positions that represent different types of work (line versus administrative).

Accountability (3 points possible)

6c and ci. Do executive performance plans actually include a critical element that holds executives accountable for the performance management of subordinates? If yes, how many and what percentage of supervisory executives have this element included in their performance plans?

- The agency earns full points if it reports that 90% or more of executives have performance plans that include a critical element that holds executives accountable for

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the performance management of subordinates, to include aligning subordinate plans with organizational goals **and** the rigorous appraisal of employees, **AND** all the performance plans submitted with the SES-PAAT include that critical element.

Note: Ensure both parts of accountability are evident in the sample performance plans, that is, the critical element requires both aligning subordinate performance plans with organizational goals and the rigorous appraisal of employees.

Alignment (8 points possible)

7b. How many and what percentage of SES members have performance plans that provide a clear, transparent link to organizational goals?

- The agency earns full points if it reports that the number of executives with a clear link to organizational goals in their performance plans is 90% or over, **AND** all the performance plans submitted by the agency with the SES-PAAT show a clear link to organizational goals.

Note: For agencies with full certification, if **one or more** of the performance plans in the small sample provided with the SES-PAAT do not meet the alignment criterion, no points are assigned

Measurable Results (13 points possible)

8c. Do executive performance plans include a summary rating derivation formula that counts measurable results as at least 60 percent of the summary rating? (3 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if its appraisal form includes the derivation formula referenced in the system description (scored in 8a); **AND** the derivation formula counts measurable results as at least 60% of the summary rating or measurable results clearly drive the summary rating.

8d. How many and what percentage of executive plans contain measurable results that are observable and/or demonstrable, and count them as at least 60 percent of the summary rating? (10 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if it reports that 90% or more of executive performance plans include measurable results that count as at least 60% of the summary rating **AND** all the performance plans submitted by the agency with the SES-PAAT meet the measurable results criterion.

Note: The measurable results criterion is evident when the results are measurable, observable, and verifiable. Results should have specific targets. If results cannot be measured using numbers (efficiency or accuracy rates, survey results, number completed), a description of what constitutes Fully Successful performance should be described, usually including the timeliness and quality of the results. [For agencies with full certification, if **one or more** of the performance plans in the small sample provided with the SES-PAAT do not meet the measurable results criterion, no points are assigned.]

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Balanced Measures (8 points possible)

9b. How many and what percentage of executives have *performance plans* that take into consideration both customer and employee perspectives?

- The agency earns full points if it reports that the number of executives with both customer and employee perspectives in their performance plans is 90% or over, **AND all** the performance plans submitted by the agency with the SES-PAAT include both customer and employee perspectives.

Note: For agencies with full certification, if **one or more** of the performance plans in the small sample provided with the SES-PAAT do not meet the balanced measures criterion, no points are assigned.

Consultation (2 points possible)

10b. How many and what percentage of executive performance plans indicate they were developed in consultation with the executive?

- The agency earns full points if the performance plan includes a signatory line on the form that indicates the executive was consulted in the development of the performance plan, not just a discussion.

Subpart III

Organizational Assessment and Guidelines (10 points possible)

11a. and 11ai. Does the agency assess organizational performance? How? Provide sample documentation. (2 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if it provides a thorough description of how it assesses organizational performance, and includes PAR and other performance information and/or has developed a scorecard for components that incorporates all assessments it has conducted of organizational performance.

11a.ii. Explain how organizational performance was communicated throughout the organization. (2 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if it has a systematic process for communicating organizational performance to all executives. Communication could include an automated system, a scorecard, a memo, all-executive staff meetings, off-site strategy meetings, or another method that demonstrates more communication than merely posting the PAR on the agency web site.

11b, 11bi. Did an agency official provide guidelines to executives, rating and reviewing officials, and Performance Review Boards (PRBs) about how organizational performance should be considered when deciding ratings and awards? Provide a copy. (6 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if it provides guidelines to executives, rating and reviewing officials, and PRBs in writing that include information about organizational

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performance and provide specific guidelines on how to take that performance into consideration when determining ratings, pay adjustments, and awards, **AND** the agency provides a copy.

Oversight (5 points possible)

12a and ai. Is there a high-level agency official who has oversight of the results of ratings, pay adjustments, and awards under this system? What is the title? (4 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if the appraisal system describes the oversight process and identifies a specific position that has responsibility for the oversight of the system.

Note: Even if the system description identifies an official having oversight of the results of the system, if the official is not located in a headquarters position or does not have authority over all components of the agency, no points are assigned.

12b, bi, and bii. Excluding any previous OPM compliance evaluation, has this official verified that the system has been evaluated by the agency within the last 3 years to determine compliance with law and regulation, and to determine its effectiveness at making distinctions in levels of performance for pay purposes? (1 point possible)

- The agency earns the point if the oversight official verifies that the system has been evaluated within the last 3 years.

Training (3 points possible)

13b and bi. Has the agency conducted training or held briefings for its executives on the pay-for-performance system? Explain. (2 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if it provides ample evidence it has conducted training (such as slides, attendee list, or course description), **AND** if the agency can verify that over 75% of its executives received the training.

13c. Have the rating distribution and the average pay adjustments and average award amounts been communicated to executives? Explain method. (1 point possible)

- The agency earns the point if it provides evidence (for example, slides, a memo, an email) that the agencywide rating distribution, average pay adjustments and average award amounts have been communicated to executives.

Performance Differentiation (15 points possible)

14a. The rating distribution for the two most recent appraisal periods. (10 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if the most current 2 years of rating distributions indicate the agency has reserved the highest rating (e.g., Outstanding or equivalent) level for identifying its top performers, **AND** if the distributions appear to appropriately reflect

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organizational performance as determined by the PAR and other organizational performance indicators as reported in section 11, **AND** if the agency provides an adequate description of how the rating distribution reflects organizational performance as reported in sections 11 and 14b.

14b. Explain how the rating distribution of executives, reflects organizational performance. *(5 points possible)*

- The agency earns full points if it reports the percent of PAR goals met and exceeded or not met, the results of the organizational assessments as described in Question 11a and 11ai, and/or any other organizational performance information, **AND** the agency provides a convincing, detailed justification for the rating distribution in relation to organizational performance.

Pay Differentiation (15 points possible)

15a. Pay adjustments, performance awards, other cash awards, Presidential Rank awards, and aggregate salaries reported to OPM through the annual data call show meaningful distinctions based on performance. *(10 points possible)*

- The agency earns full points if (a) the correlation coefficient of the rating and performance compensation (that is, pay adjustments and performance awards) is 0.700 or higher, **OR** (b) the pay and awards data show the agency makes distinctions in pay **AND** the average performance compensation is higher for executives rated Outstanding than for those rated Exceeds, and Exceeds is higher than Fully Successful; **AND** the data does not include any violations of pay and awards limitations.

15b. What is the agency's pay policy? *(5 points possible)*

- The agency earns full points if it provides a written pay policy and the policy describes clear differentiations in performance compensation (that is, pay adjustments and performance awards) based on the final summary rating and addresses all regulatory requirements found at 5 CFR 534.404(g) and 534.405.

Rating

Meets full certification criteria when all threshold points for full certification are met and the minimum score is 90 points
Meets provisional certification criteria when all threshold points for provisional certification are met and the minimum score is 71 points
With a score of 70 or below, and when all threshold items for provisional are not met, the system has serious flaws in its design and implementation. Significant improvements must be made before certification can be considered.