

Explanation of Scoring for the Senior Level (SL) and Scientific and Professional (ST) Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool (SL/ST-PAAT)

This document explains what is required for an agency to score maximum points on the SL/ST-PAAT while meeting certification criteria. The information presented here defines and describes the highest point score possible for each SL/ST-PAAT question and criterion.

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In addition to the SL/ST-PAAT itself, agencies must submit a certain number of performance plans so OPM can verify statements made by the agency regarding its review techniques, alignment, measurable results, and balanced measures of employee and customer perspectives and accountability, when applicable.

- For agencies with SL/ST employee appraisal systems with provisional certification or for first-time requests for certification, agencies must provide with their submissions 10 percent of SL/ST performance plans, or 20 plans, whichever is more. Agencies with fewer than 20 covered SL/ST employees must submit all performance plans.
- For agencies with SL/ST employee appraisal systems with full certification, the number of plans to submit with the agency SL/ST PAAT is 10 percent of SL/ST performance plans, or 5 plans, whichever is more. Agencies with fewer than 5 covered SL/ST employees must submit all performance plans.

To assist agencies with the review of the various documents that inform the SL/ST-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
- Subpart III — those questions that address the other documentation required.

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Note: An agency may submit for certification an SL/ST appraisal system, which as defined in regulation includes both the system description and its relevant appraisal program. For example, if an agency has a broad, flexible system approved by OPM in accordance with subpart B of 5 CFR 430 that covers all non-SES employees, the agency can establish a program under that system to cover its SL/ST employees. OPM would be able to certify the system as it is applied to the SL/ST employees under the program (as long as it meets the certification criteria). However, if the agency's OPM-approved system does not allow multiple programs or does not allow for the options necessary to meet certification criteria, the agency will need to design a new system for the SL/ST employees and request OPM approval before the system can be certified.

Subpart I

Accountability (2 points possible)

6b. Does the appraisal system require SL/ST employee performance plans to include a critical element that holds supervisory SL/ST employees accountable for the performance management of subordinates?

- The agency earns full points if the appraisal system requires supervisory SL/ST employee 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). This question is not applicable if the agency has no supervisory SL/ST employees, and agencies must indicate which SL/ST performance plans apply to supervisors.

Alignment (2 points possible)

7a. Does the system description require SL/ST employee 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 SL/ST employee performance plans link to agency goals, etc.

Measurable Results (2 points possible)

8a. Does the system description require that each SL/ST employee's performance plan counts measurable results as at least 60% of the summary rating?

(1 point possible)

- The agency earns the point if the SL/ST system description requires SL/ST employee performance plans include measurable results that comprise at least 60% of the performance plan and count toward at least 60% of the summary rating.

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8b. Does the system description include a summary rating derivation formula such that each SL/ST employee'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 SL/ST 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 supervisory SL/ST employee performance plans to take into consideration both customer and employee perspectives?

- The agency earns full points if the SL/ST system description requires supervisory SL/ST employee performance plans include a critical element(s) that incorporates both customer and employee perspectives. Performance plans for nonsupervisory SL/ST employees only need to include customer perspective. Agencies must indicate which SL/ST performance plans apply to supervisors.

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 and considered by the SL/ST employee.

Consultation (3 points possible)

10a. Does the appraisal system encourage SL/ST employee participation in the development of the SL/ST employee's performance plan?

- The agency earns full points if the appraisal system description encourages that SL/ST employees be involved in the development of their performance plans.

Training (2 points possible)

13a. Does the appraisal system description require SL/ST employees to receive training on the requirements and operation of the agency's pay policy and performance system?

- The agency earns full points if the SL/ST appraisal system requires SL/ST employees be trained on the operations of the system and its pay policy.

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 50 percent of its SL/ST performance plans if the agency has 100 or more SL/ST employees, and 100 percent of plans if an agency has less than 100 SL/ST employees.

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Note: A representative sample is one that includes performance plans that represent the entire SL/ST employee population, including performance plans from across the entire agency and across all locations and components, plans that cover a large number of SL/ST employees, 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 SL/ST employee performance plans actually include a critical element that holds supervisory SL/ST employees accountable for the performance management of subordinates? If yes, how many and what percentage of supervisory SL/ST employees have this element included in their performance plans?

- The agency earns full points if it reports that 90% or more of its supervisory SL/ST employees have performance plans that include a critical element that holds them accountable for the performance management of subordinates, to include aligning subordinate plans with organizational goals **and** the rigorous appraisal of employees, **AND all** the supervisory SL/ST performance plans submitted with the SL/ST-PAAT include that critical element. Performance plans for nonsupervisory SL/ST employees do not need to include this critical element. Agencies must indicate which performance plans apply to supervisors.

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, SL/ST employees have performance plans that provide a clear, transparent link to organizational goals?

- The agency earns full points if it reports that the number of SL/ST employees with a clear link to organizational goals in their performance plans is 90% or over, **AND** the performance plans submitted by the agency with the SL/ST-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 SL/ST-PAAT does not meet the alignment criterion, no points are given.

Measurable Results (13 points possible)

8c. Do SL/ST employee 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

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measurable results as at least 60% of the summary rating or where measurable results clearly drive the summary rating.

8d. How many and what percentage of SL/ST employee performance plans contain measurable results that are observable and/or demonstrable, comprise at least 60% of the plan, 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 SL/ST employee performance plans include measurable results that comprise at least 60% of the performance plan and count as at least 60% of the summary rating **AND** the performance plans submitted by the agency with the SL/ST-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 included, usually with 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 SL/ST-PAAT does not meet the measurable results criterion, no points are given.

Balanced Measures (8 points possible)

9b. How many and what percentage of SL/ST employees have performance plans that take into consideration both customer and employee perspectives?

- The agency earns full points if it reports that the number of supervisory SL/ST employees with both customer and employee perspectives in their performance plans is 90% or over, **AND** the supervisory SL/ST performance plans submitted by the agency with the SL/ST-PAAT include both customer and employee perspectives. Nonsupervisory SL/ST plans need only include customer perspective. Agencies must indicate which performance plans apply to supervisors.

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

Consultation (2 points possible)

10b. How many and what percentage of SL/ST employee performance plans indicate they were developed with the employee's participation?

- The agency earns full points if the performance plan includes a signatory line on the form that indicates the SL/ST employee was involved in the development of the performance plan.

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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.

11aii. 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 SL/ST employees. Communication could include an automated system, a scorecard, a memo, 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 SL/ST employees, rating and reviewing officials, and review panels 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 SL/ST employees, rating and reviewing officials, and review panels in writing that include information about organizational performance and provide specific guidance 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 official's title? (4 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if the appraisal system addresses oversight 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 given.

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)

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

Training (3 points possible)

13b and bi. Has the agency conducted training or held briefings for its SL/ST employees on the pay policy and 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 SL/ST employees received the training.

13c. Have the rating distribution and the average pay adjustments and average award amounts been communicated to SL/ST employees? Explain method.

(1 point possible)

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

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, submitted in the annual data report to OPM, 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 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 SL/ST employees 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, including a comparison of these results to the ratings given, **OR** 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.

(10 points possible)

- The agency earns full points if (a) the correlation coefficient of the rating and performance compensation (that is, pay adjustments and rating-based awards) is 0.700 or higher, when applicable, **OR** (b) the pay and awards data show the agency makes

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distinctions in pay **AND** the average performance compensation is higher for SL/ST employees 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 copy of its written pay policy, the policy describes clear differentiations in performance compensation (that is, pay adjustments and rating-based awards) based on the rating of record, and meets all the requirements in 5 CFR 534.503(b).

Rating

Meets full certification criteria when all threshold points for full certification are met and the minimum score is 90 points and no performance plans in the sample needed revision.
Meets provisional certification criteria when all threshold points for provisional certification are met and the minimum score is 71 points or performance plans in the sample needed revision.
With a score of 70 or below, and when all threshold points 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.