

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice PM-3068

For: FSA National Office Employees

**Modifying FSA Headquarter Employees
FY 2023 Performance Plans and Second Quarterly (Q2) Review**

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

DR 4040-430, issued June 24, 2020, set forth a 2-tier (Fully Successful and Unacceptable) performance management system for USDA employees. FY 2023 performance plans have been entered into the Enterprise Performance Management Application (EPMA) at <https://ehrapps.usda.gov/systems/epma/>.

Note: This notice does not apply to State and County Office employees, or employees appointed to excepted service positions who are not reasonably expected to be employed longer than the 90-calendar-day minimum appraisal period in a consecutive 12-month period.

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides guidance on modifying FSA headquarters employees FY 2023 performance plans
- provides verbiage required to modify the mission results element to add the accountability standards
- provides a deadline of March 31, 2023, to modify FY 2023 performance plans
- reminds supervisors and employees to conduct FY 2023 Q2 performance conversations no later than March 31, 2023.

Disposal Date	Distribution
December 1, 2023	All FSA National Office employees

3-24-23

2 Performance Element Modification

A Overview

Subparagraphs B and C provide language to be used to modify supervisory and non-supervisory FY 2023 performance plans mission results element to add the accountability standards that were not available when the FY 2023 performance plans were established.

B Supervisory Employees

The following accountability standards will be added to all FSA headquarters leadership and supervisory performance plans.

Internal Control and Accountability Standards – Eliminates (when possible) or reduces FSA's greatest risks to meet FSA's operations, reporting, and compliance objectives through the following:

- ensures that program requirements are analyzed to identify areas of improvement to strengthen FSA program administration, accountability, and promote FSA's equity goals and priorities
- promotes internal communications on the importance of internal controls, transparency, and accountability
- ensures that business process improvements, new application software development, and future enhancements include appropriate internal controls and support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within FSA programs
- ensures that program data is analyzed on a timely basis to track program risks, identify anomalies and potentially fraudulent activities, and alert headquarters leadership immediately on issues of potential concerns or negative impacts to FSA's diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility priorities by:
 - providing quality audit responses to external audit findings within the given deadlines, with no more than 3 exceptions unless an extension has been authorized
 - providing oversight and ensuring that corrective actions and recommendations from external audits are completed within their estimated completion dates, with no more than 3 exceptions unless an extension has been authorized
 - ensuring that quality audit reports are developed after the completion of each internal audit within 45 calendar days, with no more than 3 exceptions unless an extension has been authorized.

Note: This alerts headquarters leadership immediately on issues of potential concern or negative impact to FSA.

2 Performance Element Modification (Continued)

C Non-Supervisory Employees

The following accountability standards will be added to all FSA headquarters non-supervisory performance plans as applicable to their roles and responsibilities.

Internal Control and Accountability Standards – Eliminates (when possible) or reduces FSA's greatest risks to meet FSA's operations, reporting, and compliance objectives through the following:

- ensures that program requirements are analyzed to identify areas of improvement to strengthen FSA program administration, accountability, and promote FSA's equity goals and priorities
 - promotes internal communications on the importance of internal controls, transparency, and accountability
 - ensures that business process improvements, new application software development, and future enhancements include appropriate internal controls and support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within FSA programs
 - ensures that program data is analyzed on a timely basis to track program risks, identify anomalies and potentially fraudulent activities, and alerts headquarters leadership immediately on issues of potential concerns or negative impacts to FSA's diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility priorities by:
 - reviewing and implementing appropriate internal controls within business process improvements, new application software development, and any future enhancements
 - timely developing or updating applicable program directives with required compliance controls for any new or existing program, with no more than 3 exceptions unless an extension has been authorized
 - timely drafting and submitting quality audit responses to address external audit findings within the given deadline, with no more than 3 exceptions unless an extension has been authorized
- Note:** Additionally, this alerts the supervisor immediately as issues of potential concern arise with no exceptions.
- implementing program corrective actions and recommendations from external audit findings within the estimated completion dates, with no more than 3 exceptions unless an extension has been authorized

2 Performance Element Modification (Continued)

C Non-Supervisory Employees (Continued)

- **for DAFLP, DAFP, and Office of Management and Strategy staff, as applicable,** elevating State and county compliance issues to DAFO within 10 calendar days of identification to resolve the issues
- **for DAFO staff, as applicable,** addressing and monitoring State and county compliance issues within 10 calendar days of identification or notification by Deputy Areas and notifying the applicable areas of the resolution.

3 Modifying Performance Plans in EPMA

A Overview

Supervisors and reviewing officials must ensure that the modifications provided in this notice are completed by March 31, 2023.

B Action

Headquarters supervisors will access EPMA and recall the employee's previously approved performance plan. Once the performance plan has been recalled, the supervisor will paste the language in subparagraph 2 B or C, as applicable, in the mission results element. The supervisor will then CLICK "Submit".

Performance plans must be modified and signatures logged in EPMA according to the instructions in this notice no later than March 31, 2023.

Note: For supervisors who have completed Q2 conversations performance plans should be modified no later than April 28, 2023.

4 Q2 Conversations in the Performance Management Cycle

A Overview

Q2 conversations are required by DR 4040-430 and must be logged within EPMA. Rating officials are responsible for ensuring that the Q2 conversations for their employees are completed.

4 Q2 Conversations in the Performance Management Cycle (Continued)

B Q2 Conversations

During the Q2 conversations, rating officials or the first-level supervisor should review individual performance goals with each employee to ensure that goals are still pertinent and remain an organizational priority.

Rating officials may also discuss other issues, such as:

- informal or formal training needs to improve skills and knowledge level
- status of work
- delegation of assignments
- changes in organizational goals
- any obstacles the employee is encountering in meeting performance expectations.

At any time during the appraisal period, if an employee's performance is determined to be less than "Fully Successful" in 1 or more critical elements, the rating official should work closely with HRD's Workforce Operations Branch, Employee and Labor Relations team to develop a performance plan that affords the employee a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate a "Fully Successful" performance on the critical elements in their performance plans.

C Action

Q2 conversations with employees should take place and be documented in EPMA no later than Friday, **March 31, 2023**. Q2 conversations cover the employee's performance from January 1, 2023, until the Q2 conversation is completed.

D Additional Resources

Supervisors can find additional resources at the following links:

- **AgLearn Course: Documenting Quarterly Conversations/Progress Reviews in EPMA**
- **EPMA Guides.**