Writing Technical Competencies & Performance Expectations

For more information or assistance, please contact the Employee Relations Division @ 464-3329 or 464-3506
What are technical competencies?

A **technical competency** is the knowledge of; ability to perform; and/or skill in the exercise of; practices required for successful accomplishment of a business, job, or task. (KSA = knowledge, skill, ability)
Why is it important to establish technical competencies for a position?

So that the employee will know what knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) they are expected to develop and maintain in order to successfully perform the duties of their position.
An **Environmental Code Enforcement Officer** might be required to:

- have a working knowledge of related codes, ordinances and procedures (Note: The specific codes and/or ordinances might even be listed.)
- possess the skills to conduct field inspections, determine facts through investigation and read legal descriptions, maps and construction drawings
- demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate and interact with the general public and enforce regulations firmly, tactfully and impartially
Emergency Communications Call Takers might be required to:

- be knowledgeable of county geography, corporate areas, roadway networks, locations of important attractions, major buildings, subdivisions and hospitals
- demonstrate skill in simultaneously handling multiple calls/tasks
- possess the ability to distinguish varied pitches of bells, signals, and tones and different colors
An **Office Specialist** might be required to:

- be knowledgeable of standard office practices, procedures and equipment
- possess skill in keyboarding accurately at a reasonable rate of speed (Note: the more specific here the better – i.e., how fast and at what maximum error rate)
- demonstrate the ability to understand and carry out basic oral and written instructions and keep accurate records
What are “performance expectations?”

They are simply, the required end result of the employee’s work efforts such as:

- **daily performance standards** – for example, how many of a specific item they must produce or process *(Note: Normally, once established, daily performance standards would not change unless the introduction of a new technology or streamlining of procedures enables the employee to conduct their work better, faster, or more accurately.)*

- **objectives or goals** – for example, learning how to use a certain piece of software or master a certain process

- **projects** – for example, working on an assignment which has specific criteria and milestones that the employee must meet
Why is it important for the employee and their supervisor to establish written performance expectations?

So that the employee does not spend valuable time and work effort on things that are of low (or no) priority to the organization.
What do “performance expectations” provide?

- Focus on a specific end result that is produced or delivered by the employee, which contributes to the success of the organizational unit – i.e., meaningful.
- Focus on the product or service that results from the work activity rather than the activity itself. Example: The number of bills sent rather than the act of billing.
- Ensure accountability – meaning that you can hold the employee responsible.
Writing Performance Expectations

OVERVIEW

Performance expectations should focus on the end result of an activity. This end result can be described in terms of a project completed, service provided, or accomplishments achieved.

Because expectations are either quantifiable or verifiable, someone should be able to easily determine whether or not the expectations have been achieved.

Expectations are not always projects/products. They can also focus on intangible results. For example, higher quality service is an important expectation that can be verified by the customer.

- Focus on the end result of a work activity
- Describe expectations in terms of projects/products, services, or accomplishments
- Should be quantifiable or verifiable
- Can focus on either concrete results (examples: time or money saved) or intangible results (example: higher quality service)
An easy way to develop effective expectations is to remember that they should be SMART.

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time-specific**
Writing Performance Expectations

Following are some examples of performance expectations and why they are SMART!
Example 1- SMART Expectation

By January 15th, write a status report on the departmental reorganization including such details as task realignment, new reporting lines, and implementation dates. Be sure to use the departmental reporting standards and criteria.
Here you can see that the expectation is **specific** and **measurable** (verifiable) because it describes a certain action (write a departmental reorganization status report) and it lists certain criteria to be included (task realignment, new reporting lines, and implementation dates).

By January 15th, write a status report on the departmental reorganization including such details as task realignment, new reporting lines, and implementation dates. Be sure to use the departmental reporting standards and criteria.
Example 1 - SMART Expectation

By January 15th, write a status report on the departmental reorganization including such details as task realignment, new reporting lines, and implementation dates. Be sure to use the departmental reporting standards and criteria.

Additional measureable/verifiable criteria are the established departmental reporting standards against which the report will be compared for conformance.
It is, if the supervisor and employee have analyzed it well, **achievable** (doable). If not, then the employee and supervisor need to re-negotiate the expectation.

**Example 1 - SMART Expectation**

By **January 15th**, write a **status report** on the departmental reorganization including such details as task realignment, new reporting lines, and implementation dates. Be sure to use the departmental reporting standards and criteria.
It is relevant to the organization’s goals – the departmental reorganization.

Example 1 - SMART Expectation

By January 15th, write a status report on the departmental reorganization including such details as task realignment, new reporting lines, and implementation dates. Be sure to use the departmental reporting standards and criteria.
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Example 1 - SMART Expectation

It is time-specific because it has a specific due date of January 15th.

By **January 15th**, write a status report on the departmental reorganization including such details as task realignment, new reporting lines, and implementation dates. Be sure to use the departmental reporting standards and criteria.
Example 2 - SMART Expectation

Document, on/before 30 days following the date of receipt, the resolution of all citation appeals received.
It is specific and measurable/verifiable because a review of the documentation should reflect \textit{resolution of the citation appeals}.  

**Example 2 - SMART Expectation**

Document, on/before 30 days following the date of receipt, the resolution of all citation appeals received.
Example 2 - SMART Expectation

It is also achievable (doable) and relevant to the organization’s goals – enforcement of the County’s codes.

Document, on/before 30 days following the date of receipt, the resolution of all citation appeals received.
Writing Performance Expectations

Example 2 - SMART Expectation

It is **time-specific** because it has a specific deadline – on/before 30 days following date of receipt.

Document, on/before 30 days following the date of receipt, the resolution of all citation appeals received.
Example 3 - SMART Expectation

On or before June 30, 2011, develop a written process to assure accurate reconciliation of all accounts.
The expectation is specific as it details an observable action: production of a written reconciliation process.

Example 3 - SMART Expectation

On or before June 30, 2011, develop a written process to assure accurate reconciliation of all accounts.
It is measureable/verifiable because it requires that a written process to assure accuracy be produced.

Example 3 - SMART Expectation

On or before June 30, 2011, develop a written process to assure accurate reconciliation of all accounts.
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Example 3 - SMART Expectation

On or before June 30, 2011, develop a written process to assure accurate reconciliation of all accounts.

It is also achievable (a written process) and relevant to the organization’s goals - accuracy of accounts.
Example 3 - SMART Expectation

On or before June 30, 2011, develop a written process to assure accurate reconciliation of all accounts.

It is time-specific because it has a specific deadline – June 30, 2011.
Example 4 - SMART Expectation

Respond to all requests for assistance within 2 days of receipt utilizing established departmental protocols and report formats.
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Example 4 - SMART Expectation

The expectation is specific because it details an observable action: response to all requests.

Respond to all requests for assistance within 2 days of receipt utilizing established departmental protocols and report formats.
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Example 4 - SMART Expectation

It is measurable/verifiable - the reports will document the responses and the use of established departmental protocols and formats.

Respond to all requests for assistance within 2 days of receipt utilizing established departmental protocols and report formats.
Example 4 - SMART Expectation

It is also achievable (doable) and relevant to the organization’s goals – quality customer service.

Respond to all requests for assistance within 2 days of receipt utilizing established departmental protocols and report formats.
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Example 4 - SMART Expectation

It is **time-specific** because it has a **specific deadline** – responses within **2 days of receipt**.

Respond to all requests for assistance **within 2 days of receipt** utilizing established departmental protocols and report formats.
Example 5 - SMART Expectation

Treat all customers with dignity and respect (as observed by supervisor/reported by customers) while providing accurate guidance per agency policy within a 1-day turn-around time from initial contact by customer.
The expectation is specific: treat customers with dignity & respect and provide accurate guidance per agency policy.

Example 5 - SMART Expectation

Treat all customers with dignity and respect (as observed by supervisor/reported by customers) while providing accurate guidance per agency policy within a 1-day turn-around time from initial contact by customer.
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Treat all customers with dignity and respect (as observed by supervisor/reported by customers) while providing accurate guidance per agency policy within a 1-day turn-around time from initial contact by customer.

It is measurable (verifiable) through the supervisor's observations (and/or customers' reports).
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Example 5 - SMART Expectation

Treat all customers with dignity and respect (as observed by supervisor/reported by customers) while providing accurate guidance per agency policy within a 1-day turn-around time from initial contact by customer.

It is also achievable (doable) and relevant to the organization’s goals – accuracy of guidance and treatment of customers with dignity and respect.
Example 5 - SMART Expectation

Treat all customers with dignity and respect (as observed by supervisor/reported by customers) while providing accurate guidance per agency policy within a 1-day turn-around time from initial contact by customer.

It is time-specific – a deadline of a 1-day turn-around time.
Writing Competencies & Performance Expectations - a side by side comparison

Example: METER READER 1
Note: These are examples only and may or may not match competencies and expectations currently in use

**COMPETENCIES**

- Knowledge of the geography and street locations of the county
- Ability to read maps
- Skills to make simple arithmetical calculations rapidly and accurately
- Ability to learn computer applications and software and enter routine data

**EXPECTATIONS - examples only**

- Read a daily average of ____ meters per available work day with ____ % accuracy; recording all information on electronic reading device
- Input and update Special Instructions and meter location codes as well as create work orders in the handheld computer daily, as needs arise

Note: These are examples only and may or may not match competencies and expectations currently in use.
**SUMMARY**

**Competencies** are the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary for an employee to successfully perform the duties and responsibilities of the position they hold.

**Performance Expectations** are statements of the most significant actions and outcomes required of the employee on the job—i.e., what they are to accomplish.
“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

- George Bernard Shaw, author
“Communication works for those who work at it.”

- John Powell, composer