Companion Guide to the Asylum Officer Performance Plan and Appraisal

Revised

Asylum Division

9/8/2022

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General Principles

Purpose

The purpose of this Companion Guide is to supplement the field Asylum Officer (AO) and Senior Asylum Officer (Sr. AO) Performance Plan and Appraisal (PPA).[1] It sets forth performance expectations based on the Asylum Division's established lesson plans, policies, procedures, and guidance. Supervisory Asylum Officers[2] (SAOs) should use these guidelines to evaluate the quality and accuracy of work performed by AOs under the Performance Goals and the Core Competencies.

PPA Framework

The AO PPA is comprised of Performance Goals and Core Competencies. The Performance Goals account for 60% of the AO's overall rating and the Core Competencies comprise 40% of the total rating. AOs will have three Performance Goals: Quality, National Security and Fraud Detection, and Timeliness. The Core Competencies include Communication, Customer Service, Representing the Agency, Teamwork and Cooperation, and Technical Proficiency. The weights assigned to each of these rating categories are outlined in the table below.

Field Asylum Officer PPA Framework			
Performance Goals (60%)	**Weight**	**Core Competencies (40%)**	**Weight**
Quality	35%	Communication	20%
National Security & Fraud Detection	35%	Customer Service	20%
Timeliness	30%	Representing the Agency	20%
		Teamwork & Cooperation	20%
		Technical Proficiency	20%

Sources of Authority

All performance standards are based on existing Asylum Division guidance, as articulated in the Lesson Plans, Procedures Manuals (Affirmative Asylum [AAPM], Identity and Security Check [ISCPM], Credible Fear [CF], Reasonable Fear [RF], and ABC/NACARA), and other applicable guidance documents. If there

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[1] Moving forward, this Companion Guide will collectively refer to Asylum Officers, Senior Asylum Officers, and New Rule Asylum Officers as "Asylum Officer" or "AO." When necessary to distinguish, AOs hired under the GS-7/9 track will be referred to as "AO1,"AOs hired under the GS-9/11/12 track will be "AO2," and AOs hired under the GS-13 track will be "AO3."

[2] Moving forward, this Companion Guide will collectively refer to all Supervisory Asylum Officers as "Supervisory Asylum Officer" or "SAO." When necessary to distinguish, SAOs hired under the GS-13 track will be referred to as "SAO1" and SAOs hired under the GS-14 track will be "SAO2."

is any discrepancy between the PPA guidance and the above-referenced guidance, the legal and procedural guidance is controlling. Such discrepancies should be identified and communicated to the Asylum Division Management Branch Chief through the chain of command.

Supervisory Review Expectations

SAOs are required to conduct 100% review of all AO work products for all officers (AO1, AO2, and AO3) unless otherwise advised through an established source of guidance (i.e., memoranda or procedures manual). SAOs will review work products through the course of their regular case review process, as well as random reviews. Officers should expect that random review of cases will occur monthly and will be factored into their accuracy rating. Cases returned to officers will also be tracked and counted for performance review purposes.

Recordkeeping and Forms

Shared recordkeeping and communication are critically important under the PPA. AOs will be required to report, and SAOs to validate, individual case submissions. When AOs and SAOs cooperate in this manner, performance data is current and more transparent. The tracking of performance will occur on a pay period basis, with overall scores based on aggregate data at the mid-cycle review and final appraisal. Asylum offices are required to track performance via the AO Biweekly Report and the AO Workbook; however, an office may use a similar method of recordkeeping provided the method does not significantly alter the tools provided and the method is applied consistently by the office. The process outlined may be revised in the future, particularly if new reporting capabilities become available with the creation of a new case management system. Such changes will be bargained as appropriate.

AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log

Each AO is responsible for completing and submitting an *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log*, which automatically calculates timeliness for the pay period. Offices may implement a similar method of record keeping in lieu of the *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log*. As stated previously, the alternate tool may not significantly alter the *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log* and must be applied consistently to all AOs. The *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log* for the preceding pay period should be submitted no later than the first Friday of the following pay period absent exigent circumstances (leave, etc.). This includes both the Biweekly Overview tab and the Timeliness Log tab. The *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log* is reviewed by the SAO, and may be verified through a review of systems, system-generated reports, and consultations with the AO. The SAO is expected to review the submitted report and to address any concerns regarding the data provided no later than the second Friday of the pay period absent exigent circumstances (leave, etc.). If an error is detected, the *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log* must be updated. Failure to submit this report or to exercise due diligence in submitting an accurate report may be an issue appropriate for a performance or conduct action depending on the circumstances.

AO PPA Workbook

An SAO must maintain and update an *AO PPA Workbook*, or similar method of record keeping, for each AO they supervise on a routine[3] basis. The *AO PPA Workbook*, explained below, is an Excel spreadsheet that aggregates the data from the *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log*, automatically uses the data to calculate overall ratings, and serves as a log of random case reviews and other relevant PPA actions. The first tab, Data Entry, should be updated using the data provided by the AO in the *AO Biweekly Report and Timeless Log* after that report is reviewed and confirmed by the SAO. The *AO PPA Workbook's* Data Entry tab will allow the SAO to enter:

- the total number of interviews and cases completed by the AO (blue columns in the spreadsheet under Case Data Entry)
- the total number of cases submitted for full SAO review counted for Accuracy and any Returns (green columns under Accuracy Data Entry)
- the total number of cases submitted for Timeliness, which continues to be for all cases submitted (orange columns under Timeliness Data Entry)

As noted above, any discrepancies between the *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log* and the *AO PPA Workbook* should be addressed promptly by the SAO. Regularly updating the *AO PPA Workbook* spreadsheet will help the SAO calculate and monitor performance throughout the year. This data includes:

- Number of cases submitted for the pay period
- Number of returns for Accuracy
- Number of timely cases submitted
- Random Reviews using the Interview, Written Decision, and Administrative Task Evaluation Forms
- Other relevant rating activities/performance information

The SAO should also update the Random Reviews tab and the Performance-Training-Core Competencies tab throughout the year as appropriate. The Random Reviews tab of the *AO PPA Workbook* is used to record the AO's scores on random evaluations of the case interview, written decision, and associated administrative tasks. The SAO is encouraged, but not required to update the Performance-Training-Core Competencies tab of the *AO PPA Workbook*. This tab is provided to assist SAOs to organize performance related information, which may not be otherwise catalogued in the other forms and documents. For example, an SAO could reference events documented elsewhere via e-mail or memo under any of the relevant categories.

If an office opts to use a different document or method to track AO performance, it should be uniform across that office and it must contain all the essential data points covered in the *AO PPA Workbook*. Additional data elements may be added to the *AO PPA Workbook* as needed. The SAO and AO are encouraged to meet periodically to review the contents of the *AO PPA Workbook* upon either party's request.

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[3] Because the tracking of performance occurs on a pay period basis, HQ Asylum recommends that offices maintain and update their recordkeeping for purposes of the PPA, at minimum, biweekly.

Evaluation Forms

Performance standards are described in the evaluation forms and their accompanying guides. An SAO must use an evaluation form to notify an AO of their performance on a given case. There are four types of evaluation forms: *Interview Evaluation Form* (IEF), *Written Decision Evaluation Form* (WEF), *Administrative Task Evaluation Form* (AEF), and the *National Security and Fraud Detection Evaluation Form* (NFEF). The SAO must use the IEF, WEF, and/or the AEF for random reviews. There are separate evaluation forms based on the adjudication type: Affirmative, APSO, Asylum Merits Interview (AMI), MPP, and I-730. When informing an AO of an inaccurate non-random review, the SAO must use the IEF, WEF, AEF, and NFEF to identify the deficiencies or errors in the work product. A score is unnecessary for inaccuracy notifications. Regardless of whether the case is a random review or not, SAOs can also note positive feedback on a case using the comment section of the form. SAOs should retain the original evaluation forms, giving a copy to the AO.

Required PPA Documentation

An SAO should maintain the following performance-related documentation relied upon for each AO:

1) *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log* (submitted by the AO and verified by the SAO) for each pay period in the rating year.
2) *AO PPA Workbook,* an Excel spreadsheet that covers the rating year.
3) Officer activity reports for each pay period in the rating year generated from SMART or any other reliable source.
4) *Interview Evaluation Forms* for each observed, scored, and returned case.
5) *Written Decision Evaluation Forms* and accompanying written decisions for each scored and returned case.
6) *Administrative Task Evaluation Forms* for each scored and returned case.
7) *National Security and Fraud Detection Evaluation Form*
8) Any other documentation related to the AO's performance for the rating year, including the core competencies. It is encouraged, but not required, that an SAO organize this information in the Performance-Training-Core Competencies section of the *AO PPA Workbook.*

If the AO is reassigned to a different SAO during the rating period, all performance documentation is passed on to the new SAO. The above-referenced reports and evaluation forms are provided as attachments to this document and include detailed guidance.

Performance Goals

Performance goals will account for 60% of an AO's total rating. AOs will be evaluated on three performance goals including Quality (35%), National Security and Fraud Detection (35%), and Timeliness (30%). The following section will outline the standards for each performance goal and provide guidance on how those standards will be applied.

Quality Goal (35%)

Overview

AOs will be evaluated on their ability to accurately apply rules, regulations, precedent decisions, policies, and procedures to the timely completion of work assignments. Quality decisions ensure that the right benefit is given to the right person at the right time. AOs are expected to produce a high-quality work product that is mission-centered and customer-focused. To this end, interviews, written decisions, and administrative tasks will be evaluated against the performance standards outlined on the IEF, the WEF, and the AEF.

For routine work products, an AO's performance will generally be evaluated in the following ways:

1. Cases that are randomly selected for scoring and are fully reviewed by a supervisor will receive a numerical quality rating using the IEF, WEF, and AEF. The ratings by evaluation types will then be averaged to arrive at a final average for all Random Reviews; and
2. The number of cases that were accurate at the time of submission will be averaged for an overall accuracy rating score.

The AO's final rating for the Quality Goal is based on the average of the individual's average of the Random reviews and their average accuracy rating. That combined score will then be applied to the rating scale below to determine the AO's rating in the Quality Goal in most circumstances. Additionally, while most of the language in the Quality Goal is directly tied to case adjudications, there is one factor that is not. That factor relates to "Promoting a Community of Practice," (CoP) which is described as "contributing to process improvements and supporting fellow officers" with distinction. High-performing AOs are encouraged to contribute to process improvements and support to fellow officers by collaborating with peers to improve the quality and efficiency of adjudications. This may be facilitated through the asylum office's teams, peer-to-peer networks, or communities of practice. Some examples include collaborating with an Asylum Training Officer to develop training on complex country conditions information or highly technical immigration issues, laws, regulations or policies or drafting a local standard operating procedure to enhance the quality, consistency or efficiency of a work process in the office. If an AO receives a numerical score at the top 3 percent or higher of the Exceeded Expectations (outlined in the table below), that individual's rating may be increased to Achieved Excellence if they have promoted a "Community of Practice" with distinction. The basis for this determination must be documented in the SAO's records, as well as in the narrative of the final rating.

The tables below provide a breakdown of the Quality Goal Rating Scale to be applied to the GS-7/9 AO1, the GS-9/11/12 AO2, and the GS-13 Field Asylum Officer positions.

Quality Rating Scale: GS-7/9 AO1 Field Asylum Officers

GS-7 AO1	
≥70% or < 75%	Achieved Expectations
≥75% - < 80%	Exceeded Expectations
≥80% - <85% w/o CoP	Exceeded Expectations
≥80% - <85% w/ CoP	Achieved Excellence
≥85% w/ or w/o CoP	Achieved Excellence

GS-9 AO1	
≥70% or < 80%	Achieved Expectations
≥80% - < 88%	Exceeded Expectations
≥88% - <90% w/o CoP	Exceeded Expectations
≥88% - <90% w/ CoP	Achieved Excellence
≥90% w/ or w/o CoP	Achieved Excellence

Quality Rating Scale: GS-9/11/12/13 Field Asylum Officer

GS-9 AO2		GS-11 AO2	
≥70% or <80%	Achieved Expectations	≥70% or <80%	Achieved Expectations
≥80% - <88%	Exceeded Expectations	≥80% - <88%	Exceeded Expectations
≥88% - <90% w/o CoP	Exceeded Expectations	≥88% - <90% w/o CoP	Exceeded Expectations
≥88% - <90% w/ CoP	Achieved Excellence	≥88% - <90% w/ CoP	Achieved Excellence
≥90% w/ or w/o CoP	Achieved Excellence	≥90% w/ or w/o CoP	Achieved Excellence

GS-12 AO2		GS-13 Senior AO & AO3	
≥75% or <82%	Achieved Expectations	≥80% or <88%	Achieved Expectations
≥82% - <90%	Exceeded Expectations	≥88% - <92%	Exceeded Expectations
≥90% - <92% w/o CoP	Exceeded Expectations	≥92% - <95% w/o CoP	Exceeded Expectations
≥90% - <92% w/ CoP	Achieved Excellence	≥92% - <95% w/ CoP	Achieved Excellence
≥92% w/ or w/o CoP	Achieved Excellence	≥95% w/ or w/o CoP	Achieved Excellence

Example of Overall Quality Goal Performance Calculation

Random Reviews:			Accuracy:			
Case Scores	Average Score		# of Reviewed Cases	# of Inaccurate Cases	% Inaccurate	% Accurate
Case 1: 95%	**Average: 89%**		PP 1: 16	2	12.5%	87.5%
Case 2: 85%			PP 2: 15	1	6%	94%
Case 3: 89%			PP 3: 18	3	16%	84%
Case 4: 87%			PP 4: 17	2	11.8%	87.2%
			Total: 66	8	12%	**88%**

The AO's final rating for the Quality Goal is the average of random reviews and the average accuracy rate (the latter of which is based on 100% of submitted and fully reviewed cases). In this case, it is the average of 89% and 88%, which is 88.5%. This number is then applied to the appropriate Quality Rating Scale table included above to determine the AO's performance level.

Hypo 1: The AO is a GS-9 or GS-11 and they have not promoted a Community of Practice with distinction. Based on the table, the AO will be rated Exceeded Expectations in the Quality Goal.

Hypo 2: The AO is a GS-9 or GS-11 and they have promoted a Community of Practice with distinction. In that circumstance, the AO may be rated as Achieved Excellence in the Quality Goal.

Work Products Evaluated

For first-time assignments, an AO will not be rated using the scored evaluation forms until they have been assigned to and gained experience of 30 working days or more on that particular assignment. For example, the first time an AO is placed on the affirmative asylum caseload, their work product will not be counted toward their numerical rating until they have at least 30 working days of being on the the affirmative asylum schedule and completing an affirmative caseload. The SAO will provide performance feedback during the initial 30-day period that will not be incorporated into scored evaluations. Formal scored evaluations will begin after the 30-day grace period. Please see additional guidance on the *Rating Method When Officers Lack Numerical Evaluation Scores.*

Interviews

Asylum Officers should conduct interviews in accordance with statute, regulation, policy, training materials, procedures manuals, and any other designated authority regarding all matters under the jurisdiction of the Asylum Division. Quality interviews lay the foundation for quality adjudications. An AO is rated for adherence to the quality standards for the following interview types: Asylum, NACARA, CF, RF, MPP, Terminations and AMI.

Written Decisions/Determinations

AOs should prepare a written decision for each case reflecting an analysis and outcome that is consistent with statute, regulation, policy, training materials, procedures manuals, and any other designated authority regarding all matters under the jurisdiction of the Asylum Division. To that end, taking into account current guidance on what analysis is required in the relevant decision document, written decisions should document the application of the law and any relevant policy to the facts for each of the eligibility requirements, enabling reviewers to gauge adherence to legal requirements, program policy, and, when applicable, providing customers with effective notice and opportunity to respond to potential agency actions. An AO will be rated for adherence to the quality standards for the following written decision types: decision assessments (including CF and RF determination checklists, the AMI Determinations, the MPP Assessment Worksheet, and I-730 worksheet), Notices of Intent to Deny (NOID), NACARA decision worksheets, Notices of Intent to Terminate (NOIT), and Recommendation Memoranda produced under AAPM III(V)(7) for Termination cases only.

Administrative Tasks

An AO completes administrative tasks for each case in accordance with statute, regulation, policy, training materials, procedures manuals, and any other designated authority regarding all matters under the jurisdiction of the Asylum Division. The accuracy of the administrative tasks may impact the integrity and legality of the agency's decision and any associated benefits or actions. Moreover, correct data and documentation ensures that customers receive their decisions promptly. AOs will be rated for adherence to the quality standards for the following administrative tasks and prepared documentation: Asylum, NACARA, CF, RF, MPP, AMI, I-730, and Termination of Asylum.

Rating Method

As noted above, an AO's rating in the Quality Goal will be calculated by averaging the overall random review score and the overall accuracy rating score. In the event that the person's rating is in the upper 3 percent of the Exceeded Expectations range, an additional non-scored factor featured in the Achieved Excellence standard language, "Promoting a Community of Practice," may be cited to increase the AO's rating from the Exceeded Expectations to the Achieved Excellence level provided certain conditions are met.

Random Reviews

Random reviews are evaluated through a specified number of evaluations forms using only the criteria specified on the form. An average of all of the cases randomly reviewed and scored will comprise a portion of the overall "Random Review" score.

A randomly selected case is chosen for a random review by a locally determined method that ensures indiscriminate selection of a case, such that the AO does not know it will be selected and the SAO cannot choose to evaluate and score a case based on a preview of the work product. The method can be made known to asylum officer staff to the extent that it does not disclose which cases will be selected. For example, an asylum office may determine that the last three digits of an A-number will

always be used in the selection of random reviews. For the month of April, all A-numbers that have the last three digits beginning with a "3" are reviewed and scored. An AO could not know that this month's number is "3" or that the method is always based on the first of the last three digits because the randomness of selection would be compromised. However, AOs can be made aware that random selection for random reviews is based on the composition of the A-number.

In addition, random reviews will be pro-rated to the time the individual is actually assigned to that assignment type.

Example – Pro Rating Random Reviews

AO goes on a 90-day refugee detail. This 3-month absence from the interview calendar is represented by 3/12, or 25% of the year. Since the required number of interview observations and ratings is 12 for the year, it will be reduced by 25%, for a total of 9 interviews observed and rated.

Note: Pro-rata amounts are calculated to the 1/10th percentile and then rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. If the result is exactly in the middle (.5), the number of interview observations required is rounded up if the AO is performing below Achieved Excellence, in order to provide the AO more opportunities to increase their performance. Therefore, if the pro-rated requirement is for 10.5 ratings and the AO is at the Achieved Excellence level so far, the number of interview observations required for the year is 10. If the AO is below the Achieved Excellence level, the number of interview observations required is 11.

Number of Interview Observations

The general rule is that an AO will be observed and rated on one interview per month, pro-rated to the time on the interview calendar. However, if an AO performs at the Achieved Excellence level in random reviews for three consecutive months (i.e. scoring within the Achieved Excellence range in the table outlined above based on the AO's grade level), interview observations may be reduced to every other month for the rating period, unless:

- The AO performs below the Achieved Excellence level in a subsequent interview; or
- The SAO detects errors in subsequent interviews upon review of the notes or other available AO work products

In either case, the schedule of observation-based ratings would return to the regular one interview per month. For purposes of random review reduction, the Achieved Excellence range utilized should be the non-CoP range. For example, a GS-9 AO would have to receive a minimum of 90% on three consecutive interviews to be eligible. Additionally, the AO must have scored in the Achieving Excellence range for each of the three consecutive interviews.

SAOs should strive to observe and rate at least one interview per month, even if the AO is only interviewing a few cases a month. In the event that interview evaluations are not possible every month due to limited case/officer availability, SAO's should ensure all other evaluations are conducted on a

regular basis. Please note these standards are nationally negotiated and need to be applied consistently to the extent possible. Asylum offices should inform the Asylum Division's Management Branch if they encounter any other challenges in incorporating this guidance.

Interview performance standards are grouped into four categories on the IEF with weights totaling 100%:
- Procedural Requirements – 10%
- Issue Recognition and Coverage – 70%
- Note-taking – 10%
- Effective Communication – 10%

Written Decisions

An AO's performance will be rated based on one written decision per month, pro-rated to the time assigned to the duty. There is no reduction in the number of random reviews in this category for performance throughout the year.

Written decision performance standards are grouped into three categories on the WEF with weights totaling 100%:
- Basic Requirements and Completeness – 5%
- Legal Analysis – 85%
- Writing Style and General Quality Criteria – 10%

Administrative Tasks

An AO will receive one random case review per month, pro-rated to the time they are assigned to that duty. The criteria apply to principals and dependents, where applicable. There is no reduction in the number of random reviews in this category for performance throughout the year.

The Administrative Tasks performance standards are grouped into two categories on the AEF for AO2s and AO3s with weights totaling 100%:
- Forms, Decision Documents, and System Updates – 45%
- Security Checks Documentation – 55%

Note that while the AEFs are distinct forms, they are substantively identical.

The Administrative Tasks performance standards are grouped into two categories on the AEF for AO1s with weights totaling 100%:
- Research – 50%
- Providing Internal and External Administrative Support – 50%

Scoring Standards and Criteria in Evaluation Forms

The performance standards in the IEF, WEF, and AEF are intended to summarize existing laws, regulations, procedures, and policy guidance. If the AO does not agree with the score assigned by the SAO, the AO and SAO must review and discuss the applicable underlying authority together. If the discussion does not produce a consensus, regular dispute resolution procedures apply when the AO and rating official do not agree.

Performance standards are grouped into categories on the evaluation forms (IEF, WEF, AEF), with weights assigned to each category. Within each category area, there are a series of criteria. The criteria are spelled out in more detail on the "Guide" page of the evaluation form.

The rating official indicates whether the AO met each numbered criterion by noting "Y" for Yes or "N" for No. When all criteria are met, they are weighted equally within the category. If the AO does not meet a criterion marked as "Critical", the result will be a zero for the entire category.

If a criterion does not apply to the case, the rating official will indicate "NA" and the other criteria will automatically count proportionately more.

There is no partial credit. Where there are multiple aspects to a criterion or standard, the AO must satisfy all aspects to receive a "Y."

Example – Interview Evaluation Form Scoring Method:

For Interviews, in the category of "Procedural Requirements," there are eight individual criteria: Jurisdiction & File Completeness, Introduction, Explanation of Purpose, Explanation of Procedure, Administration of Oath, Basic Biographical Information and Form Questions, Representation, and Conclusion. Administration of Oath is critical. Possible scores follow:

Scenario 1: The applicant is not represented, and the AO met all criteria except she failed to notify the applicant of how the decision would be delivered. The scoring would be as follows:

Jurisdiction & File Completeness	Y
Introduction:	Y
Explanation of Purpose:	Y
Explanation of Procedure:	N
Administration of Oath:	Y
Basic Biographical and Form Questions:	Y
Representation:	NA
Conclusion:	Y

The AO's score for this category would be based on meeting 6 of 7 applicable criteria, or 85.7%.

Scenario 2: The same performance occurs as described in Scenario 1, except the applicant was represented and the AO met the performance criteria described in the IEF by verifying the presence of the representative or securing a written waiver. The scoring would then be:

Jurisdiction & File Completeness	Y
Introduction:	Y
Explanation of Purpose:	Y
Explanation of Procedure:	N
Administration of Oath:	Y
Basic Biographical and Form Questions:	Y
Representation:	Y
Conclusion:	Y

The AO's score for this category would be based on meeting 7 of 8 applicable criteria, or 87.5%.

Scenario 3: The same performance occurs as described in Scenario 1, except the AO failed to place the applicant under oath. Because the AO failed to meet a critical criterion, his score for the "Procedural Requirements" category would be 0.

The scores for each category are added according to the weight they are assigned for an overall percentage rating for the case. After the case is complete and scored, the AO will receive a copy of the form containing their scores for each section, the total score expressed as a percentage. In addition to the scoring, the SAO is expected to use the comment section of the relevant evaluation form to highlight positive and critical feedback to the AO.

Accuracy Rate

The quality of interviews, written decisions, and administrative tasks will also be assessed through routine supervisory reviews. An AO will be evaluated by measuring the portion of the total number of cases submitted that are accurate at the time of submission as measured by the criteria on the IEF, WEF, AEF.

Defining Accuracy

Interviews, written decisions/forms, and administrative tasks are inaccurate when an AO failed to adhere to the performance standards outlined on the evaluation forms.

Accuracy Rate Calculation

An AO's accuracy rate is determined by dividing the number of inaccurate cases by the total number of case submissions. When a non-random review is returned for correction or otherwise found to be inaccurate, the form must be used to notify the officer of the errors in the case, but the form is not scored.

If an SAO returns a case to an AO for correction and the AO makes the correction, but the SAO still finds that the AO's correction is deficient, the SAO will return the case and it will be counted as an additional inaccurate case. Each time a case is returned for correction, an SAO should complete a new evaluation form, in order to keep track of the returns and to identify the source of the inaccuracy.

If the SAO finds a different, pre-existing mistake after the AO already corrected a different inaccuracy, the SAO will return the case to AO for correction using a new evaluation form, but will not count it as an additional return as that error should have been caught during the initial review and counted as part of the original return.

An SAO must evaluate decisions for performance purposes using the standards outlined in the evaluation forms. An SAO may believe that a case is incorrect for a reason that is not outlined in the performance standards. If it is a minor, clear error, the AO should make the change and the SAO will not count the error for Quality Goal rating purposes. If there is a more serious issue not covered by the evaluation form, the SAO should proceed as directed by local office policy. The AO must correct the case as management directs, but the correction will not be taken into account for Quality Goal rating purposes.

Similar to random reviews, the SAO is expected to give positive feedback to AOs when warranted on non-random cases, particularly if the work is of a high caliber. This could be documented using the

comment section of the evaluation form or via-email. The SAO is encouraged to keep records of such performance throughout the course of the year.

Rating Method When Officers Lack Numerical Evaluation Scores

To address situations that have prevented officers from being formally evaluated via random reviews due to a reduction of interviews and/or opportunities to adjudicate cases, SAOs should apply one of the two tracks below to issue a final Quality Goal rating:

- **Track One**: will be utilized for AOs who have completed the 30-day grace period and who are therefore subject to receiving a formal rating based on numerical scores.   This is the current ratings procedure described in the preceding sections. There is no minimum number of random reviews required to receive a rating under Track One. As long as the AO has met the 30-days experience requirement, SAOs are to formally evaluate the officer and incorporate these metrics in the calculator to issue a final Quality Goal rating. If the AO is at risk of receiving an Unacceptable final rating for the Quality Goal based on limited data, the Asylum Office shall consult with Asylum HQ to obtain further guidance from HCT and LER, if necessary, before issuing a final rating.

- **Track Two:** is added as an alternative avenue for rating an AO in instances when the officer did not have the opportunity to complete the grace period and/or who lacks formal ratings (i.e., numerical quality scores) due to office closures, reduced interview schedules, or any other extenuating circumstances. Under Track Two, the Quality rating should be determined in reference to the standards in the PPA instead of scored evaluations. For example, the PPA Template for an AO states that achieving expectations requires completing work assignments that are well-reasoned, legally sufficient, and procedurally correct; work is performed with minimal errors and minimal supervision. To achieve excellence, the AO should independently complete complex cases or accurately communicate technical immigration information to stakeholders. Given that a Quality rating for AOs in Track Two will not rely on scored evaluations, an SAO will rely on the **overall work product** and will take into consideration factors such as the AO's inability to complete the grace period and/or any other factors beyond the officer's control to issue a final rating for this goal. The AO's work product may include but is not limited to special assignments or projects, administrative adjudication duties (e.g., administrative closures or withdrawals, reviewing cases for jurisdiction, case write-ups), other adjudicative duties (e.g., conducting COI research, preparing decision documents, file preparation), and any eligibility determinations for Affirmative, APSO, MPP, AMI, or I-730 cases the AO was able to complete before the end of the fiscal year.

National Security and Fraud Detection (35%)

Overview

An AO is responsible for maintaining the integrity and security of the immigration system through detection and deterrence of immigration-related fraud. An AO is also expected to accurately apply national security and public safety laws, regulations and policies through interviews, security checks, document reviews, and other actions in accordance with established guidelines. SAOs should keep records of high-quality AO performance, such as noting effective collaboration with FDNS officers or complex and accurate analyses of fraud and national security related issues. The 30-day grace period for first-time assignments also applies to the National Security and Fraud Detection Performance Goal.

Performance Standards

GS-7/9 and GS-9/11/12/13
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Consistently identifies and addresses benefit fraud and national security concerns by referring identified or suspected fraud to FDNS.	Work products and communications establish consistent and correct performance of security checks, follow-up on positive hits, proper identification of national security concerns arising from security checks, and appropriate identification and referral of suspected benefit fraud (including fraud, public safety, and national security matters) as required by established policies and procedures.
Accurately applies national security and public safety laws, regulations, policies, and procedures and ensures these are effectively applied throughout the adjudication process, including during interviews, security checks, document reviews, and other actions	Review of interviews and work product indicates that credibility issues, mandatory bars, factors associated with the terrorism-related inadmissibility grounds (TRIG) and National Security indicators are being properly identified and explored, and national security and public safety laws, regulations, and policies are being properly applied. Accurately follows procedures and completes paperwork to document security checks, TRIG exemptions, national security concerns, and suspected fraud.
Ensures cases are adjudicated or units of work are completed in a timely manner and that decisions are made in accordance with established guidelines; correctly refers cases using appropriate processes.	Work assignments involving fraud or national security issues are generally completed within established time frames barring any unforseen challenges beyond an employee's control. Ensures cases are adjudicated in a timely manner to prevent the exploitation of the asylum process and employment authorization clock by ineligible persons.
Collaborates with Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS) and other entities, as appropriate, resulting in the resolution of national security concerns.	In conjunction with the SAO, collaborates with FDNS Officers, Quality Assurance/Trainers, and/or other appropriate entities to document previously identified fraud trends and national security concerns through to resolution and completion.

Achieved Expectations - *In addition to achieving expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:*

Standards	Examples
Promotes the security and integrity of the immigration system through sharing fraud or	Proactively researches new issues, identifying or learning about fraud trends and national security issues, sharing the information with team members, peers and supervisors, as appropriate. Develops a

national security issues and trends with peers and supervisors, as appropriate.	presentation on the findings and communicates it to the team or office, as appropriate. All trends or new issues should be referred to FDNS.
Provides detailed supporting information and key indicators such that findings of fraud are further strengthened.	Elicits detailed testimony and provides supporting information and key indicators that strengthen findings of fraud or significantly contribute to an FDNS investigation.
Independently conducts research to provide necessary and critical technical advice and guidance in the screening and vetting of sensitive, complex, and problematic applications/petitions.	In addition to carrying out assigned duties, conducts research or provides guidance that assists peers or other members of the asylum office in the screening and vetting of complex or sensitive applications. Drafts or assists in the drafting of a local standard operating procedure to enhance the quality and consistency of a work process in the office. This may be facilitated through the asylum office's teamwork/peer-to-peer networks.
Recommends viable process improvements to better detect and deter fraud and/or enhance national security.	Identifies opportunities for improvement in detecting national security, public safety, and fraud concerns and suggests viable solutions to implement at the local or national level. This may be facilitated through the asylum office's employee suggestion program and/or local FDNS.

Rating Method

In the context of case adjudications, performance in this category should be documented using a National Security and Fraud Detection Form (NFEF) when errors on individual cases are detected. These forms should not be scored but a copy should be provided to the AO as performance feedback. These feedback forms will document the AO's performance in many of the performance standards outlined in the chart above, but others, particularly at the Achieved Excellence level, reflect achievements and tasks, which are not purely adjudicative. For example, one of the standards in Achieved Excellence indicates the AO "recommends viable process improvements to better detect fraud and/or enhance national security." These types of activities and achievements can be documented using e-mail, memo to the officer's personnel file, the office's rewards and recognition program, or by some other documented means. The totality of the AO's documented performance against the standards listed above will inform the AO's rating.

Timeliness (30%)

The SAO case review procedures do not affect the Timeliness Goal. SAOs are required to track the timeliness of case submissions even if all cases do not undergo full supervisory review.

Overview

An AO is expected to complete cases in a timely manner in order to further Asylum Division compliance with deadlines imposed by statute, regulation, policy, and procedure for all matters under its jurisdiction. An AO will be rated for adherence to timeliness standards with respect to Asylum, AMI, NACARA, CF, RF, MPP, I-730, and other assigned special projects. The 30-day grace period for first-time assignments also applies to the Timeliness Performance Goal.

Affirmative Asylum
- Local Cases

    - Pick-up Cases: Unless otherwise instructed by this guidance, the SAO, or local/national policy, all locally assigned affirmative cases fall into this category. Cases are considered timely when it is first completed and submitted within five working days after the interview. Any such case returned for correction is to be resubmitted the next working day for it to be considered timely.

    - Non-Pick up Cases: Unless otherwise instructed by this guidance, the SAO, or local/national policy, the affirmative case is considered timely when it is first completed and submitted within eight working days after the interview. Any such case returned for correction must be resubmitted within two working days for it to be considered timely.

    - Completion Only: When a case is assigned to an AO for completion only, it is considered timely when it is first completed and submitted within eight working days unless otherwise instructed by this guidance, the SAO, or local/national policy. In accordance with local procedures, the AO may be responsible for updating the status of a case placed on hold Some examples of completion only cases include a final denial after the expiration of a NOID rebuttal period and a final decision after HQ, awaiting documents, or other hold type. The triggering date for timeliness purposes is the event that resulted in the hold being lifted.

- Circuit Ride (not including completion-only or release from holds): Timeliness standards are determined locally as there is considerable variation in the caseloads assigned on circuit ride and the logistics involved. Affirmative circuit ride timeliness standards will be established locally to consider those variations. Standards will be communicated to all officers and timeliness on those assignments will be tracked and rated consistent with the local standards.

- Special Projects and all other non-adjudications work: Timeliness standards are determined by local office management. The deadline will be communicated to the AO at the time of the assignment and should be commensurate with the complexity and volume of the work and local operational constraints.

Asylum Merits Interview (AMI)
- Local Cases

    - Pick-up Cases: Unless otherwise instructed by this guidance, the SAO, or local/national policy, all locally assigned AMI cases fall into this category. Cases are considered timely when it is first completed and submitted within five working days after the interview. Any such case returned for correction is to be resubmitted the next working day for it to be considered timely.

    - Non-Pick up Cases: Unless otherwise instructed by this guidance, the SAO, or local/national policy, the AMI case is considered timely when it is first completed and submitted within eight working days after the interview. Any such case returned for correction must be resubmitted within two working days for it to be considered timely.

- o Completion Only: When an AMI case is assigned to an AO for completion only, it is considered timely when it is first completed and submitted within eight working days unless otherwise instructed by this guidance, the SAO, or local/national policy. In accordance with local procedures, the AO may be responsible for updating the status of a case placed on hold. Some examples of completion only cases include a final decision after HQ, awaiting documents, or other hold type. The triggering date for timeliness purposes is the event that resulted in the hold being lifted.

- Circuit Ride (not including completion-only or release from holds): Timeliness standards are determined locally as there is considerable variation in the caseloads assigned on circuit ride and the logistics involved. AMI circuit ride timeliness standards will be established locally to consider those variations. Standards will be communicated to all officers and timeliness on those assignments will be tracked and rated consistent with the local standards.

- Special Projects and all other non-adjudications work: Timeliness standards are determined by local office management. The deadline will be communicated to the AO at the time of the assignment and should be commensurate with the complexity and volume of the work and local operational constraints.

Credible Fear (CF) and Reasonable Fear (RF)

- CF and RF timeliness standards are determined locally as there is considerable variation in the schedules, caseloads, and logistics involved at the nearly 100 detention facilities ASY deals with across the country. As such, CF and RF timeliness standards will be established locally to consider those variations. Standards will be communicated to all Asylum Officers and timeliness on those assignments will be tracked and rated consistent with the local standards.

I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition

- Similar to the CF and RF workloads, offices have the flexibility to determine the deadlines for I-730 case submission. However, generally, I-730 cases are timely when completed within one working day of case assignment. Exceptions to the 1-day deadline may apply (e.g., the case presents complex legal or procedural issues, pending required security checks), and any delays in submission must first be consulted with and approved by a supervisor.

Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)

- Similar to the CF and RF workloads, offices have the flexibility to determine the deadlines for MPP case submission. However, generally, MPP cases are timely when completed the same day the applicant is interviewed. Exceptions to the 1-day deadline may apply (e.g., the case presents complex legal or procedural issues), and any delays in submission must first be consulted with and approved by a supervisor.

NACARA

- Offices have the flexibility to determine the deadlines for NACARA case submission. Exceptions to the set deadline may apply, and any delays in submission must first be consulted with and approved by a supervisor.

Rating Method and Scale

An AO's timeliness rating is based on the following scale regardless of grade level:

Timeliness

GS-7/9 and GS-9/11/12/13	
≥75% or <85%	Achieved Expectations
≥85% - <92%	Exceeded Expectations
≥92%	Achieved Excellence

The same Timeliness standards will be expected of all AOs, including AO1s, both GS-7 and GS-9s, AO2s in the GS-9/11/12 scale, and AOs that are GS-13s. Timeliness is a requirement for the Asylum Division, as this ensures timely completions of cases. If an AO1 is pulled from an adjudicative duty, to conduct a non-adjudicative duty, the AO1 can request that a specific deadline for a case be extended or exempted from the Timeliness calculation. SAOs will have wide latitude to grant exemptions to AO1s when they are pulled to conduct non-adjudicative duties. In addition, offices have the flexibility to set deadlines for pre- and post-adjudicative tasks. If an AO1 completes a task by the deadline, it will be considered timely.

An AO must report the timeliness of case submissions using the *AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log* or equivalent. The AO is responsible for accurately counting and reporting the timeliness of cases, both for initial submissions and returns for correction. The AO is expected to exercise diligence in accurately reporting timeliness. The rating is based on the percentage of total submissions that were timely. The SAO keeps track of the biweekly submissions, using the *AO PPA Workbook*. The total number of timely cases is divided by the total number of submissions to determine timeliness. The SAO will provide a copy of the *AO PPA Workbook* upon request.

Cases are completed and submitted when the AO turns in a finished work product for SAO review, which includes entering the decision in Global and following local office procedures for file submission for case review and processing. Local management is encouraged to take COVID-19 into account when defining when a case is "completed and submitted" to ensure officers can meet the Timeliness guidelines. Field offices are also encouraged to implement electronic submission protocols (such as by saving case documents on a share drive or within Global) and physical submission of a file to the SAO does not need to occur within the timeframes noted above for a case to be considered timely as long as the AO's work on the case has been completed.

When a case is returned for correction, timeliness standards apply to the re-submission. Overdue cases that have not yet been submitted are counted as untimely by adding them to the number of untimely cases at the time the rating is calculated, no less frequently than at the mid-cycle and final appraisal. For untimely cases that overlap from one fiscal year to the next, they should be considered late in the fiscal year that they were technically due and not carry over into the next year. SAOs should take care

to ensure they only factor an overdue (but not yet submitted) case into the timeliness calculation one time only.

Time is calculated beginning the working day following the triggering event (i.e. interview, return for correction, or assignment of a case for completion). Working days that count for timeliness are the days an AO is present on duty for any part of the day.

Timeliness Examples

Example 1: The AO interviewed an out-of-status asylum applicant on a Monday and was in the office the following day (Tuesday), but was assigned other duties by management for 2 hours. The timeliness clock for this case would begin on Tuesday, because even though the AO was on pre-approved duties for 2 hours, this is still the next working day. The case will be timely if it is submitted to the SAO on or before the 5th working day, Monday of the following week, provided she worked each day.

Example 2: The AO interviewed an out-of-status asylum applicant on a Monday and was on sick leave for all of the following day (Tuesday), and has an AWS day off on the Friday following the interview. The timeliness clock for this case would begin on Wednesday, which is the AO's next working day. The AWS day off does not count. The case will be timely if it is submitted to the SAO on or before the 5th working day, Wednesday of the following week, provided she worked each day.

Exceptions/Exemptions to the Timeliness Standard

Asylum Office management may shorten timeliness deadlines in individual cases due to operational reasons such as expedited processing, the clock, in-status cases that will fall out of status prior to issuance of a final decision, or other exigent reasons. The AO will be provided notice before the application of a shorter timeliness standard. Under such circumstances, the AO may be given extra time to complete a case that s/he was unable to work on due to the expedited processing or, if no additional time is given for other work assignments, s/he may be recognized under the applicable core competency such as Teamwork and Cooperation, Customer Service, or Technical Proficiency.

AOs are responsible for managing their workloads and apprising their SAO of any circumstances that may interfere with the timely completion of cases. Where there are justifiable reasons, management may grant a timeliness exemption or extension or productivity reduction if requested in advance. The request must be made as soon as possible and within the number of days under the applicable timeliness standard. SAOs are encouraged to grant extensions over exemptions if possible. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, SAOs should generously grant extensions or one-time exemptions to the Timeliness metric in cases where the AO requests an extension or exemption due to situations outside the AO's control. Examples of situations that are outside the AO's control include, but are not limited

to, childcare/assisting children with virtual learning, elder care, medical issues related to COVID, care of a family member with medical issues related to COVID, or other unforeseen circumstances.

If an AO is pulled from an Affirmative or AMI adjudicative duty to another (e.g. MPP, CF/RF), the timeliness exemption for case submissions will be extended by the number of days the AO is assigned to other workloads. Asylum Office management has the discretion to modify this exemption as needed and as appropriate. When an AO has been reassigned to a different caseload or is going to be unavailable to adjudicate for the foreseeable future they should notify their supervisor. Asylum Office management is responsible for identifying the best way to determine the cases are processed in a timely manner. For purposes of the Timeliness metric in the PPA, if an SAO grants a one-time exemption (not an extension) for the initial submission of a case, the case is considered a timely initial submission. The use of one-time or occasional exemptions is intended to encourage employees to communicate any complication that will affect the timely submission of cases. Counting the case as timely, when an exemption is approved timely, encourages this communication. One-time or occasional exemptions do not supersede any division-wide Timeliness exemptions issued under special circumstances.

Core Competencies

Overview

The Core Competencies were established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and are required of all DHS employees. The Core Competencies comprise 40% of an AO's overall rating. There are five competencies, and each is weighted at 20%. SAOs should document evidence of the Core Competencies throughout the year in support of the employee's rating.

Competency 1: Communication

Definition: Actively listens and attends to nonverbal cues when responding to the questions, ideas, and concerns of others. Communicates in an influential or persuasive manner, as appropriate. Writes in a clear and concise manner. Orally communicates in a clear and concise manner. Tailors communication (for example, language, tone, level of specificity) to the audience based on its level of understanding and to the communication medium.

<u>GS-7/9</u>
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Listens and appropriately responds to questions and concerns from others.	Asks relevant questions, listens to responses without interruption and takes notes when appropriate.
Shows respect for others' ideas, comments and questions.	Listens respectfully to a colleague's statement. Body language is positive.
With guidance, prepares and delivers basic communications that may require some revisions.	Composes written materials (for example, customer responses) that typically require some minor editorial revisions by supervisor before distribution.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Accurately reads and assesses situations and responds effectively.	Identifies sensitive issue and escalates it to the appropriate level, following up to ensure organizational understanding.
Effectively tailors the amount and format of information included in straightforward communications to meet the audience's needs.	Following office protocols, ensures that all written responses contain the appropriate information and are sent to intended audience.
Effectively explains viewpoint when necessary.	Presents proposed procedural changes during a meeting, answering questions and defending changes in a clear manner. Explains policy changes to customers, providing rational responses and answering questions.
Independently prepares and delivers routine communications that are clear, concise, and timely.	Composes written materials (for example, customer emails) that summarize issues clearly within established deadlines, rarely requiring revisions.

GS-11/12/13
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Applies effective listening skills and appropriately responds when communicating with others.	Asks relevant questions, listens to the responses without interruption and asks appropriate follow-up questions.
Solicits, shows respect for, and carefully considers others' ideas, comments, and questions within scope of work.	Listens respectfully to a colleague's statements and provides thoughtful constructive responses.
Effectively explains or defends viewpoint when necessary.	Presents proposed policy changes during a meeting, answering stakeholder questions and defending changes in a clear manner.
Independently prepares and delivers communications that are clear, concise, and timely.	Composes formal email or memo that summarizes issue clearly within established deadline.
Writes communications that generally require few substantive or editorial revisions.	Casework, policies, procedures and other written materials are accurate and well-written.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Accurately reads and assesses more ambiguous situations and responds effectively.	During an interview, observes the applicant's demeanor and takes a few minutes to establish a rapport before asking official questions.
Effectively explains or defends viewpoint to audiences who hold opposing views.	Presents proposed policy changes during a meeting, addressing concerns and maintaining poise when faced with strong opposition to proposed changes.
Independently and effectively tailors communication style (for example, language, tone, level of specificity) and customizes communications to the audience.	When composing written material intended for wide distribution, recognizes the sensitive nature of the complex issue and adjusts the tone to provide the appropriate level of detail.

Competency 2: Customer Service

Definition: Communicates with customers to understand their needs. Works with customers to set expectations and keeps them informed of issues or problems. Provides timely, flexible, and responsive services to customers.

GS-7/9

Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Effectively and appropriately interacts with customers, as directed, to understand their needs and provide them with routine or less complex information, products, or services in a timely manner.	When interacting with customers, demonstrates empathy and a courteous demeanor, using correct grammar and providing the appropriate information and guidance.
With guidance, seeks input to clarify customer needs.	Seeks input from colleagues and supervisors prior to responding to customer requests to confirm information accuracy.
Keeps supervisor informed of customer-related issues, as appropriate.	Recognizes issues with potential policy implications or that could generate widespread public interest and brings them to supervisor's attention.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Takes initiative to learn about and engage with customers; provides high-quality service.	After receiving an applicant's request (for example, Service Request Management Tool request), takes initiative to contact customer via phone and resolves the issue, saving the applicant an additional trip to the office.
Recognizes and addresses potential issues or inconsistencies in customer needs.	Identifies a customer need and recommends a viable change to office procedure (for example, FAQ website) which improves the overall customer service of the office.
Displays flexibility in responding to changing customer needs.	When faced with competing priorities, remains flexible, going beyond what is expected to ensure customer's needs are met.

GS-11/12/13
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Reaches out to customers to gather information about their requirements and needs.	Communicates with an applicant about their request, providing the appropriate information and guidance.
Develops and delivers products or provides services to meet those needs in a timely manner.	Recognizing that an internal customer requires assistance on an urgent procurement matter and quickly develops an accurate fact sheet to address the issue.

Discusses expectations with customers, keeps customers informed of problems that could delay progress, and suggests workable solutions.	Provides a customer with information on each step of the application process and standard time frames for completion to reduce customer anxiety and confusion.
Responds to questions or requests from customers within reasonable time frames.	While working at the customer information center, verifies case status and takes reasonable steps to provide service beyond basic status check.
Displays flexibility in responding to changing customer needs.	When faced with competing priorities, remains flexible, going beyond what is expected to ensure customer's needs are met.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Independently develops creative and useful ideas that add significant value to products and services.	Makes viable suggestions to management for ways to improve operational processes, improve ways of disseminating information, and/or increase customer comprehension.
Anticipates customer needs and resolves or avoids potential problems, maximizing customer satisfaction.	The officer proactively seeks to resolve a pending case (for example, taking meaningful steps to determine status), and provides follow-up instruction.

Competency 3: Representing the Agency

Definition: Represents the agency and its interests in interactions with external parties. Ensures that interactions with and information provided to outside parties reflect positively on the agency. Enhances trust and credibility in the agency and its mission through effective professional interactions with others outside the organization. Deals professionally and tactfully with external parties, even in difficult, tense, or emergency situations.

GS-7/9
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Presents a professional image when interacting with others.	Employee is respectful, reflecting a positive image for themselves and the agency as a whole.
In predictable situations where roles are well defined, handles interactions with others in a tactful and calm manner.	Employee is courteous and cooperative when interacting with colleagues, customers and stakeholders in everyday situations.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Demonstrates a high degree of professionalism and tact when dealing with others in less predictable situations.	Remains calm and respectful when confronted by a difficult, demanding and/or angry customer, consistently upholding the agency's interests and core values.

Takes effective steps to defuse or resolve confrontational situations in a manner that reflects positively on the agency.	Proactively and appropriately addresses a conflict in a manner that assists in the resolution of the issue.

GS-11/12/13
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Presents a professional image when interacting with others, establishing trust and credibility.	Employee is respectful, reflecting a positive image for themselves and the agency as a whole.
In unpredictable situations, stays calm and handles somewhat difficult, tense or emergency situations with good judgment and professionalism.	Remains calm and respectful when confronted by a difficult, demanding, and/or angry customer, consistently upholding the agency's interests and core values.
Takes effective steps to defuse or resolve confrontational situations in a manner that reflects positively on the agency.	Proactively and appropriately addresses a conflict in a manner that assists in the resolution of the issue.

Achieved Excellence
In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Engages with others in a manner that earns their respect and helps to advance the agency's goals and objectives.	Builds effective relationships with external organizations, taking the initiative to establish themselves as an authoritative point of contact, when appropriate.
Takes action to effectively manage difficult, tense, or emergency situations.	Initiates a working group to proactively address a controversial issue, defusing tension by suggesting a course of action that is agreeable to all involved parties. When confronted by a demanding, angry group, remains calm and respectfully listens to the group's demands. Assures them that their message will be conveyed to the relevant office for proper consideration and explains why the other office, rather than their own, is the one that must consider the matter.

Competency 4: Teamwork and Cooperation

Definition: Makes positive contributions to achieving team goals. Develops and maintains collaborative working relationships with others. Builds effective partnerships that facilitate working across boundaries, groups, or organizations. Respects and values individual differences and diversity by treating everyone fairly and professionally. Works constructively with others to reach mutually acceptable agreements to resolve conflicts.

GS-7/9
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Contributes to accomplishing goals by working collaboratively with others.	Assumes personal responsibility for assigned duties, is cooperative and demonstrates competence as a team member. Within area of expertise, willingly briefs teammates on issues relevant to the completion of office goals. When working as part of a team, individual contributions meet team expectations. Ensures the smooth transitions of assignments and tasks.
Consults senior team members or supervisors on more difficult situations.	Recognizing that a particular issue has agency-wide implications, brings the matter to the attention of a supervisor to ensure proper coordination and resolution.
Deals with everyone fairly, equitably and professionally, respecting and valuing individual differences and diversity.	Demonstrates respect for others' opinions and views by listening to and considering input from colleagues on a particular issue.
Handles minor disagreements or conflicts in a professional manner.	Responds constructively to a complaint from a colleague and helps resolve the issue by maintaining a positive attitude.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Collaborates beyond what is expected resulting in high-impact contributions.	Supports supervisor by modeling specific procedures or activities (such as mission support) for teammates so that they observe firsthand how to address issues that may arise.
Contributes to a climate of trust and develops relationships with others that result in more effective team performance.	Consistently follows through on commitments when collaborating with groups outside of the office and/or agency. Acts as a peer mentor, taking initiative to guide and/or assist coworkers within area of expertise.
Effectively defuses or avoids conflicts.	Actively develops positive relationships with others to reduce the potential for conflict. If a disagreements or conflict arises, responds in a constructive way and implements corrective measures to avoid similar conflicts in the future.

GS-11/12/13
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Contributes to achieving goals by working collaboratively with others and building effective partnerships across organizational boundaries.	After completing assigned casework and/or duties, volunteers for extra assignments, thereby contributing to the productivity and timeliness goals for the division/team/office.
Independently offers assistance and provides support to advance goals.	Assists a newly hired employee with navigating a complex database.
Effectively handles disagreements or conflicts, resolving them in a constructive manner.	Remains calm when resolving disagreements during a heated stakeholder meeting.
Consults with senior team members or supervisors when appropriate and makes viable recommendations for resolving differences.	Recognizing that a particular issue has agency-wide implications, brings the matter to the attention of a supervisor and outlines the benefits and challenges of different options to resolve the issue.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Collaborates beyond what is expected resulting in high-impact contributions.	Recognizes a need and with management approval, takes the lead on collaborating with others to address the issue (for example, develops and provides training for local law enforcement agencies to prepare certifications for victim petitions).
Contributes to a climate of trust and skillfully develops productive relationships and networks that advance goals.	When collaborating with groups outside of the agency, demonstrates a clear understanding of USCIS's role, encourages free exchange of information, and consistently follows through on commitments.
Anticipates situations with potential for conflict and takes effective steps to minimize escalation.	When planning for a stakeholder meeting, anticipates potential issues that may arise and prepares appropriate responses in advance.
Considers all sides of issues and develops effective compromises or resolutions.	Facilitates consensus on a resolution to a complex and/or ongoing issue in a manner that is acceptable to all parties.

Competency 5: Technical Proficiency

Definition: Demonstrates and applies relevant knowledge and skills to perform work in accordance with applicable guidelines. Uses appropriate and available technology or tools to perform work activities. Acquires, develops, and maintains relevant and appropriate job skills through training or other opportunities for learning and development. Stays up to date on developments related to own work. Demonstrates an understanding of the organization's mission, functions, and systems. Collects relevant information needed to identify and address problems or issues. Analyzes and integrates information to identify issues and draw sound conclusions. Identifies and evaluates alternative solutions to problems. Makes sound, well-informed, and timely decisions or recommendations. Identifies and uses innovative or creative methods and solutions to accomplish work, as appropriate. Maintains an awareness of available resources and the process for acquiring resources. Identifies and advocates for resources required to accomplish work activities or projects. Makes effective and efficient use of available resources. Safeguards available resources to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

GS-7/9
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Successfully applies basic knowledge and skills (including the use of technology and tools) to perform more routine assignments within own occupational specialty, seeking guidance as appropriate.	Ensures that system access and/or security procedures remain up-to-date or are reinstated at the earliest possible time to minimize negative impact on productivity. Completes mandatory training within established deadlines.
Demonstrates a basic understanding of the applicable organization's mission, functions, values and relevant policies or procedures; carries out basic tasks in accordance with these.	Consults current procedures and guidance to ensure written communication on a basic policy matter is accurate.
Is generally familiar with the basic resources needed to perform own work, and uses resources as directed to complete own work in an efficient manner.	Uses available resources to accurately complete tasks and assignments within established deadlines.

With guidance, effectively gathers relevant information from routine sources and analyzes information to identify reasonable solutions for issues or problems at this level.	With guidance from supervisor, researches routine issue and develops list of viable options.
Makes well-reasoned decisions in situations involving own specialized work.	Independently and accurately addresses routine issues within their work area with minimal supervision.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Successfully performs advanced tasks with minimal supervision.	Demonstrates advanced knowledge by accurately completing a complex case with little guidance or intervention by the supervisor.
Continually broadens and enhances job skills, resulting in performing more complex work activities.	Seeks out and volunteers for opportunities that will enhance expertise and develop interdisciplinary capabilities.
Takes initiative to discover and make useful suggestions about ways to use resources more efficiently in performing own work.	Recognizes that customer inquiries on a particular issue are becoming more frequent and develops a standard template for response to save time and ensure consistency.
Effectively conducts routine analyses and presents recommendations on issues with minimal supervision; seeks opportunities and takes initiative to assist in addressing more complex problems.	Independently conducts market research during procurement process, providing summary of viable options and recommendations to supervisor.

GS-11/12/13
Achieved Expectations

Standards	Examples
Successfully applies basic knowledge and skills (including use of technology and tools) to independently perform a full range of assignments, seeking guidance as appropriate.	Demonstrates advanced knowledge by accurately completing several complex cases on a range of issues with minimal consultation with a supervisor.
Uses formal or informal feedback on own performance to develop job skills that facilitate achieving results.	Actively contributes to performance evaluation process, remaining open to manager's feedback and taking steps to develop additional job skills based on that feedback.
Demonstrates an understanding of the applicable organization's mission, functions and values, the interrelationships between various units and organizations, and relevant policies or procedures; uses this knowledge to carry out a full range of work assignments.	Uses available resources to accurately complete tasks and assignments within established deadlines.
Demonstrates working knowledge of the resources available to perform work.	Uses appropriate DHS databases to conduct security checks, taking initiative to learn about the databases and procedures and continually references relevant materials as new issues arise.
Identifies and acquires needed resources and ensures that use of resources is efficient and consistent with the planned project or activity.	Noticing an unusual increase in incoming customer inquiries, coordinates with supervisor to identify the resources needed to address the demand.
Effectively gathers complete and relevant information from appropriate sources to address issues or problems.	While conducting adjudications, encounters a number of cases with the same eligibility issue and refers cases to relevant resources available in the office.

Effectively analyzes information to identify issues, weigh alternatives, and draw logical conclusions.	Drafts a thorough adjudicative decision based on the information provided and/or collected from available resources.
Anticipates and resolves a full range of problems or issues.	In tackling a new project, identifies process deficiencies that could compromise quality and develops a new standard operating procedure to address the issue.
Makes well-reasoned, timely decisions and recommendations affecting own work.	Independently and accurately addresses routine issues within their work area with minimal guidance.

Achieved Excellence

In addition to achieving the expectations above, the employee also performs with distinction in one or more of the following areas:

Standards	Examples
Successfully uses knowledge to independently perform highly complex or varied assignments at this level.	Accurately completes complex cases on a range of issues with no consultation with a supervisor.
Continually broadens and enhances expertise, resulting in performing more complex work activities.	Continually evaluates own performance, identifying gaps in skills or knowledge and taking steps to further improve ability to perform complex work and develop interdisciplinary capabilities.
Accomplishes tasks in a highly efficient and effective manner and makes high-impact contributions.	Is sought out by management to provide guidance in areas of expertise, consistently providing advice that has a positive impact.
Takes initiative to expand knowledge about resources available and makes useful suggestions that increase efficiency.	Suggests innovative and plausible ways that databases can be used to increase employee efficiency while conducting security checks.
Identifies and uses effective methods to gather information in a highly efficient manner.	While using DHS databases to conduct security checks, implements changes in the way someone looks up information, resulting in significant efficiencies in routine security check processing.
Regularly and correctly identifies key issues.	When conducting research, realizes that the relevant sources available in the office do not completely address a unique or unusual issue and conducts additional search using online USCIS materials and an online research database, identifying the key issues and drafting a decision to resolve the issue.
Anticipates and identifies alternative solutions for problems that have a variety of viable solutions.	Prepares an options paper, outlining the benefits and challenges of implementing certain options to address a policy issue and makes recommendations.
Seeks opportunities to participate in addressing more complex problems.	Volunteers to adjudicate a case with unique and unusual issues.

Attachments:
   A.   Affirmative Interview Evaluation Form
   B.   Affirmative Written Decision Evaluation Form
   C.   Affirmative Administrative Task Evaluation Form
   D.   GS-7/9 AO1 Pre and Post Adjudication Activities Evaluation Form
   E.   National Security and Fraud Detection Evaluation Form
   F.   APSO Interview Evaluation Form
   G.   APSO Written Decision Evaluation Form
   H.   APSO Administrative Task Evaluation Form

I. MPP Combined Forms (Interview, Written Decision, and Administrative Tasks)
J. I-730 Evaluation Form
K. AMI Interview Evaluation Form
L. AMI Written Decision Evaluation Form
M. AMI Administrative Task Evaluation Form
J. AO Biweekly Report and Timeliness Log
K. AO PPA Workbook Report