



Rater Consistency Handbook



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How to Use this Handbook

Purpose:

This handbook is intended to assist management teams (Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, Performance Management Performance Review Authorities (PM PRA), and Senior Leaders) in understanding and implementing rater consistency. The handbook includes a brief explanation of what rater consistency is, the value of rater consistency discussions, a rater consistency activity timeline, rater consistency roles and responsibilities, and checklists for rater consistency discussions held at the beginning, midterm, and end of the performance evaluation period.

Included in the rater consistency discussion checklists are discussion points and optional exercises to help management teams build trust in the system and create a shared understanding of the performance standards and performance expectations for the work performed within their work group. Rater consistency discussions can happen during a staff meeting or a separate rater consistency session. The discussions do not need a formal facilitator and can be led by a “Meeting Leader” (e.g., Reviewing Official, PM PRA, Business Executive, Chief of Staff, Senior Leader). A formal facilitator (e.g., Human Resource Official) may facilitate the discussion if recommended by your organization’s rater consistency process, or if desired by the management team.

This handbook is not intended to be read once and then set aside. Rather, it is designed to be a tool to assist with rater consistency activities throughout the performance evaluation period. Understanding the rater consistency activities and holding rater consistency discussions early and throughout the performance evaluation period is a small investment with big payoffs as compared to the time, frustration, and effort involved in correcting inconsistent and inappropriate ratings and restoring employee trust.

Target Audience:

Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, PM PRAs, and Senior Leaders

Supporting Materials:

Appendices A-J are located in the back of this handbook.

Appendices K-M are not included, due to the size of the documents, but can be found here:

K, http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/140025v2007_17apr2012.pdf

L, <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/1400.25-V2011.pdf>

M, http://dcips.dtic.mil/documents/IC_Performance_Standards_23Apr09_Final.pdf

What is Rater Consistency?



Within the Intelligence Community (IC), rater consistency is a process to establish a common understanding among Rating and Reviewing Officials of the performance standards and how they should be applied to performance elements and performance objectives in a specific work environment. When Rating and Reviewing Officials implement and follow the rater consistency process and hold rater consistency discussions, the intended result is that individuals performing similar work and producing similar results within a given workgroup would receive a consistent rating.

Rater consistency is an integral part of the DCIPS performance management process that includes, planning, setting, and communicating individual and organizational performance expectations to employees; monitoring and measuring their performance; providing feedback; taking appropriate steps to improve employee performance; addressing poor performance; and rating and rewarding employee performance to reflect the accomplishment of individual and organizational goals and objectives.

As a brief review, employees are evaluated on two components – (1) performance elements (the how) and (2) performance objectives (the what). The rater consistency process holds Rating and Reviewing Officials accountable for supporting the ratings they assign, ensuring that Rating and Reviewing Officials understand and can apply ratings that are based on established standards¹, and that the ratings they assign are supported by actual performance from the current evaluation period.

Ultimately, the rater consistency process is designed to promote consistent application of the performance standards, thereby supporting equity in ratings and building employee trust in the system.

¹ DoD Instruction 1400.25-V2011, DCIPS Performance Management, Table 1, “General Standards for Performance Objectives and Element Rating Descriptors” and Table 2, “Converting Average Rating to Evaluation of Record” are the established standards for rating Defense intelligence positions under DCIPS (Appendix H of this guide).

Why are Rater Consistency Discussions Important?

Rater consistency discussions are conducted to achieve a shared understanding of expectations and application of the performance standards in order to ensure that a consistent and equitable assessment is made for all employees. For example, rater consistency discussions help ensure that when one Rating Official assigns a rating to an objective or an element that he/she applies the same standards that would result in the same assigned rating by other Rating Officials looking at the same work.

While there are a number of reasons why a Rating Official might intentionally or unintentionally give an employee a higher or lower rating than the employee's performance would support, the impact of such inconsistent or inflated ratings on an organization can be far reaching. First, it directly impacts the perception of trust towards the system to produce equitable and consistent results. Second, inaccurate ratings could penalize truly high performers who may not receive performance-based rewards consistent with their accomplishments and impact. Finally, it gives employees a false sense of their accomplishments and contribution to the mission, both to employees who received inflated ratings and those who work with them. This is a disservice to all employees in regards to growth and development and creates challenges for future efforts to support consistent ratings aligned to the performance standards.



Achieving rater consistency involves on-going dialogue between Rating Officials (generally supervisors and managers) and Reviewing Officials, and ideally the Performance Management Performance Review Authority (PM PRA) and senior leaders. These discussions help Rating and Reviewing Officials establish a common framework of understanding about how performance standards will be applied to performance elements and performance objectives in a specific work environment. This is an important “check and balance” built into the performance management process.

Finally, rater consistency is **not**, and **cannot** be, about meeting a prescribed quota per rating level (e.g., only 10% of employees can receive an Outstanding rating) **nor** is it about rating employees to fit a bell-shaped curve. Instead, it is about applying a common set of performance standards to rate employees equitably and consistently across the organization based on their performance against established performance objectives and performance elements for the performance period.

Benefits of Focusing on Rater Consistency

Rating Official / Reviewing Official / Performance Management Performance Review Authority / Senior Leadership Benefits

- **Saves time** – Starting the rater consistency process at the beginning of the evaluation period and continuing throughout the period increases the likelihood that ratings and narratives will be accurate when submitted at the end of the performance period. Sending back or revising a small percentage of evaluations for changes because they do not clearly support the standards for the ratings assigned may not be a big deal, but if you have to send back or revise any more than that, that is a significant amount of time that could have been avoided by establishing and following consistent application of the standards for your work group.
- **Trust** – Increases morale when Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, and everyone involved in the performance management process feel like they can trust the system to produce equitable, consistent results.
- **Job Satisfaction** – Increases job satisfaction when Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, and other leaders involved in the performance management process feel they are making meaningful contributions to mission success and that their efforts supporting a shared understanding and rater consistency are recognized.
- **Employee growth** – Fosters employee growth by helping Rating Officials identify clear performance expectations and provide accurate, honest feedback that empowers the employee. Employees who receive unclear expectations and inaccurate feedback or ratings not supported by their performance are at a disadvantage; they are not made aware of what was expected of them and/or an area where they are either excelling or could improve. Without accurate understanding of what is expected of them and how they are performing, employees may not seek opportunities to enhance skills or take advantage of developmental assignments.
- **Reduce costly mistakes** – Saves time, effort, and costly mistakes made by employees who were not clear on their performance expectations due to vague and/or misaligned performance objectives.
- **Team morale** – When Rating Officials evaluate and rate their employees according to performance standards accurately across the organization, it identifies both high and poor performers and helps to facilitate a culture that recognizes high performers and holds poor performers accountable for their performance.



- **Mission achievement** – Ensures alignment between employees, organizations, component, and IC goals; fosters greater integration of the IC by creating a more consistent approach to performance management practices.
- **Grow bench strength** – Establishing clear performance expectations increases the opportunity to understand and focus development appropriate to employees’ knowledge, skills, and career aspirations.
- **Workforce retention** – Increases job satisfaction when those involved in the performance management process feel they are making a meaningful contribution to mission success and that their efforts supporting a shared understanding and rater consistency are recognized.

Employee Benefits

- **Trust** – Increases morale and trust in the system when employees believe a process is being followed and standards are being applied to produce appropriate and consistent ratings.
- **Job satisfaction** – When performance plans are aligned with and support the mission, it increases employee understanding that what they do truly matters and makes a difference.
- **Saves time** – Less frustration and rework is necessary when employees’ performance expectations and the process are clear.
- **Engagement** – Provides regular opportunities for employees to dialog with their Rating Officials regarding the performance management process and their performance expectations, and provides opportunities for feedback and clear understanding which builds trust in the performance management system.
- **Rewarding performance** – Employee trust in the performance management system and the rating and reviewing process helps support understanding and acceptance of the related rewards as equitable and based on performance.
- **Team morale** – Consistent and accurate ratings cultivate a collaborative team atmosphere that promotes a sense of equality and transparency.



Rater Consistency Activity Timeline

Phase	Rater Consistency Activity	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period	1 Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, and PM PRA meet and complete items on Rater Consistency Checklist #1 (see page 8); Senior Leadership may want to provide a message about performance management														
	2 Rating Official and Employee meet and establish a performance plan														
	3 Recommended training for each role (employee, supervisor/manager, leader) during this timeframe has a corresponding training roadmap located at the DCIPS website, http://dcips.dtic.mil/training.html														
Midterm	1 Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials meet and complete items on Rater Consistency Checklist #2 (see page 12)														
	2 Rating Official and Employee meet for Mandatory Midpoint Review														
End of Performance Evaluation Period	1 Employee submits a self-report of accomplishments to Rating Official														
	2 Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials (and PM PRA should be engaged) meet and complete items on Rater Consistency Checklist #3 (see page 14); Senior Leadership makes an announcement pertaining to the close-out of the performance evaluation period and expectations of the leadership team														
	3 After given approval to do so (Reviewing Official and PM PRA have approved the Evaluations of Record), Rating Official and Employee meet to discuss the Performance Evaluation of Record														
	4 Recommended training for each role (employee, supervisor/manager, leader) during this timeframe has a corresponding training roadmap located at the DCIPS website, http://dcips.dtic.mil/training.html														
Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	1 On-going performance management dialogue between Rating Official and Employee, both informal and formal														
	2 Recommended training for each role (employee, supervisor/manager, leader) during this timeframe has a corresponding training roadmap located at the DCIPS website, http://dcips.dtic.mil/training.html														

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Rater Consistency Discussion Checklists

Achieving appropriate and consistent ratings requires regular communication between Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, the Performance Management Performance Review Authority (PM PRA), and senior leadership. The following checklists contain recommended best practices and optional exercises for rater consistency discussions at the beginning, midterm, and end of a performance evaluation period. Having these discussions up front and throughout the performance period is a small investment with big payoffs as compared to the time, frustration, and effort involved in correcting inconsistent and inappropriate ratings and restoring employee trust.

Rater Consistency Checklist #1			
Phase: Beginning of the Performance Evaluation Period			
<p>Directions: <i>The rater consistency discussion at the beginning of the evaluation period serves as a “setting the stage” event in the effort to ensure aligned performance expectations and achieve consistent ratings. When done effectively, the bulk of the time and effort needed to align performance expectations happens during this discussion, making the discussions at the midterm and end of the performance evaluation period much easier and less time consuming. Having this discussion ensures that the management team and employees start the performance period on the same page when it comes to performance expectations. This creates clarity, understanding, trust in the process, and increases the likelihood of accomplishing the mission when employee efforts are aligned with Component goals and objectives.</i></p> <p><i>Recommended discussion items are listed in the “Action Items” column in the table below. The action items are divided into three sections: prior to the discussion, during the discussion, and after the discussion. Included with some of the action items are optional exercises designed to increase understanding of the rater consistency process.</i></p> <p><i>This rater consistency discussion is among Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials, and ideally, the PM PRA and senior leadership. The discussion could happen during a staff meeting or a separate rater consistency session. The discussion does not need a formal facilitator and can be led by a “Meeting Leader” (e.g., Reviewing Official, PM PRA, Business Executive, Chief of Staff, Senior Leader). A formal facilitator (e.g., Human Resource Official) may facilitate the discussion if recommended by your organization’s rater consistency process.</i></p>			
Prior to the Discussion			
#	✓	Action Items	Resources/Tips
1		<p>Prepare for meeting</p> <p>Meeting Leader (e.g., Reviewing Official, PM PRA, Business Executive, Chief of Staff, Senior Leader, or Human Resource Official) prepares for the rater consistency discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As needed, schedule room and/or remote meeting equipment (e.g., VTC, teleconference) Send meeting invitations - Tell participants what information to prepare before and/or bring to the meeting (e.g., performance objectives, performance standards, position descriptions, mission goals) 	<p>Tip for Meeting Leader: Review the following job aids prior to holding the rater consistency discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective Meeting Facilitation Tips (see Appendix A) Tips for Managing Group Conflict During Rater Consistency

Rater Consistency Checklist #1			
Phase: Beginning of the Performance Evaluation Period			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare copies of exercises, job aids, appendices K-M, and/or tools you plan to use during the discussion • Complete any additional prep work applicable to the rater consistency process followed in your organization 	Discussions (see Appendix B)
During the Discussion			
#	✓	Action Items	Resources/Tips
2		<p>Review purpose/goals of this rater consistency discussion</p> <p>The purpose of this discussion is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set your management team up for success in achieving consistent, appropriate ratings at the end of the performance evaluation period • Enable Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials and the PM PRA to make meaningful distinctions between levels of performance • Address any misperceptions that may exist regarding how to evaluate and rate employees • Increase employee trust in the process to produce equitable, consistent results • Accomplish the mission by ensuring performance objectives are aligned with the mission <p>This is done by establishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared understanding of the appropriate work for various grade and band levels, performance standards for the performance elements and performance objectives and how they will be consistently applied within your work group • A shared understanding of performance expectations for the work levels in your work group • Appropriate performance objectives for the work levels in your work group <p>Remember, once your management team comes to a shared understanding of the performance standards and expectations for your work group, it is important that each team member consistently apply what they have agreed to rather than go back to their individual thinking or approach after the discussion ends</p>	<p>Tip: As needed, refer to pages 5 – 6 of this handbook and review the benefits of focusing on rater consistency</p> <p>Tip: Encourage discussion participants to engage in constructive dialogue throughout the discussion—challenge differing perspectives, ask open-ended questions, share insights, respectfully listen to the opinions of others—to achieve a shared understanding</p>
3		Review the mission goals, strategies, and priorities for your organization for the current evaluation period	Tip for Meeting Leader: Be prepared to share these items during the meeting
4		Discuss the results data from the prior evaluation period to help inform the performance expectations for the current evaluation period:	

Rater Consistency Checklist #1		
Phase: Beginning of the Performance Evaluation Period		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you assess organizational performance (e.g., an exceptional year, a good year, or perhaps a developing year as you got up to speed on a new effort)? • What circumstances impacted performance expectations and meeting mission objectives (e.g., leadership reorganization, facility move)? • What are lessons learned that you can apply to the current evaluation period?
5		<p>Establish a shared understanding of the performance standards for both objectives and elements and a commitment to adhere to what you agree upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review what the standards are and where to find them (See Optional Exercise #1 in Appendix C) • Discuss how the standards should be applied (frame of reference) for performance elements and performance objectives according to the work in your work group (e.g., what are the behaviors and results that would constitute Successful, Excellent, and Outstanding performance at various work levels?) See Optional Exercise 2, Appendix D • Discuss how much above Successful performance would constitute an Excellent or Outstanding rating. It is important to create a shared understanding that performance that is a little above Successful is not necessarily a higher level of performance
6		<p>Establish consistent performance objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the critical role performance objectives play in achieving rater consistency (i.e., performance objectives ratings are given based on performance against established objectives and according to the standards. When performance objectives are not accurate, aligned appropriately to work levels or work assigned to the position, SMART, or reflective of the work the employee is actually doing, it is unlikely employees will receive performance objective ratings that are truly consistent and commensurate with their performance (See Optional Exercise #3 in Appendix E) • Discuss whether the performance objectives for the positions in your work group are aligned to organizational goals, follow the SMART criteria, are written at the Successful level, and are appropriate for the individuals work level and position • Discuss whether your employee performance objectives are consistent for employees at the same work level, performing similar work both within your work group and across offices, and that performance measures are

Optional Exercise 1 – What the Standards are and How to Use Them (see Appendix C)
 Optional Exercise 2 – Process for Creating a Shared Understanding of the Standards (see Appendix D)
 Job Aid: General Standards tables (see Appendix H)
 A position’s work level is often identified in the position description. Contact your HR office if you do not know the work level of a given position.

Optional Exercise 3 – Impact of Performance Objectives on Rater Consistency (see Appendix E)
 Training Course: *one of the several different offerings of writing SMART objectives courses, found at the DCIPS website, <http://dcips.dtic.mil/training.html>.*
 Tip for Reviewing Officials: Rather than quickly signing off on objectives, make sure they are clear, and accurately aligned, as this is key to having consistent, accurate ratings

Rater Consistency Checklist #1			
Phase: Beginning of the Performance Evaluation Period			
		appropriate and focus on impact and results	
7		Review the common rating errors job aid and discuss how to avoid the errors within your work group	Optional Exercise 4 – Common Rating Errors (see Appendix F)
8		Discuss various performance tracking methods that can be used to track employee performance throughout the evaluation period (e.g., Microsoft Outlook calendar or notes; Microsoft Excel or Word file; paper-based journal; HR Information System)	
9		Document the performance expectations you have discussed and the agreed upon shared understanding of the standards (frame of reference) for evaluating performance elements and performance objectives	Tip: You will save time and rework at the end of the evaluation period if you ensure clarity and understanding of expectations at the beginning
After the Discussion			
#	✓	Action Items	Resources/Tips
10		Meeting Leader sends attendees discussion notes, as applicable	
11		<p>Rating Official and Employee Meet</p> <p>Rating Official communicates with Employee in a one-on-one discussion, preferably in a private location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review/create the employee’s Performance Plan • Outline and clarify performance expectations • Provide concrete examples of the behaviors and results that would constitute Successful performance, and discuss expectations pertaining to the on-going, frequent performance that would exceed the Successful level; provide concrete examples 	<p>Training Course:</p> <p><i>DCIPS 101</i></p> <p><i>Setting Performance Expectations</i></p> <p><i>Putting Yourself in the Other Person’s Shoes</i></p>

Rater Consistency Checklist #2

Phase: Midterm of the Performance Evaluation Period

Directions: The rater consistency discussion at the Midterm of the performance evaluation period serves as an opportunity to check in and ensure the leadership team is consistently applying the performance expectations and shared understanding of the standards established at the beginning of the performance period. It is also an opportunity to identify any changes, such as a mission change or unit reorganization, that either has or will affect performance expectations. Having this discussion ensures that the management team and employees are on the same page when it comes to performance expectations. This creates clarity, understanding, trust in the process, and increases the likelihood of accomplishing the mission when employee efforts are aligned with Component goals and objectives.

Recommended discussion items are listed in the “Action Items” column in the table below. The action items are divided into three sections: prior to the discussion, during the discussion, and after the discussion. Included with some of the action items are optional exercises designed to increase understanding of the rater consistency process.

This rater consistency discussion is among Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials, and ideally, the PM PRA and senior leadership. The discussion could happen during a staff meeting or a separate rater consistency session. The discussion does not need a formal facilitator and can be led by a “Meeting Leader” (e.g., Reviewing Official, PM PRA, Business Executive, Chief of Staff, Senior Leader). A formal facilitator (e.g., Human Resource Official) may facilitate the discussion if recommended by your organization’s rater consistency process.

Prior to the Discussion

#	✓	Action	Resources/Tips
1		<p>Prepare for meeting</p> <p>Meeting Leader (e.g., Reviewing Official, PM PRA, Business Executive, Chief of Staff, Senior Leader, or Human Resource Official) prepares for the rater consistency discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As needed, schedule room and/or remote meeting equipment (e.g., VTC, teleconference) • Send meeting invitations - Tell participants what information to prepare before and/or bring to the meeting (e.g., performance objectives, performance standards, position descriptions, mission goals) • Prepare copies of exercises, job aids, and/or tools you plan to use during the discussion • Complete any additional prep work applicable to the rater consistency process followed in your organization 	<p>Tip for Meeting Leader: Review the following job aids prior to holding the rater consistency discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Meeting Facilitation Tips (see Appendix A) • Tips for Managing Group Conflict During Rater Consistency Discussions (see Appendix B)

During the Discussion

#	✓	Action	Resources/Tips
2		At a high-level, review general midterm performance, both within your work unit and within your organization. Are there examples of exceptional performance, or performance that is not meeting the standards?	Job Aid: General Standards table (see Appendix H)
3		Discuss how Rating Officials are considering performance and ensure consistency based on the shared understanding of the	Tip: Encourage discussion participants to engage in

		standards and expectations agreed upon during the discussion held at the beginning of the evaluation period	constructive dialogue throughout the discussion
4		<p>If your organization assigns midterm performance ratings, ensure performance is being evaluated consistently and that ratings are appropriately awarded based on the established expectations and the performance standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use specific examples of behaviors for the performance elements and specific examples of impact and results for the performance objectives • Identify anomalies • Discuss and consider areas where the same levels of performance are resulting in different ratings; make adjustments to achieve consistency 	Optional Exercise 4 – Common Rating Errors (see Appendix F)
5		In general terms, discuss whether performance objectives are still relevant and achievable given any changes that may have occurred since the beginning of the performance period	
6		Document any changes to performance expectations and the agreed upon common application of the standards that was established at the beginning of the performance period	
After the Discussion			
#	✓	Action	Resources/Tips
7		Meeting Leader sends attendees discussion notes, as applicable	
8		<p>Rating Official communicates with Employee in a one-on-one discussion, preferably in a private location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review objectives to determine they are still relevant and achievable; modify as needed • Discuss progress towards meeting performance objectives, and in relation to performance elements • Document any changes to performance objectives and/or performance expectations 	<p>Training Courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>C.O.A.C.H. for Success: How to Hold Performance Conversations Like a Pro</i>

Rater Consistency Checklist #3

Phase: End of the Performance Evaluation Period

Directions: The rater consistency discussion at the end of the performance evaluation period serves as an opportunity to ensure the management team is consistently applying the performance expectations and shared understanding of the standards established at the beginning of the performance period prior to Rating Officials submitting the Evaluation of Record for their employees. Having this discussion helps to create clarity, understanding, and trust in the process.

Recommended discussion items are listed in the “Action Items” column in the table below. The action items are divided into three sections: prior to the discussion, during the discussion, and after the discussion. Included with some of the action items are optional exercises designed to increase understanding of the rater consistency process.

This rater consistency discussion is among Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials, and ideally, the PM PRA and senior leadership. The discussion could happen during a staff meeting or a separate rater consistency session. The discussion does not need a formal facilitator and can be led by a “Meeting Leader” (e.g., Reviewing Official, PM PRA, Business Executive, Chief of Staff, Senior Leader). A formal facilitator (e.g., Human Resource Official) may facilitate the discussion if recommended by your organization’s rater consistency process.

Prior to the Discussion

#	✓	Action	Resources/Tips
1		<p>Prepare for meeting</p> <p>Meeting Leader (e.g., Reviewing Official, PM PRA, Business Executive, Chief of Staff, Senior Leader, or Human Resource Official) prepares for the rater consistency discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As needed, schedule room and/or remote meeting equipment (e.g., VTC, teleconference) • Send meeting invitations - Tell participants what information to prepare before and/or bring to the meeting (e.g., performance objectives, performance standards, position descriptions, mission goals) • Prepare copies of exercises, job aids, and/or tools you plan to use during the discussion • Complete any additional prep work applicable to the rater consistency process followed in your organization 	<p>Tip for Meeting Leader: Review the following job aids prior to holding the rater consistency discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Meeting Facilitation Tips (see Appendix A) • Tips for Managing Group Conflict During Rater Consistency Discussions (see Appendix B)

During the Discussion

#	✓	Action	Resources/Tips
2		<p>Discuss the organization’s progress towards the mission and goals established at the beginning of the current evaluation period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the organization excelling? Surviving? Meeting or exceeding? • What has been accomplished? • How can the accomplishments be aligned to employee performance? • Where is the organization falling short on goals and expectations? • How can the shortfalls be addressed? 	<p>Tip: Encourage participants to engage in constructive dialogue throughout the discussion—challenge differing perspectives, ask open-ended questions, share insights, respectfully listen to the opinions of others—to achieve a shared understanding</p>

Rater Consistency Checklist #3			
Phase: End of the Performance Evaluation Period			
3		<p>Discuss application of employee performance against the performance standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider organization and unit successes and efforts • Generally speaking, share examples of performance that met, exceeded, or failed to meet performance standards 	Job Aid: General Standards table (see Appendix H)
4		<p>Discuss the proposed performance ratings and how the standards were applied. Discuss examples and obtain consistency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use specific examples of behaviors • Identify and discuss anomalies 	Job Aid: General Standards table (see Appendix H)
5		<p>Discuss the consequences of sticking with an “unjustified” rating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of unfairness • Undermines employee trust in organizational leadership and the performance management system • Lowers morale • Decreases motivation • High performers leave • Potential impact on rewarding high performers 	Optional Exercise 4 – Common Rating Errors (see Appendix F)
6		<p>Commit Rating Officials to review their individual ratings in consideration of group consistency discussions and goals and make changes as appropriate; this builds trust amongst the management team and with employees</p>	Training Course: <i>Evaluating Performance and Preparing Performance Narratives</i>
7		<p>The group has the option to meet later, or could choose to discuss and/or create draft performance objectives for the next performance evaluation period to be used during the beginning of the performance period meeting between Rating Officials and employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What worked? What caused challenges? How can lessons learned be applied to improve employee performance objectives? • Ensure objectives are aligned to the mission and consistent for employees performing similar work both within and across offices 	Training Course: <i>Overcoming Challenges in Writing Performance Objectives</i>
After the Discussion			
#	✓	Action	Resources/Tips
8		Meeting Leader sends attendees discussion notes, as applicable	
9		<p>Rating Official communicates with Employee in a one-on-one discussion, preferably in a private location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once given the approval to do so, Rating Official communicates the Evaluation of Record to the Employee • Rating Official and Employee discuss how the evaluation period went and how to apply lessons learned to the next performance evaluation period • Rating Official and Employee discuss and/or create draft performance objectives for the next performance period 	Training Course: <i>How to Hold a Formal Feedback Review</i>

Rater Consistency Roles and Responsibilities

Rater consistency responsibilities support the performance management process and help build trust in the system. The following tables outline the responsibilities of Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, and the Performance Management Performance Review Authority.

Rating Official

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities
<p>Rating Official</p>	<p>Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in a rater consistency discussion to create a shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards • Ensures employees understand the performance management process and how rater consistency supports the process; shares any applicable messages from senior leadership • Meets with employees to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review/create the employee’s Performance Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set performance expectations in the form of performance objectives that are SMART and appropriate for the position and the work level and pay band or grade of the employee. ▪ Performance measures should focus on impact and results ▪ Discuss appropriate work behavior (performance elements) and explain how they relate to the performance objectives ▪ Create an IDP that focuses on developmental needs, ensuring employees are aware of training opportunities related to performance management ○ Outline and clarify performance expectations ○ Provide concrete examples of the behaviors and results that would constitute Successful performance, and discuss high level expectations pertaining to the on-going, frequent performance that would exceed the Successful level
	<p>Midterm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in a rater consistency discussion to create a shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards, created at the beginning of the performance period • Reviews employee self-report of accomplishments (if Midterm self-reports are required by organization) • Assesses performance to date in alignment to the performance plan; identifies changes necessary and areas of focus for the remainder of the performance period • Discusses performance with employee; seeks employee feedback on his/her perspective of the performance period thus far in

		<p>consideration of the performance plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents Mandatory Midpoint Review and sends review documentation to Reviewing Official for approval
	End of Performance Evaluation Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in a rater consistency discussion to create a shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards, created at the beginning of the performance period • Provides timeline for employees to submit their self-report of accomplishments • Reviews employee self-report of accomplishments • Writes evaluation narrative of employee performance (addresses the objectives and provides examples of the elements) and rates objectives and elements by applying the appropriate standards • Prepares the end-of-year Performance Evaluation of Record for each employee • Makes meaningful distinctions among employees regarding their performance • Submits recommendations to the Reviewing Official • Shares final Performance Evaluation of Record with employees <u>after</u> the Reviewing Official and PM PRA have completed their review and provided approval; if edits are necessary to align to policy, the edits are made and resubmitted to the Reviewing Official and PM PRA for review and approval
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses progress towards performance objectives and elements • Discusses performance plan and IDP and modifies as needed • Documents observed employee accomplishments • Gives feedback and engages in ongoing meaningful dialogue • Encourages employee performance through training, mentoring, and coaching • Addresses poor performance, when needed

Reviewing Official

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities
<p>Reviewing Official</p>	<p>Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts and/or participates in a rater consistency discussion with Rating Officials to create a shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards • Ensures performance objectives are clear, aligned, SMART, written at the Successful level, appropriate for the position and work level of the employee, and that performance measures clearly identify impact and results • Ensures the performance plan and IDP are established for all employees and reviews them for appropriateness • Approves performance plans • Provides oversight of timelines and processes • Ensures Rating Officials and Supervisors are properly trained in their roles in the performance management system and understand expectations of themselves in these roles
	<p>Midterm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts and/or participates in a rater consistency discussion with Rating Officials to review the shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards that was established at the beginning of the performance period • Reviews Midterm Review documentation to ensure consistency, if required • Reviews employee self-report of accomplishments, if included as part of the Midterm Review process • Ensures Rating Officials have performed Midterm Reviews and feedback sessions
	<p>End of Performance Evaluation Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts and/or participates in a rater consistency discussion with Rating Officials to review the shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards that was established at the beginning of the performance period • Reviews Performance Evaluations of Record to ensure consistency, alignment between ratings and supporting narratives, compliance with merit system principles, and adherence to other relevant policies • Completes review and approves Performance Evaluations of Record concurrently with the PM PRA review and final approval process, following component guidance • Makes any edits as necessary to align to policy
	<p>Throughout Performance Evaluation Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures Rating Officials provide performance feedback throughout the performance evaluation period

PM PRA (Performance Management Performance Review Authority)

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities
<p>PM PRA (Performance Management Performance Review Authority)</p>	<p>Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides high-level message about performance management and how rater consistency supports the process (optional) • Hosts and/or participates in a rater consistency discussion with Rating and Reviewing Officials to create shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards • Provides oversight of the performance management process
	<p>Midterm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts and/or participates in a rater consistency discussion with Rating and Reviewing Officials to create shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards that was established at the beginning of the performance evaluation period • Ensures all Midterm Reviews and feedback sessions within area of responsibility are completed
	<p>End of Performance Evaluation Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts and/or participates in a rater consistency discussion with Rating and Reviewing Officials to create shared understanding of expectations and the application of the performance standards that was established at the beginning of the performance evaluation period • Provides oversight of the performance evaluation process • Verifies compliance with merit system principles • Conducts final review of Performance Evaluations of Record to ensure consistency and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, concurrent with Reviewing Official review • Returns proposed final evaluations of record to support alignment with policy
	<p>Throughout Performance Evaluation Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides support and guidance to Rating and Reviewing Officials

Employee

Role	Phase	Responsibilities
Employee	Beginning of Evaluation Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in setting performance objectives and identifying ways to measure accomplishments Discusses his or her developmental needs and contributes input for performance plan and IDP with Rating Official
	Midterm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes a self-report of accomplishments on work performed up to this point (if required by organization) and provides to Rating Official Participates in mandatory Midterm Review
	End of Evaluation Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completes and submits the self-report of accomplishments according to organization guidelines Discusses performance with Rating Official Suggests ideas on areas of focus for next performance period Discusses goals as well as training and developmental opportunities for upcoming performance evaluation period
	Throughout Evaluation Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in developmental discussions, both formal and informal Self-monitors progress against performance plan throughout the year and documents performance Focuses on developing skills and abilities Takes advantage of opportunities, both formal and informal to engage rating official Keeps rating official engaged regarding successes and challenges Provides, receives, and acts on feedback Continues to seek developmental opportunities

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Appendix A – Effective Meeting Facilitation Tips

As the meeting facilitator:

- Help team members agree on meeting expectations, desired outcomes, and ground rules. Examples of ground rules may include:
 - Come prepared (e.g., proposed ratings, narratives, justification, examples)
 - Arrive on time
 - Build on the ideas of others
 - Be respectful
 - Have an open mind
- Ensure that all team members are given an opportunity to express their opinions and that other team members are respectful even if they disagree.
- Create an environment that avoids criticism, sarcasm, impatience, interruptions, and “yes-but” statements as these actions derail open, collaborative communication.
- Avoid letting one team member or group of team members dominate the conversation.
- Invite quiet group members who may not volunteer their opinion to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.
- Respect gender and cultural differences.
- Ask open-ended questions and avoid questions that can be answered “yes” or “no.”
- Use statements such as, “Tell me more,” “Please explain,” “What do you feel about ...?” to encourage team members to elaborate on their ideas/opinions.
- Help the team find a common goal. This is especially helpful when team members disagree. Rather than focus on the area of disagreement, identify a common goal to which all team members agree. For instance, team members may agree that it’s more important to come to a resolution than continuing to disagree.
- Have team members take a break if the discussion becomes disruptive, heated, or non-productive.
- Allow additional input after the meeting for emerging ideas and comments and include them in the meeting minutes, if appropriate.

Reference: Gebelein, Susan, et al. *Successful Manager’s Handbook: Develop Yourself to Coach Others*. 7th ed. Minneapolis: PreVisor, 2004. Print.

Appendix B – Tips for Managing Group Conflict during Rater Consistency Discussions

- Establish business rules/rules of engagement at the beginning of the meeting (e.g., honor time limits, be respectful of those talking or presenting, keep the discussion focused, share all relevant information)
- Watch for indicators of conflict (e.g., lack of eye contact, distancing body language, unusual silence, attacks, sarcasm, accusations)
- Decide if the conflict impacts the group
 - If it is a minor disagreement with two people, let it go
 - Determine if you need to work with the group to diffuse tension
 - If the conflict impacts the group, work to diffuse
 - Make or ask the group for recommendations to address the situation
- Acknowledge the value of conflict
 - Conflict helps clarify points of view
 - Diversity leads to effective solutions
- Affirm the value of and the right to different opinions
 - Differences are natural in a group
 - Do not allow personal attacks on anyone
- Focus on outcomes and behavior, not values
 - Focus on the desired result, rather than the conflicting values, (e.g., outcomes to help ensure equity for employees)
 - The word “should” indicates a value conflict. If this is a values conflict, help the group focus on the result rather than trying to change the values
- Look for and build on areas where people agree
 - Discover common ground, (e.g., good working relationships, achieving a goal, protecting the nation, equity for employees)
 - When you find agreement, build on it
 - Name the source of conflict as you see it. Define the problem specifically
 - Make sure you are focusing on the right problem or conflict
 - Some conflicts are caused by miscommunication. Discussions sometimes can clarify issues/disagreements
- Take a break or end the meeting if tempers get hot
- Use your business rules to keep the meeting moving smoothly
 - Be clear about expectations, expected outcomes, and decision making
- Move with the group energy, rather than against it; when things are going well and energy is high, make decisions and achieve goals

Appendix C – Optional Exercise 1 – What the Standards Are and How to Use Them

Desired Outcomes	<p>Participants will be able to explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the performance standards are and their purpose • Where to find the performance standards • How to use the standards to rate performance objectives and performance elements
Resource Item(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Standards table (Appendix H) • DCIPS Occupational Structure diagram (Appendix J) • DoDI 1400.25-V2011, DCIPS Performance Management (Appendix L) • IC Performance Standards (Appendix M)
Discussion Points/ Activity	<p><i>Lead a discussion using the points below; add or modify discussion points to meet the needs of your group and organization’s rater consistency process</i></p> <p><i>Share the analogy and explain the points that follow</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Analogy – Think back to a time when you were either participating in or watching a sporting event. Regardless of the sport, there are rules, or standards, as to how the game should be played. Players are evaluated based on how well they follow the rules or standards • Similar to sporting events that have rules, or standards, by which the game is played to ensure it is played consistently, the IC performance management process also has a standard against which to measure performance with the intent of producing consistent ratings • Because evaluating human performance is subjective, there is room for inconsistency in applying the standards. This is why rater consistency discussions among management teams are important as it gives them an opportunity to create a shared understanding of how to apply the standards consistently for their work group <p><i>Introduce the Standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants if they can identify where the General Standards tables for rating Performance Objectives and Elements are listed (<i>Answer: DoD Instruction 1400.25-V2011, Tables 1 and 2, or Appendix H of this guide</i>). <p><i>To help participants better understand the rating levels within the standards, you may want to provide examples of what Successful, Excellent, and Outstanding performance, at different work levels and pay bands or grades, would look like in your work unit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards provide a description of the type of behavior (performance elements) and results (performance objectives) one should demonstrate to receive one of the five possible rating levels (i.e., Outstanding, Excellent,

	<p>Successful, Minimally Successful, Unacceptable) for the individual’s performance elements and performance objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To rate performance objectives and performance elements against the performance standard, read through the description for each of the five rating levels and determine which one most closely matches the behavior (performance elements) or results (performance objectives) exhibited by the person you are rating, as aligned to their performance plan • It’s important to note that employees are rated against the performance standards, not other employees • The IC Performance Standards (Appendix M) can be used as a supplemental guide for rating performance elements, but the standard still remains as written in DoDI1400.25-V2011. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The guide is organized by work category and work level and identifies performance indicators for each of the six performance elements, however, it is an older document and only references by Band, not Grade. To determine the grade, you would use the DCIPS Occupational Structure diagram (Appendix J) to determine the appropriate band/grade equivalent at a given work level.
<p>Summary Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance standards are a way to measure performance with the intent of producing consistent ratings • The General Standards tables are listed in DoDI 1400.25-V2011, Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix H) • The IC Performance Standards (Appendix M) is a supplemental guide to assist in rating performance elements • To rate performance objectives and performance elements against the performance standards, read through the description for each of the five rating levels and determine which one most closely matches the behavior (performance elements) or results (performance objectives) exhibited by the person you are rating as aligned to their performance plan. If they did not consistently or substantially exceed, considering impact and results, they should not be ‘matched’ to the higher rating. • Attending rater consistency discussions is important for achieving a shared understanding of how to apply the standards consistently for your work group • Employees are rated against the performance standards, not other employees

Appendix D – Optional Exercise 2 – Process for Creating a Shared Understanding of the Standards

Desired Outcomes	<p>Participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the three work categories and four work levels in the DCIPS Occupational Structure Explain how the work levels are used to create a shared understanding of the performance standards and performance expectations Identify examples of behaviors and results they would expect for Successful, Excellent, and Outstanding performance ratings in their work group
Resource Item(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Standards table (Appendix H) Work Level Definitions (Appendix I) DCIPS Occupational Structure diagram (Appendix J) DoDI 1400.25-V2007 (Appendix K) DoDI 1400.25-V2011 (Appendix L)
Discussion Points/ Activity	<p><i>Lead a discussion using the points below; add or modify discussion points to meet the needs of your group and organization’s rater consistency process</i></p> <p><i>Wait to direct the participants to the resource items until after the initial discussion points</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants to identify the three work categories and four work levels in the Occupational Structure Ask participants to identify the work levels within their work group Ask participants to describe the type of work and behaviors they would expect from an employee in each of the work levels within their work group (speaking in general terms about the position and not about specific employees) <p><i>Direct participants to a copy of the resource items in their Appendices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants to read the formal definition for each work level in their work group Ask participants to identify if the type of work and behaviors they described a moment ago is consistent with the behaviors identified in the work level definitions, and the descriptions of work that is assigned to the employee Ask participants if there is anything they would change or add to what they would expect based on the work level definitions Ask participants why knowing the work level definitions is important for creating a shared understanding of the performance standards and performance expectations <p><i>Lead a discussion to create a shared understanding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants to review the rating level descriptions for performance

	<p>objectives for each rating level on the General Standards table (This Appendix H job aid contains the standards from DoDI 1400.25-V2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the work level definitions, have participants discuss the results they would expect for the Successful, Excellent, and Outstanding rating levels for each work level (The Appendix I job aid contains the definitions from DoDI 1400.25-V2007) within their work group; have participants provide concrete examples of the results and explain how they would differentiate performance between each rating and work assigned • Document the examples that are shared • Repeat the same process for performance elements, focusing on behaviors rather than results (performance objectives focus on the “what,” the results; performance elements focus on the “how,” the behaviors) <p><i>Make the connection between work levels and performance objectives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants how understanding the work levels helps them create performance objectives, written at the successful level, that are appropriate for an employee’s position and consistent with other employees performing similar work • Ask participants how understanding the work levels helps them consistently evaluate performance against established performance objectives and assign accurate ratings
<p>Summary Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are four work levels in the Occupational Structure. The levels and definitions can be found in DoDI 1400.25-V2007. • Knowing the work level definitions is important for creating a shared understanding of the performance standards and performance expectations as well as creating appropriate, consistent performance objectives, written at the successful level

Appendix E – Optional Exercise 3 – Impact of Performance Objectives on Rater Consistency

Desired Outcomes	<p>Participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the critical role performance objectives play in achieving rater consistency • Explain why performance objectives need to be accurate, SMART, aligned, and appropriate for an employee’s work level to achieve rater consistency
Resource Item(s)	N/A
Discussion Points/ Activity	<p><i>Share or ask a participant to read the following scenario</i></p> <p>It’s the end of the performance evaluation period and Jason, a Rating Official, is both dismayed and frustrated. Jason’s Reviewing Official returned the proposed Performance Evaluations of Record for three of Jason’s employees indicating that in each case the ratings Jason assigned for the employee’s performance objectives appear to be inflated and the narrative does not justify the assigned rating. The Reviewing Official asked that Jason make the necessary revisions in order to align with policy, and resubmit.</p> <p>The work of Jason’s employees far exceeded expectations and he wants to ensure they receive ratings commensurate with their performance. The problem though is that the areas where Jason’s employees excelled and exceeded the standards were not included in their performance objectives. Jason does not have any concrete examples he can use to justify that his employees exceeded Successful performance on their <u>assigned</u> objectives. At the beginning of the performance evaluation period when his employee’s performance objectives were set, Jason had a lot going on and did not take the time to ensure the performance objectives were truly accurate and aligned with the work his employees were doing. And while Jason kept meaning to revisit his employee’s performance objectives throughout the performance evaluation period to ensure they were appropriate for and aligned with the expectations for his employee’s work levels before the 90-day* window passed, it seemed like something always got in the way and he never got it done.</p> <p>[*Note: According to DoDI 1400.25-V2011, employees must be under a performance plan for at least 90 days to receive an Evaluation of Record. Thus, performance objectives can be changed up to 90 days prior to the end of the performance evaluation period.]</p> <p><i>Lead a discussion using the points below; add or modify discussion points to meet the needs of your group and organization’s rater consistency process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to identify in what ways Jason caused himself problems in terms of being able to assign a rating for his employees’ performance objectives that is commensurate with their performance (<i>explain that Jason can apply the performance, where applicable, in the performance element</i>)

	<p><i>ratings he assigns his employees, but that performance objective ratings are based on performance measured against that which is outlined in the objective)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to consider in this case whether it is the “system” that has caused Jason’s frustration or how he applied a process • Ask participants how Jason can avoid having to experience this issue again (<i>Jason recognized throughout the performance period that his employees were focusing on other requirements not outlined in their performance plan and should have made it a priority to make adjustments to their performance objectives to match the major work his employees were doing</i>) • Ask participants to identify how performance objectives that are aligned to organizational goals, follow the SMART criteria, are written at the Successful level, and are appropriate for an individual’s work level help achieve rater consistency • Ask participants to consider if Not Rated (NR) would be appropriate to use (<i>NR is available to use, if the employee did not have the opportunity to complete the objective. Objectives rated NR are not included in the computation of overall summary average ratings</i>) • Ask participants to identify other ways Jason could recognize his employees’ accomplishments that were not captured in the performance objectives, but occurred during this performance evaluation period (<i>the point here is not to mitigate the need for accurate performance objectives, but to identify ways employees can be appropriately recognized for their performance, such as through on-the-spot awards, or try to capture those accomplishments through the performance elements, if appropriate</i>)
<p>Summary Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving rater consistency does not happen at the end of the performance evaluation period, but starts at the beginning of the performance evaluation period with an employee’s performance objectives • Throughout the performance evaluation period, Rating Officials and employees should continue to ensure the performance objectives established at the beginning of the performance evaluation period accurately reflect Successful performance for the employee’s work assigned at their work level and pay band or grade; and, when necessary, make modifications to the performance objectives when they are no longer relevant or appropriate • Take advantage of the midpoint review to ensure objectives remain aligned to work being performed and modify as needed • Performance objectives can be changed up to 90 days before the end of the performance evaluation period, but not later than 90 days left because employees must have a minimum 90 days under a new or changed performance objective • Performance objectives ratings are given based on performance against established objectives and according to the standards. When performance objectives are not accurate, aligned, appropriate, SMART, or reflective of the work the employee is actually doing, it is unlikely employees will receive ratings that are truly consistent and commensurate with their established performance plans

Appendix F – Optional Exercise 4 – Common Rating Errors

Desired Outcomes	<p>Participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least four common rating errors and explain how to avoid each error Describe how their management team has agreed to hold each other accountable in an effort to avoid making the common rating errors
Resource Item(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common Rating Errors/Bias Job Aid (Appendix G)
Discussion Points/ Activity	<p><i>Direct participants to a copy of the Common Rating Errors/Bias Job Aid</i></p> <p><i>Have participants read the common rating errors job aid to themselves. Or, to increase interactivity and participation, break into smaller groups and assign those groups one or two common rating errors and have them discuss how the error(s) may show up in the work setting. Tell each group that you will come back together and have each group report out the highlights of their discussion on each common rating error. Participants can use the examples provide on the job aid, when they discuss their assigned error(s), to begin their discussion.</i></p> <p><i>Lead a discussion using the points below; add or modify discussion points to meet the needs of your group and organization’s rater consistency process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that most Rating Officials have good intentions when assigning ratings and want to be equitable to their employees, but that errors can still be unintentionally introduced into the process Without naming specific Rating or Reviewing Officials, ask participants to identify which of the errors they may have seen displayed and the impact the errors had on the process (e.g., inconsistent ratings, inflated or deflated ratings, perception of trust that the system will produce equitable and accurate ratings) Review with participants how the rating errors they have observed could be avoided. Use the information on the job aid and encourage participants to add additional ideas based on their experience or observation Ask participants to identify and discuss ways they can support and hold each other accountable as a management team in an effort to avoid making the common rating errors
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Rating Officials have good intentions when assigning ratings and want to be equitable to their employees, but errors can still be unintentionally introduced into the process Common rating errors/biases include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central tendency Contrast First impression Halo Leniency/Severity Overemphasizing positive or negative performance Recency

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Similar to me○ Stereotyping● Awareness of the common rating errors and a willingness for management teams to support and hold each other accountable will help Rating and Reviewing Officials avoid making the common rating errors
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Appendix G – Common Rating Errors/Biases Job Aid

While most Rating Officials have good intentions when assigning ratings and want to be equitable to their employees, errors can still be introduced into the process. Below are a number of common rating errors and how they can be avoided.

Error	Example	How to Avoid
Central Tendency- Giving similar ratings to all individuals, despite differences in their performance.	Rater: “My team has really pulled together and worked hard to reach our goals. Everyone has done a great job pulling their weight and deserves 4s.”	To distinguish among employee performance levels, try this: Pick one performance element (e.g., communication) and rate each employee on it. Then, pick another element and do the same. By rating all employees on one element and then another, differences in employee performance levels become more clear.
Contrast- Basing ratings of an individual on a comparison of that individual to others rather than the performance standards.	Rater: “There’s a night and day difference between Maria’s reports and Julian’s reports. Compared to Julian, Maria is definitely a 5 in Communication.”	Ensure that assigned ratings are based on performance standards, not relative comparisons between employees.
First Impression- Basing ratings on performance exhibited early on rather than on performance exhibited throughout the evaluation period.	Rater: “The whole fiasco at the beginning of the rating period when Jose sent the wrong report to the customer was really a mess. I’ve never seen the customer so mad. I’m rating Jose a 2.”	Consider performance from the <i>entire</i> evaluation period, not just first impressions. Take notes throughout the performance evaluation period.
Halo- Ratings on multiple competencies are based on an overall impression (either positive or negative) rather than on the individual’s performance relative to each performance area.	Rater: “Pasha is the most technical savvy employee I have. I don’t know what I’d do without her. I’ll give her 4’s across the board.”	Evaluate an individual’s performance in each element and objective separately. Do not let performance in one area influence your rating of other areas.

Error	Example	How to Avoid
<p>Leniency/Severity- Giving unnecessarily lenient (or harsh) ratings to all individuals.</p>	<p>Rater: “My team has really tried hard this year. It’s not their fault we had a few bumps along the way. After all, it would only discourage them to get a low rating. I’ll give them 4’s and 5’s.”</p>	<p>Carefully read the performance standards and work with other managers to ensure you are applying them consistently and equitably across employees.</p>
<p>Overemphasizing Positive or Negative Performance- Relying too heavily on either the positive or negative aspects of an individual’s performance when assigning ratings.</p>	<p>Rater: “Our customer is still talking about the statistical report Leon whipped together in record time three years ago. Leon is definitely a 5 in Critical Thinking.”</p>	<p>Equally consider all aspects of an employee’s performance, both positive and negative. There is a tendency for raters to consider positive performance to a much greater extent than negative performance, thus resulting in a higher rating than earned.</p>
<p>Recency- Basing ratings on recent performance rather than on performance exhibited throughout the evaluation period.</p>	<p>Rater: “The way Janelle conducted our last customer brief was outstanding. She deserves a 4, no question.”</p>	<p>Consider performance from the <i>entire</i> evaluation period, not just recent events. Keep notes of critical performance incidents throughout the year so your final rating accurately reflects them.</p>
<p>Similar to Me- Assigning higher ratings because someone is similar to you.</p>	<p>Rater: “Devon deserves a 5. Besides, I wouldn’t expect anything less from a fellow Penn State graduate.”</p>	<p>Make a conscious effort to ignore any similarities or differences you may have with particular individuals. Focus on examples of performance relevant to the standards when you make your ratings.</p>
<p>Stereotyping- Basing ratings of an individual on membership (e.g., ethnicity, gender, religion) rather than on performance.</p>	<p>Rater: “Max did alright for someone his age, definitely better than I thought he would. I’ll give him a 4.”</p>	<p>Be aware of the stereotypes that you hold about different groups and make a conscious effort to ignore your stereotypes when assigning performance ratings.</p>

Appendix H –General Standards tables

DoDI 1400.25-V2011, Table 1. Performance Objectives and Element Rating Descriptors		
GENERAL STANDARDS		
PERFORMANCE RATING	OBJECTIVES DESCRIPTORS	ELEMENT DESCRIPTORS
OUTSTANDING (5)	The employee far exceeded expected results on the objective such that organizational goals were achieved that otherwise would not have been. At the summary level, the employee far exceeded expected results on all performance objectives such that organizational goals were achieved that otherwise would not have been. Such exemplary achievements serve as a role model for others.	The employee consistently performed all key behaviors at an exemplary level on the element. At the summary level, the employee consistently performed at an exemplary level on all performance elements. The employee served as a role model for others.
EXCELLENT (4)	The employee surpassed expected results in a substantial manner on the objective. At the summary level, the employee surpassed expected results overall and in a substantial manner on most of the objectives with an average rating within the “Exceptional” range in Table 2.	The employee demonstrated mastery-level performance of the key behaviors on the element. At the summary level, the employee demonstrated mastery-level performance on most key elements with an average rating within the “Exceptional” range in Table 2.
SUCCESSFUL (3)	The employee achieved expected results on the assigned objective. At the summary level, the employee achieved expected or higher results overall and on most assigned objectives with an average rating within the “Successful” range in Table 2.	The employee fully demonstrated effective, capable performance of key behaviors for the performance element. At the summary level, the employee demonstrated effective, capable performance or higher on key behaviors on most performance elements with an average rating within the “Successful” range in Table 2.
MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL (2)	The employee only partially achieved expected results on the performance objective. At the summary level, the employee only partially achieved expected results for assigned objectives with an average rating within the “Minimally Successful” range in Table 2.	The employee’s performance requires improvement on one or more of the key behaviors for the objective. At the summary level, the employee’s behavior requires improvement with an average rating that falls within the “Minimally Successful” range in Table 2.
UNACCEPTABLE (1)	The employee failed to achieve expected results in one or more assigned performance objectives.	The employee failed to adequately demonstrate key behaviors for the performance element. At the summary level, the employee received a rating of “Unacceptable” on average for the performance elements.

NR	The employee did not have the opportunity to complete the objective because it became obsolete due to changing mission requirements or because of extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the employee and supervisor (e.g., resources diverted to higher-priority programs, employee in long-term training, deployed, on leave without pay).	Not used for performance elements.
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DoDI 1400.25-V2011, Table 2. Converting Average Rating to Evaluation of Record

AVERAGE RATING RANGE	EVALUATION OF RECORD RATING/DESCRIPTOR	GENERAL STANDARD
4.6-5.0	OUTSTANDING (5)	The employee’s overall contribution, both in terms of results achieved and the manner in which those results were achieved, has had extraordinary effects or impacts on mission objectives that would not otherwise have been achieved.
3.6-4.5	EXCELLENT (4)	The employee’s overall contribution, both in terms of results achieved and the manner in which those results were achieved, has had a significant impact on mission objectives.
2.6-3.5	SUCCESSFUL (3)	The employee’s overall contribution, both in terms of results achieved and the manner in which those results were achieved, has made a positive impact on mission objectives.
2.0-2.5	MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL (2)	The employee’s overall contribution to mission, although positive, has been less than that expected.
<2 on any objective	UNACCEPTABLE (1)	The employee received an unacceptable rating on one or more performance objectives.

Appendix I – Work Level Definitions

Source: DoDI 1400.25-V2007, DCIPS Occupational Structure

Work levels apply within the context of the assigned work category. Not all work levels are found in all work categories because the work is not expected to be performed within that work category (e.g. within the Supervision/Management work category, there is no Entry/Developmental work level because that level of work is not expected to be performed within that work category). In the graded environment, work levels encompass work at multiple grades (except at the Expert level). Descriptions of work (e.g. work roles, position descriptions (PDs)) should also be consulted when determining appropriate work for a position.

Entry/Developmental. In both the Professional and the Technician/Administrative Support Work Categories, work at this level includes learning and applying basic procedures and acquiring competencies through training or on-the-job experience. Positions in the Technician/Administrative Support Work Category at this level may involve independent performance of duties. Technician/Administrative Support positions should be placed in this work level when their primary function is the execution of established office procedures and standard program practices, and when typical career patterns for the occupation do not extend to the complexity, variety, and scope of the Full Performance Work Level.

Full Performance. Work at this level involves independently performing the full range of non-supervisory duties assigned to the employee. Employees at this level have successfully completed required entry-level training or developmental activities either within the employing organization or prior to joining the organization. Employees at this work level have a full understanding of the technical or specialty field, independently handle situations or assignments with minimal day-to-day instruction or supervision, and receive general guidance and direction on new projects or assignments. Within established priorities and deadlines, Full Performance employees exercise independent judgment in selecting and applying appropriate work methods, procedures, techniques, and practices in accomplishing their duties and responsibilities. Actions at this level may have impact beyond the work unit and, as a result, employees at this level typically collaborate internally and externally with their peers.

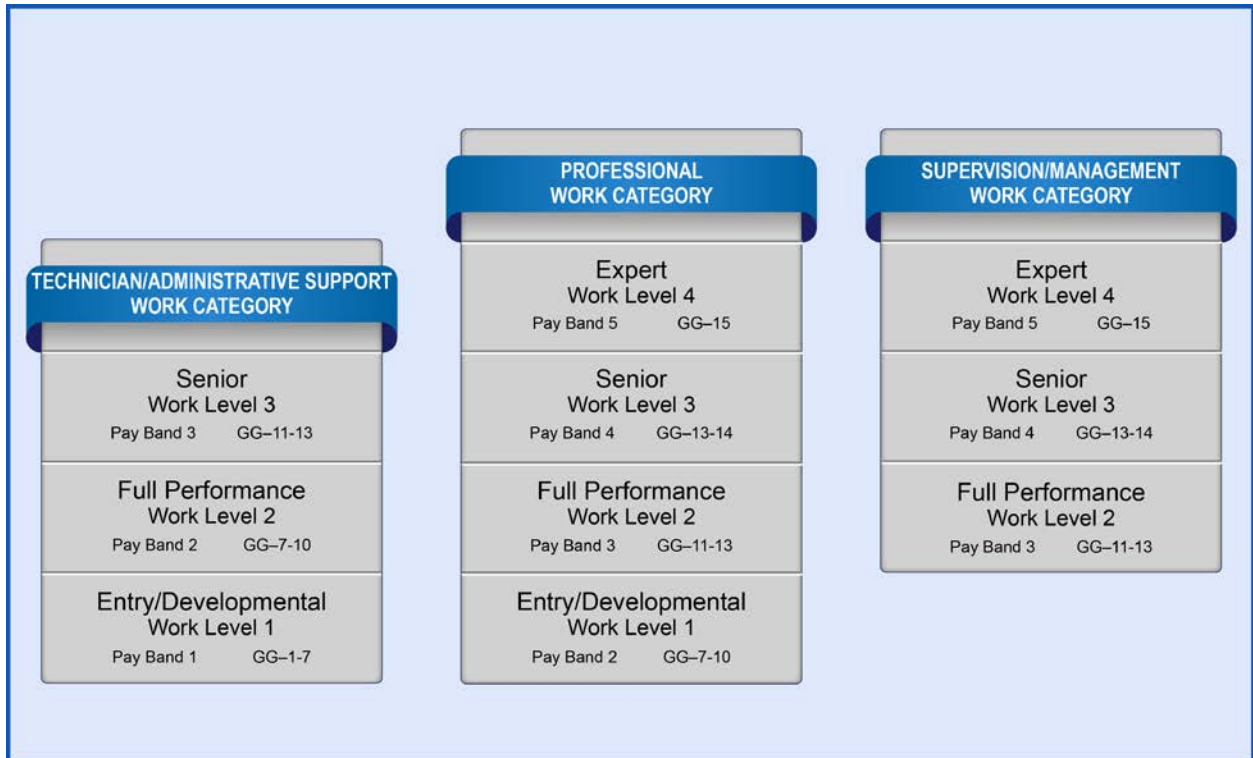
Senior. Work at this level involves a wide range of complex assignments and non-routine situations that require extensive knowledge and experience in the technical or specialty field. Receiving broad objectives and guidelines from the supervisor, Senior Work Level employees independently handle a wide range of complex assignments and non-routine situations and exercise independent judgment to identify and take alternative courses of action. Following broad objectives and guidelines, employees act independently to establish priorities and deadlines within expectations established by the supervisor and exercise individual judgment to choose alternative guidelines to complete assignments. Employees may lead and coordinate special projects, teams, tasks, and initiatives and may be required to build and utilize collaborative networks with key contacts within and outside of their immediate organization. Actions at this level are likely to have an impact beyond the employee's immediate organization.

Expert. Work at this level involves an extraordinary degree of specialized knowledge or expertise to perform highly complex and ambiguous assignments that normally require integration and synthesis of a number of unrelated disciplines and disparate concepts. Employees at this level set priorities, goals, and deadlines and

make final determinations on how to plan and accomplish their work. DoD Components with DCIPS positions rely on employees at this level for the accomplishment of critical mission goals and objectives and, as a result, employees may lead the activities of senior and other expert employees, teams, projects, or task forces. Employees at this level create formal networks involving coordination among groups across the Intelligence Community and other external organizations.

Appendix J – DCIPS Occupational Structure diagram

Source: DoDI 1400.25-V2007, DCIPS Occupational Structure



Appendix K – DoDI 1400.25-V2007, DCIPS Occupational Structure

*Please see separate file that should have accompanied this handbook.

Appendix L – DoDI 1400.25-V2011, DCIPS Performance Management

*Please see separate file that should have accompanied this handbook.

Appendix M – Intelligence Community Performance Standards

*Please see separate file that should have accompanied this handbook.

Note: This document is in the process of being updated. Continue to use the 23 April 2009 version until a new version is available.