Rater Consistency Handbook

DEFENSE CIVILIAN INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL SYSTEM

USD(I) DCIPS Rater Consistency, January 2014

ATTENDEE GUIDE

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For more information on any DCIPS-related questions, policies or training events, go to the DCIPS website at http://dcips.dtic.mil/index.html

How to Use this Handbook

Purpose:

The handbook outlines discussions that will ideally take place at 3 different meetings throughout the performance evaluation period. 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 based on DCIPS policy. It 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.

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 that are discussed at 3 different meetings held throughout the performance evaluation period (beginning, midterm, end). 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 K-M are not included, due to the size of the documents, but can be found through the links below.

> 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/perfmgt.html, and choose the Performance Element Job Aid file

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 standards[1], 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.

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[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 be 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
Planning: Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period	1	Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, and PM PRA meet and complete items in Phase #1; Senior Leadership may want to provide a message about performance management	■													
	2	Rating Official and Employee meet and establish a performance plan (IDP and Objectives, talk to Elements)	■													
Managing: Midterm	1	Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials meet and complete items in Phase #2						■								
	2	Rating Official and Employee meet for Mandatory Midpoint Review						■	■							
Evaluation: End of Performance Evaluation Period	1	Employee submits a SRA to Rating Official; Rating Official evaluates performance against standards												■		
	2	Rating Officials and Reviewing Officials (and PM PRA should be engaged) meet and complete items in Phase #3; Senior Leadership makes an announcement pertaining to the close-out of the 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 Performance Evaluation of Record													■	■
Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	1	On-going performance management dialogue between Rating Official and Employee, both informal and formal; UPDATE Objectives if appropriate & address performance improvement	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	2	Recommended training for each role (employee, supervisor/manager, leader) has a corresponding training roadmap located at the DCIPS website	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

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Phase 1

Phase 1, Planning: Beginning of the Performance Evaluation Period

Rater Consistency Checklist #1

Achieving appropriate and consistent ratings requires regular communication between Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, the Performance Management Performance Review Authority (PM PRA), and senior leadership. 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	
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.	
During the Discussion	
Action Items	**Resources**
The purpose of this discussion is to: • Set your management team up for success in achieving consistent, appropriate ratings using the Standards • Make meaningful distinctions between levels of performance based on the Standards • Address misperceptions regarding how to evaluate and rate employees • Increase employee trust in the process • Ensuring objectives are aligned with the mission This is done by establishing: • A shared understanding of the appropriate work for various grade and band levels, standards for the elements and objectives and how they will be consistently applied within your group • A shared understanding of performance expectations • Appropriate performance objectives for the work level It is important that each team member consistently apply the standards, rather than go back to their individual thinking or approach after the discussion ends.	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.
Review the mission goals, strategies, and priorities for your organization; an employee's objectives will be aligned to these!	
Do you have any 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	
Establish a shared understanding of the performance standards for both objectives and elements.	Job Aid: General Standards tables (see Appendix H)

Establish consistent performance objectives:
• 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
• Are the performance objectives for the positions in your work group
   o aligned to organizational goals,
   o follow the SMART criteria,
   o written at the Successful level, and
   o appropriate for the individuals work level and position
	Training Course: *there are 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

Be aware of common rating errors and discuss how to avoid them.	
What performance tracking methods will be used to track employee performance throughout the evaluation period?	Tip: Outlook calendar or notes, Excel or Word file; paper-based journal; HRIS
After the Discussion	
Action Items	**Resources/Tips**
Rating Official and Employee Meet Rating Official communicates with Employee in a one-on-one discussion, preferably in a private location: • Review/create the employee's Performance Plan and IDP • 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	Training Course: *DCIPS 101* *Setting Performance Expectations* *Putting Yourself in the Other Person's Shoes* *Intro to DCIPS for Military Supervisors*

Rater Consistency Roles and Responsibilities #1

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

Rating Official

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #1
Rating Official	Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period	• 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: o Review/create the employee's Performance Plan ▪ 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 o Outline and clarify performance expectations o 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
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• 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 #1
Reviewing Official	Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period	• 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
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• Ensures Rating Officials provide performance feedback throughout the performance evaluation period

PM PRA (Performance Management Performance Review Authority)

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #1
PM PRA (Performance Management Performance Review Authority)	Beginning of Performance Evaluation Period	• 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
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• Provides support and guidance to Rating and Reviewing Officials

Employee

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #1
Employee	Beginning of Evaluation Period	• 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
	Throughout Evaluation Period	• 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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Phase 2

Phase 2, Managing: Midterm of the Performance Evaluation Period

Rater Consistency Checklist #2

Achieving appropriate and consistent ratings requires regular communication between Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, the Performance Management Performance Review Authority (PM PRA), and senior leadership. 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 #2		
Phase: Midterm of the Performance Evaluation Period		
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.		
During the Discussion		
Action		**Resources/Tips**
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)
How are raters considering performance and ensure consistency based on the shared understanding of the standards and expectations?		
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.		Tip: Rating Officials should bring in proposed ratings to pass to other ROs for peer review
Discuss whether performance objectives are still relevant and achievable given any changes that may have occurred since the beginning of the performance period.		Tip: It is a good time to make necessary changes to objectives
After the Discussion		
Action		**Resources/Tips**
Rating Official communicates with Employee in a one-on-one discussion, preferably in a private location: • 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		Training Courses: • *C.O.A.C.H. for Success: How to Hold Performance Conversations Like a Pro*

Rater Consistency Roles and Responsibilities #2

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

Rating Official

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #2
	Midterm	• 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 consideration of the performance plan • Documents Mandatory Midpoint Review and sends review documentation to Reviewing Official for approval
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• 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 #2
	Midterm	• 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
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• Ensures Rating Officials provide performance feedback throughout the performance evaluation period

PM PRA (Performance Management Performance Review Authority)

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #2
	Midterm	• 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
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• Provides support and guidance to Rating and Reviewing Officials

Employee

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #2
	Midterm	• 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
	Throughout Evaluation Period	• 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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Phase 3

Phase 3, Evaluation: End of the Performance Evaluation Period

Rater Consistency Checklist #3

Achieving appropriate and consistent ratings requires regular communication between Rating Officials, Reviewing Officials, the Performance Management Performance Review Authority (PM PRA), and senior leadership. 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 #3	
Phase: End of the Performance Evaluation Period	
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.	
During the Discussion	
Action	**Resources/Tips**
Discuss the organization's progress towards the mission and goals established at the beginning of the current evaluation period.	
Discuss application of employee performance against the performance standards.	Job Aid: General Standards table (see Appendix H)
Share proposed ratings and write-ups with a colleague; pass around for peer review. Discuss the proposed performance ratings and how the standards were applied. • ALWAYS refer back to the standards and appropriate work levels	Job Aid: General Standards table (see Appendix H) Work levels (Appendix I)
Discuss the consequences of sticking with an "unjustified" rating.	
Review individual ratings • ALWAYS refer back to the standards and appropriate work levels	Training Course: *Evaluating Performance and Preparing Performance Narratives*
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.	Training Course*: Overcoming Challenges in Writing Performance Objectives*
After the Discussion	
Action	**Resources/Tips**
Rating Official communicates with Employee in a one-on-one discussion, preferably in a private location: • 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*: How to Hold a Formal Feedback Review*

Rater Consistency Roles and Responsibilities #3

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

Rating Official

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #3
	End of Performance Evaluation Period	• 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 after 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	• 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#3
	End of Performance Evaluation Period	• 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
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• Ensures Rating Officials provide performance feedback throughout the performance evaluation period

PM PRA (Performance Management Performance Review Authority)

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #3
	End of Performance Evaluation Period	• 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 (may direct a change, if necessary)
	Throughout Performance Evaluation Period	• Provides support and guidance to Rating and Reviewing Officials

Employee

Role	Phase	Rater Consistency Responsibilities #3
	End of Evaluation Period	• 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	• 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

Appendix C

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

Desired Outcomes	Participants will be able to explain: • 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)	• General Standards table (Appendix H) • DCIPS Occupational Structure diagram (Appendix J) • DoDI 1400.25-V2011, DCIPS Performance Management (Appendix L) • Work Levels (Appendix I)
Discussion Points/ Activity	*Introduce the Standards* • Can you identify where the General Standards tables for rating Performance Objectives and Elements are listed? • 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, Successful, Minimally Successful, Unacceptable) for the individual's performance elements and performance objectives • 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 BUT BE CAREFUL NOT TO 'STRETCH' TOO MUCH INTO THE NEXT HIGHER RATING • Make sure the objectives are written to the appropriate work level (appendix I) assigned to each employee • It's important to note that employees are rated against the performance standards, not other employees
Summary Points	• 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) • 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.

	• Make sure the objectives are written to the appropriate work level (appendix I) assigned to each employee by reading through the description for the work level assigned to the employee and matching the expectations of the behavior (performance elements) or results (performance objectives) of the person you are 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

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

Desired Outcomes	Participants will be able to: • 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)	• 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	• Can you identify the three work categories and four work levels in the Occupational Structure? • Can you identify the work levels within their work group? • Can you describe the type of work and behaviors you would expect from an employee in each of the work levels within their work group? *The facilitator will direct you to a copy of the resource items in the Appendices* • Read the formal definition for each work level in their work group • Identify if the type of work and behaviors 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 • Is there anything you would change or add to what they would expect based on the work level definitions? • Review the rating level descriptions for performance objectives for each rating level on the General Standards table (This Appendix H job aid contains the standards from DoDI 1400.25-V2011) • Based on the work level definitions, discuss the results you 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) • 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) • How does understanding the work levels help you create performance objectives, written at the successful level, that are appropriate for an employee's position and consistent with other employees performing similar work? • How does understanding the work levels help you consistently evaluate performance against established performance objectives and assign accurate ratings?

Summary Points	• 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

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

Desired Outcomes	Participants will be able to: • 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	*Read the following scenario* 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. 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. [*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.] *Discussion* • In what ways did Jason cause himself problems in terms of being able to assign a rating for his employees' performance objectives that is commensurate with their performance? • Is it the "system" that has caused Jason's frustration? • How can Jason avoid having to experience this issue again? • Is Not Rated (NR) appropriate to use here?

	• What are some other ways Jason could recognize his employees' accomplishments that were not captured in the performance objectives, but occurred during this performance evaluation period?
Summary Points	• 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

Appendix F – Optional Exercise 4 – Common Rating Errors

Desired Outcomes	Participants will be able to: • 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)	• Common Rating Errors/Bias Job Aid (Appendix G)
Discussion Points/ Activity	• Errors can be unintentionally introduced into the process • How can the errors be avoided? Use the information on the job aid and add additional ideas based on experience or observation • How can you support and hold each other accountable as a management team in an effort to avoid making the common rating errors

Summary Points	• 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:
	   o Central tendency
	   o Contrast
	   o First impression
	   o Halo
	   o Leniency/Severity
	   o Overemphasizing positive or negative performance
	   o Recency
	   o Similar to me
	   o 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

Appendix G

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 *entire* 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
Leniency/Severity- Giving unnecessarily lenient (or harsh) ratings to all individuals.	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."	Carefully read the performance standards and work with other managers to ensure you are applying them consistently and equitably across employees.
Overemphasizing Positive or Negative Performance- Relying too heavily on either the positive or negative aspects of an individual's performance when assigning ratings.	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."	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.
Recency- Basing ratings on recent performance rather than on performance exhibited throughout the evaluation period.	Rater: "The way Janelle conducted our last customer brief was outstanding. She deserves a 4, no question."	Consider performance from the *entire* evaluation period, not just recent events. Keep notes of critical performance incidents throughout the year so your final rating accurately reflects them.
Similar to Me- Assigning higher ratings because someone is similar to you.	Rater: "Devon deserves a 5. Besides, I wouldn't expect anything less from a fellow Penn State graduate."	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.
Stereotyping- Basing ratings of an individual on membership (e.g., ethnicity, gender, religion) rather than on performance.	Rater: "Max did alright for someone his age, definitely better than I thought he would. I'll give him a 4."	Be aware of the stereotypes that you hold about different groups and make a conscious effort to ignore your stereotypes when assigning performance ratings.

Appendix H

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.

DoDI 1400.25-V2011, <u>Table 2</u>. <u>Converting Average Rating to Evaluation of Record</u>		
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

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

Appendix J – DCIPS Occupational Structure diagram

Source: DoDI 1400.25-V2007, DCIPS Occupational Structure
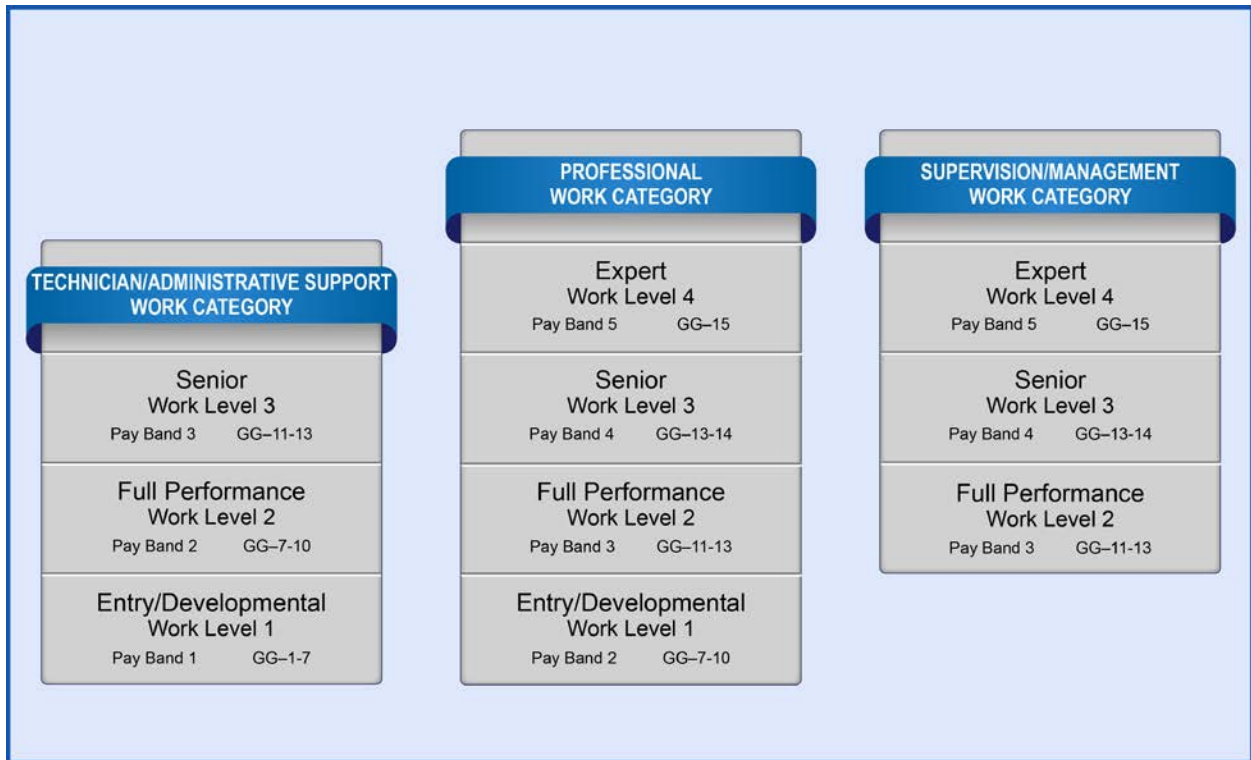
Appendix MOU

Appendix K – DoDI 1400.25-V2007, DCIPS Occupational Structure

*Due to the size of this document, it is not included in this handbook. Please go to
http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/140025v2007_17apr2012.pdf to download a copy.

Appendix L – DoDI 1400.25-V2011, DCIPS Performance Management

*Due to the size of this document, it is not included in this handbook. Please go to
http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/1400.25-V2011.pdf to download a copy.

Appendix M – Performance Element Evaluation Job Aid

*Due to the size of this document, it is not included in this handbook. Please go to
http://dcips.dtic.mil/documents/DCIPS%20Rater%20Consistency%20Job%20Aid%209%207%202012%20
FINAL.pdf to download a copy.