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Welcome!

to the web-based MANAGERS and SUPERVISORS TUTORIAL for the DoD Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project (AcqDemo).

This 1-hour tutorial has been designed for AcqDemo managers and supervisors and is based on needs identified during the first year's experience in the AcqDemo system. The tutorial emphasizes the importance of managers and supervisors properly carrying out their responsibilities in realizing the potential benefits of the AcqDemo system. Counseling of employees has been an area that requires attention across the AcqDemo organizations.

You should be aware of the importance of AcqDemo to the future of the acquisition community, especially in view of the possibility of additional downsizing and new initiatives to cope with the challenge of an aging federal workforce. This demonstration project has very high visibility within DoD, and enjoys the personal oversight of senior acquisition leaders in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and within the respective Services.

You should already have worked through the (recently revised) basic AcqDemo tutorial before you use **this** tutorial. This is important because this training assumes that you already understand basic AcqDemo policies and procedures. For example, if you don't already know what CCAS means, or what an OCS is, you will not be able to understand many of the ideas presented. So if you haven't yet taken the time to visit the AcqDemo tutorial, you may do so now by simply clicking on this link.

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As a manager or supervisor, you already know the importance of communications in insuring a high-performing organization. A smooth flow of information is the impetus that enables any enterprise to move forward.

Perhaps even more importantly, there is a basic human need for information. People need to know what is going on, what will affect them, where they fit into the larger picture, and that their leadership values them enough to keep them informed. This is especially the case when fundamental changes are occurring, such as is the case with AcqDemo. AcqDemo is more than just a collection of "interventions" or changes in personnel policy—it is an attempt to change a business culture. Change brings uncertainty, and worry, that can only be lessened by access to information.

What does this mean to you? It means that you should recognize that the employees in your organization need information, and communications, more than ever.

You probably realize this and are already establishing effective channels of communication. In this section, we'll suggest a few approaches that have been successfully employed by AcqDemo organizations to address these problems. Hopefully, you'll discover a few things you hadn't previously thought of.

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A recurring challenge for AcqDemo managers and supervisors is the requirement to train new employees in the policies and procedures of the demonstration project. In most cases, this will mean providing training and information for employees hired in to AcqDemo from another government position; these employees are familiar with the general schedule system but need information about the demonstration project.

Other employees may be new to government service, and therefore will require additional instruction and information.

Fortunately, there is help available for you, including tutorials and briefing slides especially developed to train new AcqDemo employees.

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The number and timing of new employees is critical to planning effective training.

If there are only one or two to be trained, you may wish to consider whether or not there are other new AcqDemo employees to be trained elsewhere in your organization, pay pool, or installation. At a large demonstration project site—where there are many AcqDemo participants—such as Edwards AFB, it may make sense to schedule regular quarterly training sessions for new AcqDemo employees, depending upon the number of new hires. At other, smaller sites the training may be scheduled on an ad hoc, as needed basis. But no matter how many or how few, the responsibility to insure that new employees are adequately trained in relevant AcqDemo policies and procedures falls squarely on the shoulders of supervisors and managers. What this means is that if you're the rating official for a new employee, you have to take whatever steps are necessary to provide the required training.

The type of employees to be trained will also affect your planning. Employees with prior GS experience have different needs from those entering government service for the first time. We recommend that you NOT mix these groups together for training, even if there are only a few of each to be trained. Instead, you should tailor the training for each group individually.

Finally, while generally you will want to provide all training as soon as is practicable, where you are in the appraisal cycle may be critical to your planning. The closer you are to the end of the appraisal period—and the requirement for the employee to do a self-assessment—the more urgent is the need for training. You should consult the AcqDemo Operating Procedures for the latest guidance about how long an employee must be in an AcqDemo position before receiving a CCAS appraisal.

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As mentioned above, there are some very useful training resources provided to assist you in meeting these challenges.

First, there is the basic AcqDemo tutorial. This is 2-3 hours of online instruction on the fundamentals of the demonstration project. This tutorial is intended to be the primary training experience for **all new employees**, regardless of whether they have previous government service or not. Managers and supervisors new to AcqDemo are also required to work through the tutorial.

Your responsibility as a manager or supervisor is to make sure that your new employee knows about the tutorial, has access to it (a computer with Internet access and the web address), and is given the time necessary to work through all of it. All subsequent instruction has been designed based on the assumption that each employee has already had this training!

If your employees cannot access the online version for some reason, a CD-ROM version and a print version are also available—contact your Service or Agency representative. However, the online version will always be the most up-to-date and accurate because of the ease and frequency of revisions.

While the basic tutorial is full of useful information about the demonstration project, there is no substitute for the personal touch of a manager or supervisor. Also, there are some important differences in AcqDemo implementation from site to site. Finally, the composition of the local pay pool panel, and discussions of the organizational mission, are best addressed in face to face discussions with employees.

For this reason, a Supervisors Workbook was developed for your use. It is intended to assist supervisors in preparing for and conducting employee training sessions—structured discussions between you and your employees. This workbook can easily be personalized to fit local circumstances.

The workbook consist of briefing slides, with detailed instructor notes, which you can use in a 1-2 hour session with new employees (AFTER they have completed the basic tutorial). You may download the slides and slide notes as a Microsoft PowerPoint 97 file, or as an Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) file.

Finally, a Managers Workbook has newly been developed. Similar to the Supervisors Workbook, this is a resource designed to assist senior managers in structured discussions with AcqDemo supervisors—a resource to help managers prepare supervisors for their AcqDemo responsibilities. Consisting of briefing slides with extensive notes for your use, the workbook supports a 1-2 hour meeting with supervisors.

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Training supervisors is a special challenge for AcqDemo managers. As you know, there are a number of responsibilities which supervisors have in AcqDemo that are significantly different from their general schedule responsibilities. This is particularly true in the area of CCAS appraisals, where supervisor ratings play a key role in the complex process of compensating employees according to their contributions.

As with all employees, supervisor training starts with the basic AcqDemo tutorial.
And now, there is **this** tutorial, which addresses areas of particular concern. But as with training employees, the personal touch is essential. That's why we recommend a discussion on supervisor responsibilities between each manager and his or her supervisors. And we provide the Managers Workbook to help you plan and conduct that session.

Active Duty Military Supervisors

Active duty military supervisors may require special attention beyond what we have detailed on this page. They may have little or no previous familiarity with civil service procedures, and may not fully appreciate the importance of their roles, especially in the CCAS process. Moreover, because of the traditional military practice of transferring military personnel during the summer months to lessen the effects on families, military supervisors may quickly find themselves in the position of having to rate employee contributions—a system somewhat different from active duty rating systems—without having had the opportunity to observe them for an entire appraisal cycle. Unless both supervisors and employees can quickly get a sense of confidence that the military supervisor is fully prepared to assess their contributions, there is an increased potential for employee dissatisfaction and possibly CCAS grievances.

What can you do about this? You can make sure that new military supervisors who will act as AcqDemo rating officials are given the training they need as quickly and effectively as possible. The basic tutorial, this tutorial, and structured discussions with managers will go far towards accomplishing this. If your organization is large enough so that you have had a significant influx of military supervisors, you may wish to consider conducting a mock rating exercise as a means of insuring that they are fully knowledgeable of the CCAS rating process and ready for their responsibilities.

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As a manager, you have a special duty towards the supervisors who work for you: you must help prepare them for increasing acquisition responsibilities in the challenging years ahead. But AcqDemo provides, perhaps for the first time, some of the tools you need to accomplish your managerial tasks vis-à-vis the supervisors you oversee.

The AcqDemo factors, descriptors, and discriminators have been carefully written to provide a structure for increasing supervisory responsibilities as individuals advance through the broadbands. For example, let's look at Factor 4 - Leadership/Supervision for the Business Management & Technical Management Professional.

Level II descriptors:

• Actively contributes as a team member/leader; provides insight and recommends changes or solutions to problems.

• Proactively guides, coordinates, and consults with others to accomplish projects.

• Identifies and pursues individual/team development opportunities.

Level III descriptors:

• Provides guidance to individuals/teams; resolves conflicts. Considered a functional/technical expert by others in the organization; is regularly sought out by others for advice and assistance.

• Defines, organizes, and assigns activities to accomplish project/program goals. Guides, motivates, and oversees the activities of individuals and teams with focus on projects/programs issues.

• Fosters individual/team development by mentoring. Pursues or creates training development programs for self and others.

Do you have broadband level II supervisors who aspire to promotion to level III? Do you have level III supervisors who are not yet performing at the top of their broadband? In both cases, AcqDemo factors provide the basis for a continuing dialogue between managers and supervisors—and a road map for self-improvement and professional development for those who seek promotion to senior leadership levels. While both the level II and level III descriptors illustrate leadership functions, the level III supervisor is clearly contributing to the organization at a higher and more effective level. Insuring that your supervisors both understand and appreciate these differences—and making sure they know how their own contributions measure up—is the best way to prepare them to help themselves and the organization.

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Of course, the basics of counseling are the same no matter who is being counseled, so you will want to review the Supervisor-Employee Counseling topic (next in this tutorial) as well.

However, there are a number of areas of special emphasis in regards to counseling supervisors that you may want to consider. For example:

Communicating the Mission

What is your organization's mission, and how do your supervisors and their employees fit into it?

The answers to these questions may seem obvious to you, but focus groups have shown that many AcqDemo organizations do not share a common understanding of the mission—differences are especially striking between managers/supervisors and employees. And since OCS measures contribution *to the mission*, lack of a shared perception of that mission is bound to lead to unhappy and unproductive employees who feel they are not being compensated fairly.

Even if you believe that everyone in your organization knows and understands the mission, you should take the time to address this topic with your supervisors—individually and collectively. The easy part is making sure everyone knows what the mission is—it may well be worthwhile to provide all employees and supervisors with a written mission statement. Much harder is making sure that everyone understands how his or her position contributes to that mission, and supervisors are the critical link in insuring that understanding.

Employees sometimes feel that there is little or no connection between what they are expected to do and the central purpose of the organization, particularly when their jobs are of the "base support" type. But positions would not be funded and filled unless they were necessary to the mission somehow, so YOUR task is to help your supervisors articulate the linkage between mission and contribution for every employee.

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Mental Preparation for Assessment and Counseling

Assessing employee contribution (or performance in non-AcqDemo organizations) and counseling subordinates are routine tasks for supervisors in any organization or hierarchy. So why is it so hard, and why do so many supervisors do poorly at it?

One reason is that assessment and counseling are hard to do right, and may be unpleasant in certain circumstances. Employees don't like to receive bad news, and supervisors generally don't like to deliver it. That's basic human nature, but it can be very detrimental to an organization.

You can help your supervisors by making sure that they:

- Don't procrastinate. Again, it's fundamental to our natures to want to put off unpleasant or onerous tasks. You may wish to publish a schedule for all supervisors, or dates by which they must complete all written assessments, or all CCAS counseling sessions with employees. Then follow up to make sure that they have completed these tasks on time.

  It's also a good idea to share the lessons learned from these occasions. For example, after mid-point or final CCAS counseling, you may want to gather your supervisors together for a one or two hour session to discuss how the counseling went, what problems were encountered, and how the supervisor coped with these problems. Learning from colleagues and peers can be a highly effective way to meet common organizational challenges.

  Perhaps even more importantly, your supervisors will give these matters the same degree of attention and concern as you do. If you clearly communicate, both in action and word, that assessment and counseling are vitally important to the organization, your supervisors will give them the care and consideration they deserve. Of course, the reverse is equally true: if you send the message that these things are not important, they will not be done well.
- Prepare. As this tutorial makes clear in the next section, proper counseling takes detailed preparation and planning. A step-by-step approach to preparation for counseling is provided under Supervisor-Employee Counseling (next section).

  Just as supervisors must take the time necessary to prepare for employee counseling, you must prepare to counsel your supervisors. This includes arranging a suitable setting, scheduling the time on your calendar and that of the supervisor, and writing out, in advance, those issues you want to discuss.
- Shape expectations. Employees want to know what is expected of them, and what they can expect of the organization—and to employees, supervisors represent the organization. Those expectations are shaped through day-to-day routine contact as well as through formal counseling or appraisal sessions. You must make sure your supervisors take maximum advantage of these opportunities to influence what employees may expect. The two most frequent complaints voiced by employees about appraisals are:

"I didn't know what my supervisor wanted."

And

"I thought I was doing better than that."

Similarly, your supervisors themselves will want to know what you expect of them, and what they may expect of you. If there is a Golden Rule in this regard, it is this:

What does that really mean? It certainly doesn't mean that a manager or supervisor cannot give an employee an unfavorable appraisal. Instead, it means that:

1. The subordinate must understand clearly what the expectations are. This goes back, in part, to understanding the mission and the employee's (or supervisor's) potential contribution to that mission. You must be as specific as possible in setting expectations for your supervisors, and they must be equally specific in setting expectations for their employees. Again, don't assume that "they already know what I want."
2. The subordinate should receive frequent feedback as to his or her contribution. This is particularly so where there is a significant disparity between the rating official's expectations and the observed contribution. If employees get regular feedback during the appraisal cycle—even something as simple as a "well done" upon completion of a task—they will be comfortable that they are on track and meeting your expectations. And if their contribution is lagging, they will have an opportunity to correct it before it's too late.

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There are resources available to you and your supervisors that may help.

First, this tutorial should be a continuing resource as your organization moves forward in the demonstration project. You and your supervisors can review the relevant parts of the tutorial at any time.

There may also be help available at your installation or within your pay pool. The challenges inherent in changing a business culture are similar throughout the demonstration project, and sharing lessons learned is a great way to find out how others are coping with implementation problems.

Beyond these resources, there is online help available. The Office of Personnel Management has several useful publications and links available online, including a Resource Center for Addressing and Resolving Poor Performance which prescribes a three-step process that you may find useful, along with job aids and sample documents.

For the longer term, OPM also maintains an Internet site guide to available Management Development Center Programs with a special focus on leadership for new managers and supervisors. Check it out . . . you might find something that fits your needs!

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Counseling of employees is one of the most important aspects of the AcqDemo project, and perhaps the most challenging duty for managers and supervisors. Unless employees understand supervisors' expectations and believe that their supervisors will fairly assess them, they will have little faith in the system and little reason to improve their contributions.

Here's another way of looking at counseling employees: if your employees do their jobs effectively and efficiently—i.e., contribute significantly to the mission of your organization—YOU will look good in the eyes of YOUR boss! And the best way, by far, to insure your employees contribute effectively is to counsel them effectively on their contribution.

In this section, we will review your responsibilities for counseling employees, provide some tips on how to be more effective in that role, and look at counseling employees in some special—and particularly demanding—circumstances. But this brief training can't make you an expert in counseling, nor can it provide everything you may need to know about counseling.

NOTE: This section is based, in part, on material drawn from briefings and guides developed for NAVSEA (Team CX) and MCTSSA.

AcqDemo Operating Procedures require supervisors to counsel employees at least three times in each appraisal cycle: at the beginning, the mid-point, and the end. But informal communication and feedback to employees **throughout** the appraisal cycle will generally pay contribution dividends for organizations and individuals alike.

NOTE: Service, Agency, or organizational policies and procedures may supplement and provide additional guidance beyond the AcqDemo procedures covered in this tutorial; there may also be local bargaining agreements in effect that may govern these counseling sessions. You should consult your servicing human resources office if you are in doubt.

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Prior to any counseling session, there are a number of steps you can take to make the meeting more productive and professional.

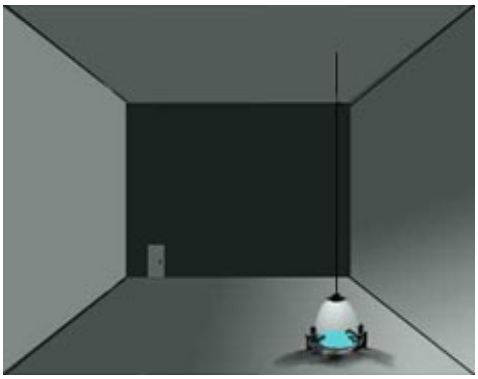
First, and most important, you must recognize the importance of this session, both for the individual employee and for the organization. That means you must **do your homework**. Doing your homework means you should:

- Take the time needed to prepare properly. You can't rush through this stage; it's not fair to the employee, and he or she will know and appreciate your efforts to do this right. And don't schedule your time so tightly that you have to hurry your employee through the session, or interrupt the meeting to go to another scheduled appointment. You might want to inform your boss and others about what you are doing in order to avoid interruptions.
- Know the employee's work record. This may mean consulting with team leaders and others supervisors, especially if your organization uses matrix teams or similar organizational arrangements.
- Review the employee's personnel file, position requirements document (PRD), and previous appraisals—you may have to visit your supporting human resources office.

Schedule the appointment with the employee. As a general rule, you would want to provide at least a week's notice, so that the employee can prepare as well.

Next, **make an agenda**. Write out an informal list of the topics you want to cover, but be sure to build in plenty of flexibility to talk about areas the employee wants to discuss. Depending on the type of counseling—initial, mid-point, or end of the appraisal cycle—there may also be specific items you must cover. These are discussed below.

Finally, **choose an appropriate setting**. Your discussions will be more productive if both of you are comfortable, and if conversational privacy is assured. A cubicle is not the right place for contribution counseling! Similarly, a room that is too large—such as a classroom—may detract from the friendly, welcoming, yet professional setting you are seeking.



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Remember, your goal is to improve the employee's contribution, not to win (or engage in) an argument with the employee.

The following proven tips for effective counseling of employees are especially useful:

- **Understand** the CCAS environment.
  - Unlike performance appraisals, CCAS looks at contribution to the mission, a difficult concept for some to grasp. Make sure you understand and can explain the difference between contribution and performance.
  - CCAS directly affects compensation. Your assessment of your subordinates will affect their livelihoods as well as their professional futures.
  - This is a difficult task. In some instances, there will be no way to make it easy or pleasant.
- **Understand** the employee.
  - Some employees do not want to participate in the AcqDemo project. Others are willing to participate, but worried about how well they will fare.
  - You are speaking to employees who may be recipients of bad news about their work and their futures. They may react emotionally, but even if they appear to react calmly they are certain to have strong feelings about their appraisal.
  - People don't change easily. CCAS tries to improve employee contribution by motivating them through their compensation, in part. Even when it works, this process can be slow and painful.
- **Anticipate** the employee's response.
  - Denial: "I was not aware . . ." or "You didn't warn me . . ."
  - Rationalization: "You didn't assign me any tasks that allowed me to contribute . . ."
  - Minimization: "My work wasn't as bad as my co-workers . . ."
  - If you have reason to believe that the employee may react strongly, you may wish to consult with your EAP counselor in advance to seek advice and to discuss resources available to the employee to help him or her cope.
- **Seek** cooperation, not confrontation.
  - Maintain a constructive tone—calm and professional.
  - Focus on contribution, not personality. Beware of negative adjectives.
  - Maintain eye contact—listen attentively.
  - Don't moralize, act guilty, or apologize.
  - Don't blame "the system" or "the pay pool panel" or "higher ups."
  - Empathize and sympathize—ask the employee how you can help him or her.
  - Seek the employee's opinions. What areas do they feel they need to improve? How do they feel they can improve their contribution?
  - Give the employee an opportunity to vent appropriately.
- **End** on a positive note by emphasizing positive accomplishments and that your mutual goal is to continue to improve the employee's contribution.
- **Document** your counseling sessions.

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In theory, each CCAS appraisal cycle should begin with a supervisor/employee counseling session at the very outset. Ideally, you would like to have the employee's final OCS score from previous year in hand when you do this counseling. Unfortunately, the new appraisal period begins before the OCS scores from the previous cycle have been finalized by the pay pool panel and approved by the pay pool panel manager.

Click here to download a template (checklist) in MS Word format that you can use in planning for and conducting initial counseling.

This means that you must either wait until the scores are released—which may be as late as January in some cases—or conduct initial counseling before either you or the employee knows the final OCS score from the previous period. Given these choices, we recommend that you schedule this initial session for as early in the new cycle as possible (in October), rather than waiting as long as three months into the new appraisal cycle for the OCS scores.

You'll still have plenty to talk about, and the employee will still have many questions. Here is your opportunity to set contribution expectations, and to insure that your employees understand how they fit into accomplishment of the organization's mission.

The Operating Procedures require you to discuss the following items during initial counseling:

- Career path, broadband level, and factors. Employees sometimes have difficulty relating the factors, descriptors, and discriminators for their career path and broadband level to their specific jobs. All factors are considered critical, although some may be weighted more heavily, so it is your responsibility to help employees understand how you will use these factors to assess their contributions.

Example:

All career paths include the "Customer Relations" factor. For some positions, it's not clear exactly who the customers are. A customer is anyone to whom products or services are provided, whether internal or external to the organizations.

The point is, both you and your employees must share a common belief about who your customers are and what you expect that employee to contribute towards improving customer relations. Finally, how will both you and the employee know whether he or she has achieved your expectation in this regard? Are there specific measures, such as customer satisfaction surveys or complaint boxes, which will indicate whether organization goals are being achieved? If not, how will you assess contribution in this factor?

- Factor weights, if any. Employees must be notified in writing at the outset of an appraisal period of any factor weights. If weighting is to be employed, make sure the employee fully understands which factors are the most important, and how he or she can maximize contribution in those factors.
- Overall OCS score which corresponds to the employee's base pay. What score must the employee obtain to protect his or her compensation?

OCS Calculator

Enter your current/desired salary: $

Upper Rail	Expected OCS	Lower Rail

You—or your employee—may also want to talk about:

- Your expectations of the employee. Be as specific as possible, relating the employees expected contribution to the CCAS rating factors. Are there any quantitative—or qualitative—goals that must be achieved? What part should the employee play in attaining those goals?
- Organizational mission. CCAS measures contribution to mission accomplishment. Which mission will be used—office, division, program, center, installation? What is that mission? Does the employee understand the mission? How does the employee's position relate to accomplishment of the mission?
- Long term goals or objectives. Where does the employee want to be in five years? What will it take to get there? How can you help?
- Education and training. What resources or programs are available to help the employee develop professionally? Note: AcqDemo gives organizations increased authority to pay for academic degree and certificate training—see the Operating Procedures.
- Any other assistance or guidance you can give the employee.

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Mid-point counseling is a more structured version of the informal and frequent feedback that you should provide to the employees you supervise throughout the year. Frequent feedback fulfills a basic human need to know both how we are doing and that our boss recognizes the quality of our work. It's also easier for you to make small but regular course corrections, if needed, than to try to make a huge change all at once, especially late in an appraisal period.

You and your employee will get the most out of mid-point counseling if you take the time to prepare carefully for the session, just as you do for initial or end of cycle counseling. This means:

- **Schedule** the appointment on your calendar and on your employee's calendar at least one week in advance.
- **Reserve** an appropriate room.
- **Make** an agenda—a list of the topics you want to discuss.

Click here to download a template (checklist) in MS Word format that you can use in planning for and conducting mid-point counseling.

What should you discuss during mid-point counseling?

This is your opportunity to let the employee know how you assess his or her contribution at the halfway point of the appraisal period:

- Use the six rating factors, along with the descriptors and discriminators, as the framework for your discussion of contribution. The AcqDemo Operating Procedures say that you **must** discuss any inadequate contribution in one or more of the factors—there should be no doubt in the employee's mind at the end of the session if he or she is in that situation. If that is the case, give the employee an opportunity to respond—perhaps there are contributions in a rating factor that you don't know about. Then try to lead the discussion towards ways of improving contribution in the factor (or factors). What improvement do you want to see, and how will you recognize it? What can you do to help?
- Be sure to include positive comments about the employee's strengths and areas of significant contribution. Has there been improvement in any factor? Try to end on a positive note.
- Refer to any professional or career development activities that could help improve contribution or lead to greater job satisfaction.

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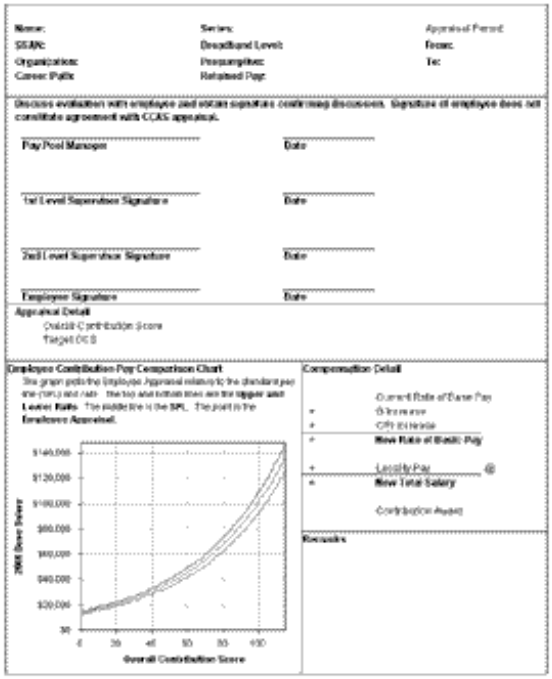
Probably the most difficult type of counseling for most supervisors is counseling employees on their contribution at the end of the appraisal period. After all, this session involves more than just an appraisal of one's work—a difficult enough process for many people—you also must inform the employee of any pay adjustments for the next year!

Click here to download a template (checklist) in MS Word format that you can use in planning for and conducting end of appraisal period counseling.

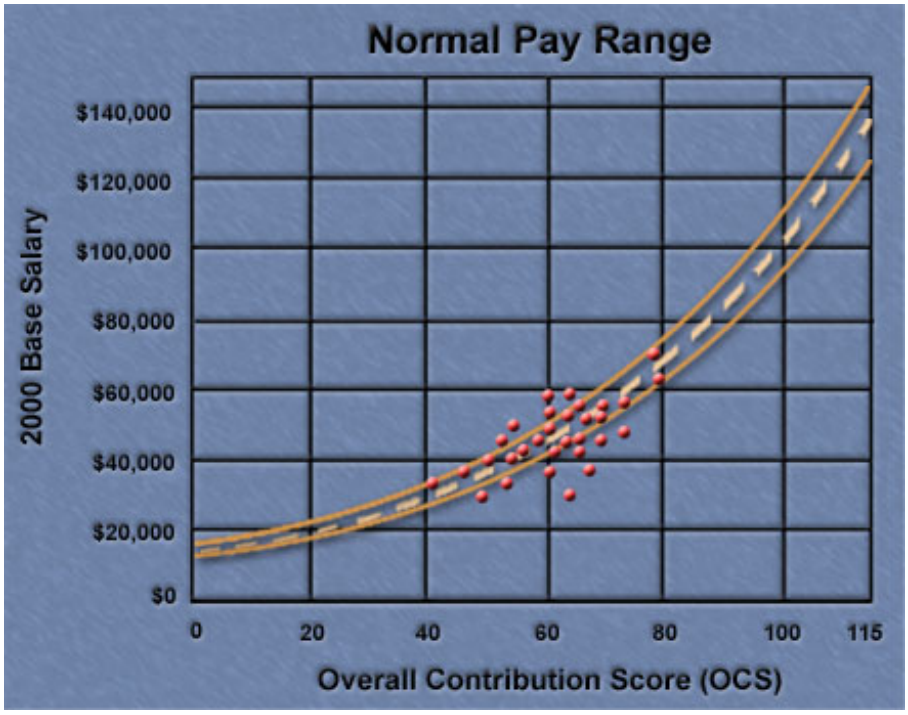
Because the end of appraisal counseling is both critical and potentially distressing, you should insure that you have done **everything** possible to prepare yourself to conduct professional counseling that will benefit the employee and the organization. You will probably want to:

- Review the CCAS Counseling Video. This 14-minute video was created especially to help prepare AcqDemo supervisors to conduct end of appraisal period counseling. The video includes counseling techniques for managers, insuring that the employee understands his or her status and the possible implications, remedial steps, and resources which may be available to assist both supervisors and employees. Professional actors, in office settings, were used to illustrate the teaching points. The video was distributed to all participating organizations in 1998, updated in 2000, and should be available locally. You'll find useful tips for counseling employees who are appropriately compensated, inappropriately compensated—below the rails, and inappropriately compensated—above the rails. You may be surprised to find that even employees who are rated as inappropriately compensated—below the rails may be unhappy if they feel their contributions warrant a larger compensation increase!
- **Review the Tips for Effective Counseling** (previously in this topic).
- Talk to the pay pool panel member who represented the employee during pay pool panel discussions; hopefully you have established a relationship early in the CCAS process. Make sure you fully understand, and can articulate to the employee, the rationale for the employee's OCS score. If the panel's assessment was different in some respect from your own assessment, find out why they changed your initial rating. (The appropriate panel member should provide this information.) After all, you are the one who will have to explain the OCS score to the employee—you can't just say "That's what the pay pool panel did!"
- Schedule plenty of time for each employee's session—this is too important to rush.
- Gather any documentation you may need, especially as relates to the employee's contribution.
- Make an agenda. Because of the sensitive nature of this discussion—and its importance to the individual and the organization—you will want to structure this discussion very carefully, making sure you cover everything you need to.
    - The employee will be eager to find out his or her OCS, so there's not much sense in delaying that discussion. You should probably start by showing the employee the overall score and pay adjustments on Part I of the CCAS Salary Appraisal Form.
    - Review the factor scores that were used to determine the OCS score. If there are factor scores that indicate inadequate contribution, you may have discussed this in previous feedback sessions, such as the mid-point counseling meeting. Refer to those conversations, and discuss any improvement or deterioration in contribution that may have occurred since your previous discussions. (Contribution Improvement Plans are discussed elsewhere in this tutorial.)

Part I: CCAS Salary Appraisal Form



- The employee will probably want to know how his or her contribution stacks up against other employees in the organization. This is a natural desire, but you must be careful to avoid giving too much detail here; the OCS scores of other employees must remain protected. Your organization may provide a scattergram (graph)—such as the one shown below—that shows all employees in the pay pool. (The Part 1 provided to the employee shows the employee's individual OCS and plot.



- Point to any opportunities for increasing contribution in the upcoming appraisal period.
- Allow plenty of time for the employee to absorb the ratings and your comments, and to respond appropriately.
- Make sure you have the employee sign the original copy of Part I of the CCAS Salary Appraisal Form, and give the employee a copy
- Document your discussion.

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One of the most widely misunderstood features of CCAS, contribution improvement plans (CIPs) is a key consideration for supervisors and managers in the case of employees whose contributions to mission accomplishment are inadequate.

When are CIPs required? When are they optional? How are they initiated? This section will answer these (and other) questions about CIPs, and will help you pick your way through the potential minefield in dealing with employees whose contributions don't measure up to standards.

Notes:

1. Some of this material is drawn from the Supervisor's Workbook, which may be downloaded for your use.
2. As suggested by the AcqDemo Operating Procedures, supervisors should consult with their servicing HR office when considering use of a CIP.
3. In some organizations, the administration of CIPs may be governed in part by agreements with unions. Consult with your servicing HR office.

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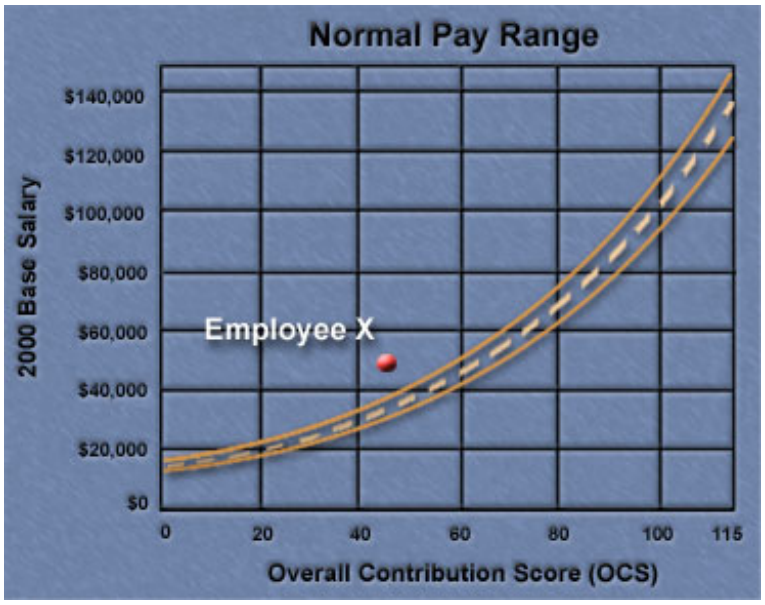
CIPs may be used when an employee's contribution is considered to be inadequate.

Basically, there are two cases of inadequate contribution that could call for a CIP:

In the first case, an employee's OCS falls above the upper rail of the normal pay range.

For example, employee "X" in the diagram on the right has received an OCS of 43, placing him or her above the upper rail. This employee is considered to be inappropriately compensated—A region (above the upper rail).

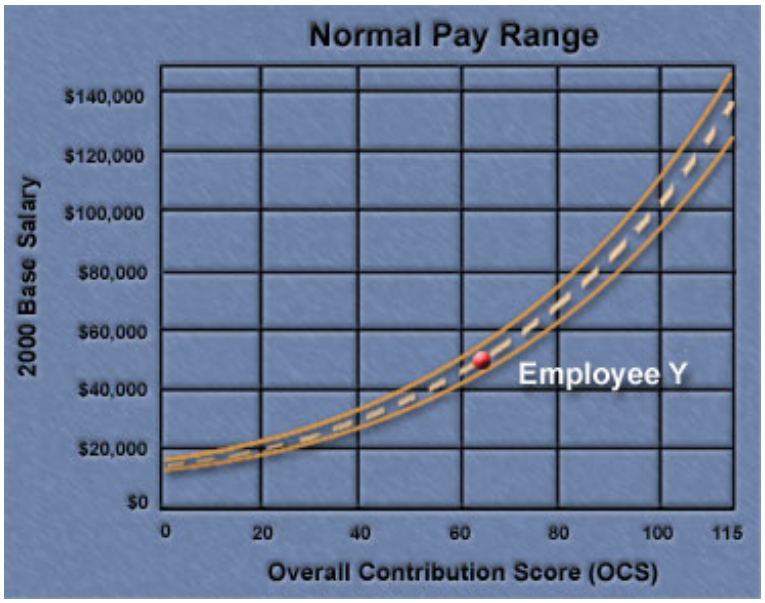


In this case, the rating official has a decision to make. The supervisor may decide to issue a CIP, notifying the employee in writing that unless the contribution increases to—and is sustained at—a higher level, the employee may be reduced in pay, reassigned, changed to a lower broadband level, or removed.

Alternatively, the supervisor may decide that no CIP is warranted. For example, the supervisor may be aware of some temporary personal problem that has affected the employee's performance. In this circumstance, the supervisor may feel that a CIP is not necessary. However, this decision must be documented by the rating official in a memorandum for record, and a copy of the memo provided to the employee and to higher management.

In the second case, the employee's contribution **in any factor** is numerically at or less than the midpoint of the next lower broadband level (for broadband level I employees, a score of 0 in any factor). In this instance, there is no supervisory discretion: a CIP **must** be used.

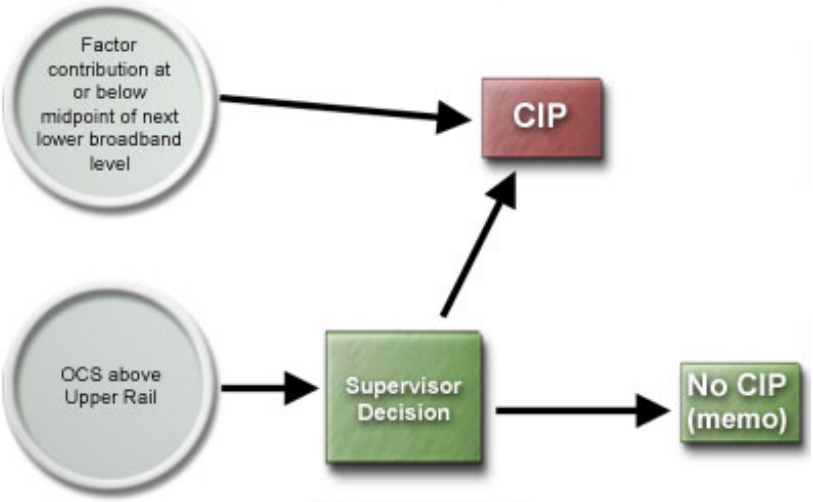
This is true **even if the employee's overall OCS places him or her within the rails**, such as employee Y (right), or below the lower rail.



Let's look at a specific example. Employee Y, a broadband level III employee in the Technical Management

Support career path, has received an OCS score of 57, which is between the rails. However, he has received a score of 34 in the Customer Relations factor. The level II range in this career path is 36-40, so the midpoint is 38. In other words, although "Y" has received an overall OCS that is between the rails, his rating in this factor is below the midpoint of the next lower broadband level. The rating official is required to issue a CIP, and written notification that unless the contribution increases to—and is sustained at—a higher level, the employee may be reduced in pay, reassigned, or removed.

The chart at right summarizes the circumstances under which a CIP is mandatory or optional.



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TIP: As soon as you decide to intitate a CIP, consult your servicing personnel office for advice and assistance.

As stated in the previous page, the CIP process starts with notification in writing to the employee that unless the contribution increases to—and is sustained at—a higher level, the employee may be reduced in pay or removed.

The CIP should accompany the notice, and must include:

- *Specific areas in which the employee is inadequately contributing, and required improvements.* The key word here is *specific*; the employee can only be expected to improve his or her contribution if you provide details. You should identify and relate the narrative to the factors, descriptors, and discriminators for the position. Describe specific examples of inadequate contribution (include dates, locations, events, etc). For example:

  > As a broadband level III employee . . . you repeatedly declined to share information and coordinate with internal and external customers in spite of several complaints. Specifically, in July you were tasked with re-writing the office SOP covering leave administration. You were directed to meet with staff members to identify problems with the present system and identify a solution. You failed to meet with any of the staff members, even though they were available. Nevertheless, you made changes to the procedures, published the SOP, and then failed to notify staff members of the changes. I reminded you on at least two occasions to brief me on any pending changes; you failed to do so. Additionally, you failed to initiate meetings with your customers in order to understand customer needs and expectations. At least two of your customers complained of your failure to respond to their concerns. Furthermore, several customers contacted me for information because you failed to return their calls. In late August you were directed to meet with your external customers monthly to identify and resolve their issues. However, you met with these customers only once since August.

- *Standards for adequate contribution*. If there are numerical goals to be achieved—such as "no more than two customer complaints during the 60 day period"—include them. Even if numerical standards cannot be stated, be as specific as possible. How will you and the employee know that the contribution has increased to a satisfactory level?
- *Actions required of the employee*. There may be specific actions that you want the employee to do as part of insuring contribution improvement. For example, you might include a statement such as the following:

  > "You must meet with your external customers monthly and phone me with regular updates."
  >
  > "You are directed to provide to your supervisor on Friday of each week a brief list in bullet format of your contributions for the week, and your anticipated contributions for the following week."

- *Time in which contribution improvement must be accomplished.* The minimum period you must provide is 60 days; more time may be provided at your discretion.
- *Assistance from the Service or agency.* There may be training or counseling available or other assistance that could assist the employee in improving his or her contribution to a satisfactory level. If so, you must include it in the CIP.
- *Consequences of failure to improve.* You should warn the employee that failure to improve his or her contribution may result in a reduction in pay, a reassignment, change to a lower broadband level, or removal from Federal service. Don't threaten any action you don't intend to carry out—that could weaken your position in dealing with other employees.

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As you can well imagine, counseling an employee receiving a CIP will be a very emotional undertaking, probably for both you and the employee. No one likes to be told that their work is unsatisfactory, especially when it could affect their pay or future employment. And you can expect that the employee, even under the best of circumstances, will resent your role in the CCAS appraisal process and may even blame you personally for this action. But counseling is critical to the process of improving contribution; simply handing an employee the notice and the CIP is a sure recipe for failure.

If you haven't done so already, you should review the section on Supervisor-Employee Counseling earlier in this tutorial. The basics of counseling employee contribution—planning, preparation, and follow-through—apply in this case just as they do with other employees.

But there are some extra steps you should consider, as well:

- *Employee Assistance Programs* (EAP). You should think seriously about calling your local or organizational EAP and asking for assistance. EAP behavioral experts can offer advice on what you can expect from the employee, how best to structure the initial CIP session, and how the employee can benefit from EAP help directly.
- *Security.* If you have **any** reason to believe that there is a risk of a violent confrontation with the employee, you should arrange with security services for any support you might need. You will probably want to do this as inconspicuously as possible, but it's certainly better to be safe than sorry: for your safety, that of the employee, and other employees.

Finally, remember that employees under a CIP need lots of help—especially from you. Once the initial shock of receiving a CIP wears off and the employee is ready to look for ways to improve, you should consider scheduling regular, frequent counseling sessions to review progress and identify solutions. You may also want to consider any formal or informal training that may help the employee improve. While this may be a burden on your time, it can be time well spent if the outcome is a fully contributing employee.

Remember, when considering placing someone on a CIP, consult with your human resources office for guidance.

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This tutorial has provided pathways to various resources available to managers and supervisors to help you do your part in making AcqDemo work and maximizing the benefits for your organization. This page gathers together those resources for your easy reference.

AcqDemo website

- Basic AcqDemo Tutorial
- Managers Workbook
- Supervisors Workbook
- Evaluation Plan
- AcqDemo Operating Procedures
- Examples of good and bad self-assessments

Diversity

- *Building and Maintaining a Diverse, High-Quality Workforce*
- *Diversity - A Business Necessity for the Millennium*
- *Workforce Diversity*

Templates

- Initial Counseling
- Mid-point Counseling
- End-of-Appraisal-Cycle Counseling

Expected OCS Calculator

You may also wish to click on the "Links" button at the bottom of this page to find related websites, such as the Office of Personnel Management and other personnel demonstration projects.

Finally, we ask that you take five minutes to provide feedback on your use of this tutorial. Simply click the "Next Page" button below, or click on "Feedback" at the bottom of the page.

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Thank you for participating in the Managers/Supervisors Tutorial. We ask you to take a few minutes to give us feedback on the program. For this assessment to be as successful as possible, kindly respond to the questions below. Your answers will help to:

- Ensure that the assumptions about the design of the web site are accurate—for example, that most people participating in the test are using Windows 95.
- Make improvements to both the content of the tutorial and its presentation.

Directions
For each question on the form below, click on the answer that best describes your response. When you are finished answering questions for all five (5) groups (Configuration, Personal, Usability, Content, and General), press the Submit button. You will receive a confirmation showing the answers you submitted. If you wish to change any of these answers, use the **Back** key on your browser to return to this screen. Make the change(s) and then submit the form again.

CONFIGURATION

1. From those listed below, which OPERATING SYSTEM is currently running on your computer?
   ○ Windows 95 ○ Windows 98 ○ Windows NT ○ Windows 3.x ○ Macintosh ○ UNIX ○ Other

   (If other, please specify) [ ]
2. Which resolution is your monitor set on?
   ○ 640 x 480 ○ 800 x 600 ○ 1024 x 768 ○ Other
   (**Note**: If you do not know, ask your systems administrator.)
3. Which Internet browser do you use MOST of the time at work?

   ○ Netscape
   [Please select version used]

   ○ Internet Explorer
   [Please select version used]

   ○ Other *Which one?* [ ]

PERSONAL

The following information will permit us to contact you for further details if needed:

Name:
(Optional) [ ]

Agency or Service:
(Optional) [ ]

Email Address:
(Optional) [ ]

USABILITY

1. How simple was it to *navigate* through the screens? ○ Easy ○ Ok ○ Hard
2. How simple was it to *read* the information on each screen? ○ Easy ○ Ok ○ Hard

3. How simple was it to *follow the sequence and flow of* what was being explained? — Easy / Ok / Hard
4. How was the *presentation* of the course screens (e.g., format, colors, margins, etc.)? — Great / Ok / Poor
5. Did you run across any *errors* in the tutorial? If so, please note them.

CONTENT

1. After taking the tutorial, what level of confidence do you have in your **understanding** of the material presented? — High / Ok / Low
2. After completing this tutorial, what is your level of confidence in your ability to **use and understand the terminology?** — High / Ok / Low
3. After completing this tutorial, what is your level of confidence in your ability to **get additional help in specific areas?** — High / Ok / Low
4. After completing this tutorial, what is your level of confidence in your ability to **find the references you will need to perform your duties?** — High / Ok / Low
5. After completing this tutorial, what is your overall level of confidence in your ability to **begin your duties?** — High / Ok / Low

GENERAL

Are there any comments or suggestions you would make on the effectiveness of this tutorial? Are there any improvements you would recommend?

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The following links will take you to related web pages of interest:

AcqDemo Home Page

Office of Personnel Management

- Resource Center for Addressing and Resolving Poor Performance
- Management Development Center Programs

Agency/Service (AcqDemo) Operating Procedures:

- Air Force: https://www.afmc-mil.wpafb.af.mil/HQ-AFMC/DR/wf_demo/index.htm
- Army: http://dacm.sarda.army.mil
- Marine Corps: http://marcorsyscom.usmc.mil/aw/demo/acqdemo.htm
- Navy: http://www.acqdemo.com
- OSD: http://www.acqdemo.com

Other Demonstration Projects:

- Air Force Research Laboratory
- Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
- Army Research Laboratory
- Commerce Department
- Naval Research Laboratory
- Naval Sea Systems Command Warfare Centers
- Navy – China Lake

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APPROPRIATELY COMPENSATED REGION	The appropriately compensated region is the area on or between the upper and lower rails of the Normal Pay Range. Under CCAS, an employee whose salary versus OCS plots within this region, *must* receive the full general pay increase, *may* receive a Contribution Rating Increase of up to 6%, and *may* receive a Contribution Award. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
BETA	A coefficient ranging from 0.0 to 1.0. When set at 1.0 the spreadsheet uses the upper rail as the "target" for determining inappropriately compensated above the rails, or below the rails. When set at -1.0 the spreadsheet uses the lower rail as the "target." When set at 0.0 the spreadsheet uses the SPL for this purpose. Beta is set separately for CRI and CA determinations. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
BROADBAND LEVEL	A broadband level is a pay range derived from the General Schedule pay rates. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
CAREER PATH	One of three categories that an employee is placed in which corresponds to the employee's occupational series currently held. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
COMPETITIVE AREA	A competitive area is the organizational unit(s) and geographical area(s) in which employees compete during a RIF. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
CONTRIBUTION AWARD	The Contribution Award is a lump-sum payment based upon an individual's contribution to the mission of the organization. This award does not affect base salary. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
CONTRIBUTION-BASED COMPENSATION AND APPRAISAL SYSTEM (CCAS)	CCAS is a contribution-based assessment system that links salary adjustments to the individual's overall contribution to the organization's mission. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
CONTRIBUTION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)	The Contribution Improvement Plan is a document issued by the rating official that outlines specific areas in which the employee is inadequately contributing. This document states how the employee's contribution is inadequate; what improvements are required; recommendations on how to achieve increased contribution; assistance that the agency will offer to the employee in improving inadequate contribution; and the consequence of failure to improve. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
CONTRIBUTION RATING INCREASE (CRI)	A Contribution Rating Increase is a base salary increase based upon an individual's contribution to the mission of the organization. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
DESCRIPTORS	Descriptors are narrative statements that describe contributions typical for the broadband levels, and are the basis for contribution assessment. Descriptors are not used individually to assess contributions but taken as a whole to derive a single evaluation for each factor. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
DISCRIMINATORS	Various categories in which an employee's contribution is assessed. Discriminators for each factor are the same for all career paths and all broadband levels. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.

DISPLACEMENT	For purposes of this demonstration project, displacement means the movement via RIF procedures of a fully qualified employee into a position held by an employee of lower retention standing in the same or lower broadband level. The undue interruption standard of 5 CFR 351.403(a)(1) serves as the criterion to determine if an employee is fully qualified. In addition, to be fully qualified, the employee must meet DAWIA statutory requirements for the position, if applicable. (However, statutory waivers shall continue to apply.) Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
EXPECTED RATING	The expected rating is a rating derived by use of the employee's last OCS to plot a scatter diagram (chart) assuming the employee's performance continued exactly as it was in the previous rating period, i.e., the dot on the plot moves in direct relation to the standard pay line. In instances where no previous rating exists, the expected rating is dreived by plotting salary in relation to the SPL for that employee's career path and broadband level. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
FACTORS	Factors are the basis for assessing contributions. The same six factors (problem solving, teamwork/cooperation, customer relations, leadership/supervision, communications, and resource management) apply to all career paths. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
FEEDBACK	Feedback is communication between the rating official and employee about the employee's contribution during the appraisal cycle. Feedback should focus on the employee's strengths and weaknesses in areas of contribution to the organization's mission, professional development, and career development activities. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
GENERAL SCHEDULE PAY INCREASE	The General Schedule Pay Increase allows for a percentage increase to the General Schedule, as authorized by Congress and the President each year. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
INADEQUATE CONTRIBUTION	An employee is considered to to be inadequately contributing if his/her contribution in any factor is at or less than the midpoint of the next lower broadband level (or a factor score of zero for broadband level I employees). Additionally, when an employee's contribution plots in the area above the upper rail of thenormal pay range, the employee is considered to be contributing inadequately. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
INAPPROPRIATELY COMPENSATED—ABOVE THE RAILS	This region is the area above the upper rail of the normal pay range. Under CCAS, an employee whose salary versus OCS plots within this region *could be denied* part or all of the general pay increase and will receive no contribution rating increase or contribution award. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
INAPPROPRIATELY COMPENSATED—BELOW THE RAILS	This region is the area below the lower rail of the normal pay range. Under CCAS, an employee whose salary versus OCS plots within this region *must* receive the general pay increase, *may* receive a contribution rating increase, and *may* receive a contribution award. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
LOWER RAIL	The curved line that is below the standard pay line (SPL) by an 8 percent difference in salary from the SPL throughout the OCS range. It is used to define the lower bound of the NPR. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
MASTER RETENTION LIST	List of competing employees in descending retention standing order as defined by their tenure, veterans' preference, and length of service as determined by their adjusted service computation date. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
NORMAL PAY RANGE (NPR)	The Normal Pay Range is the region bounded by the upper and lower rails. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
OCCUPATIONAL SERIES	One of the lines of work identified under the present, Governmentwide classification system. Under this demonstration, each occupational series is assigned to one of three career paths. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
OVERALL CONTRIBUTION SCORE	The Overall Contribution Score (OCS) is a numerical value which represents the employee’s contribution to the mission of the organization. It is computed by averaging the scores of the six contribution factors. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.

PAY POOL	A group of employees among whom a certain amount of salary increase and award money is distributed. Each participant in the demonstration project is a member of only one pay pool. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
PAY POOL PANEL	The pay pool panel, which includes the pay pool manager and rating officials (who normally report directly to the pay pool manager), conducts a final review of the OCSs and the recommended compensation adjustments for the pay pool members. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
PAY POOL MANAGER	The manager of the pay pool who has annual pay adjustment authority. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
POSITION REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT (PRD)	The Position Requirements Document for each employee provides jop-specific information, broadband level descriptors, and other information pertinent to the job, including staffing requirements and contribution expectations. This one- or two-page document replaces the current agency-developed position description form. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
PROBATIONARY PERIOD	The propationary period is a period of time in which supervisors evaluate a newly hired demonstration project employee's contribution and conduct within the acquisition workplace environment to determine whether the employee should be retained. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
RAILS (UPPER AND LOWER)	The rails are lines +/-8.0 % in salary from the Standard Pay Line and define the Normal Pay Range. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
RATING OFFICIAL	The rating official is the individual who formally rates or appraises the employee for the annual rating of record. Normally this will the first-level supervisor. The terms "rating official" and "first level supervisor" are frequently used interchangeably in this tutorial. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
RATING OF RECORD	The rating of record is the official rating that is entered into the employee's official personnel file (or database). Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
RETENTION STANDING	A competing employee's retention standing in RIF based on tenure, veteran's preference, length of service, and contribution, as compared to other employees in the same broadband level. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR PROVIDING A RATING OF RECORD	Certain employees cannot be evaluated readily by the normal CCAS appraisal process due to special circumstances that take the individual away from normal duties or duty station (e.g., long-term full-time training, active military duty, extended sick leave, leave without pay, etc.) Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
STANDARD PAY LINE (SPL)	The Standard Pay Line is a mathematical relationship between contribution and salary. The Standard Pay Line tracks from the lowest pay, GS-1/1, to the highest pay, GS-15/10. It is increased annually in accordance with the General Schedule pay increase. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
SUPERVISOR	The first-level supervisor is usually the individual who formally rates or appraises the employee for the annual contribution assessment (rating of record). The terms "rating official" and "first level supervisor" are frequently used interchangeably in this tutorial. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
UPPER RAIL	The curved line that is above the SPL by an 8 percent difference in salary from the SPL throughout the OCS range. It is used to define the upper bound of the NPR. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.
WEIGHTS	Weights are values from 0.5 to 1.0 that may be used to define the relative importance of the factors. Use the ***Back*** button on your browser to return to your previous screen.

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Periodic newsletters are a great way to get the word out. They needn't be a major effort, nor do they require professional layouts or editing. In fact, locally-produced newsletters with that "homey" touch may be just the thing to show employees that your organization wants to keep them informed, while doing it in an informal, fun manner.

Your newsletter can address common concerns voiced by AcqDemo participants (more about that later), notify all of upcoming demonstration project events such as focus groups or mid-point counseling, and provide useful lists of places to go and phone numbers to call for more information. Your organization has the means to produce a simple newsletter, since all you really need is access to a word processor and a paper copier. Another alternative is to produce and distribute your newsletter electronically, either by e-mailing it to your employees or posting it on a local web page if you have established one for this demonstration project. In that case, be sure to get the word out to everyone that the newsletter has been posted and is available for download.

Newsletters are a valuable, low-cost way to keep everyone in the loop.

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Your organization may have access to a web-server, along with the necessary webmaster services, that you can use to establish an AcqDemo web site for your installation, pay pool, or organization—or you may want to construct an AcqDemo site on your intranet, if you have one.

Surveys completed in 1997 showed that more than 85% of AcqDemo participants have access to the Internet; no doubt the percentage has grown significantly since then. That's why the Internet—or an intranet—is increasingly the delivery medium of choice within the government and industry to provide information to employees.

Your Service or Agency may decide to establish this kind of web-site—for an example, see the Marine Corps (MARCORSYSCOM) AcqDemo site. If so, perhaps you could arrange a page or a section on that site for your local information.

Or your installation may have such a site, like the one at Edwards Air Force Base. Again, perhaps you could arrange a page or section for your pay pool or your organization.

> One consideration in establishing your own AcqDemo web site is whether or not you want to limit access to the site. For example, the Edwards AFB site requires that you access it from a .mil or .gov IP address. That means that employees cannot visit the site from home, should they wish to. On the other hand, it provides an additional measure of information security. The Marine Corps site provides unrestricted access.

There is also a main AcqDemo web site, established and maintained by the AcqDemo Program Office. It has some useful information on it for all employees—including this training tutorial!—but it doesn't have the local touch that your own web pages can impart, not does it respond to the particular concerns of YOUR employees. But if you do establish your own page, be sure to include a link to the AcqDemo site.

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There are lots of other ways of getting the word out that you may wish to consider if you're not already using them:

Commanders Calls

Many organizations conduct occasional Commanders Calls or All Hands meetings for managers, supervisors, or all employees. These can be excellent fora to get your message out about the demonstration project—as well as a great way to get a sense of participants' attitudes and problems.

One word of caution, however. If not all of the employees in your organization are AcqDemo participants—perhaps due to union or organizational considerations—you may wish to avoid using a forum with a mixed (participant and non-participant) audience to get the word out. This is especially the case if there have been very strongly held feelings about participation among some organizational groups.

Base, Installation, or Post Newspapers

Several participating organizations made good use of base or installation monthly newspapers to provide information about AcqDemo prior to implementation in 1999. But have you considered using the newspaper as a means of communicating with participants after implementation? If not, perhaps now is a good time to start.

One good idea might be a monthly column about the demonstration project, with information about upcoming and current AcqDemo milestones, and explanations of policies and concepts. For example, you might write an entire column on employee self-assessments, providing some good examples and some bad examples, and reinforcing the linkage between AcqDemo rating factors, the organizational mission, and employee contributions. Something like this would be a great help to employees near the end of the annual appraisal cycle, and would help insure that employee self-assessments become a truly worthwhile tool.

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You shouldn't be limited by the means and methods discussed in this tutorial. There are lots of other ways, both formal and informal, of making sure that the lines of communications are open and that all participants in your organization have reason to feel confident that they are being kept current. *Electronic mailing lists* of participants enable you to send important e-mails to employees; *flyers and brochures* can help get the word about impending events; and AcqDemo *bulletin boards* can help you reach a wider audience.

In short, use your imagination. How you communicate is not important; that you communicate is what counts.

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Getting the word out to AcqDemo participants is only half of the communications challenge. The other half is finding out what their needs and concerns are, making sure that you address the issues they think are important. How will you know what to communicate to them unless you find ways to discover what they are thinking?

Fortunately, there are lots of ways of learning what you need to know. Here are a few methods you might want to consider.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are small groups of people assembled for an hour or two to discuss pre-determined topics under the guidance of a skilled facilitator. A very common technique in modern marketing—of everything from automobiles to political candidates—focus groups provide subjective but valuable information about attitudes and issues. For example, automobile manufacturers sometimes use focus groups to help determine style preferences for upcoming model years. You may even have participated in a marketing focus group of one kind or another.

The AcqDemo Program Office, as part of the demonstration project Evaluation Plan, uses focus groups to help gauge employee attitudes and suggest improvements. Perhaps you have already participated in one of these sessions, conducted by the evaluation contractor, Cubic Applications, Inc. These efforts are tied to mandated evaluation requirements, and while the local leadership is provided a summary outbriefing, if desired, their primary purpose is not keeping managers and supervisors informed but rather to help Congress, and OPM, decide if the demonstration project is a success.

That's why some participating organizations—such as the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB—have conducted their own focus groups. These sessions, generally an hour in length, can be a valuable source of information about how AcqDemo is doing locally, and where the pressure points are.

If you are thinking about conducting focus groups, here are some important considerations:

- Confidentiality. Employees will not participate freely unless they believe they can do so without fear of retribution no matter what they say. How will you guarantee confidentiality—or at least, non-attribution of any quote?
- Training of facilitators. Facilitating focus groups effectively requires some training and experience. Do you have access to such personnel? If not, how will you provide this training and experience?
- Selection of focus group participants. You should avoid stacking the groups artificially, either with AcqDemo supporters or those who may oppose participation. What method will you use to randomly select participants?
- Structuring focus groups. How large should your groups be? Will they include mixes of supervisors and employees? Will military personnel who rate AcqDemo participants be included? Will all local pay pools be represented? All career paths and broadbands?

Planning for, conducting, and analyzing the results of focus groups is a significant effort, but the results can be excellent, providing the local leadership with unvarnished opinions on issues of significant concern to the workforce.

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As part of the 5-year AcqDemo evaluation effort, a baseline attitude survey of participants was conducted by OPM in 1998. The evaluation contractor, Cubic Applications, Inc., will administer follow up surveys in 2002 and 2003—and there may be a short, electronic (Internet-based) survey in 2001.

You can use these same techniques to find out what you want to know. For example, PEO GCSS (Picatinny Arsenal) conducted a survey to measure employee satisfaction with AcqDemo in the spring of 2000.

Some survey planning considerations:

- Confidentiality. Employees need to know that their survey responses will be held confidentially. What steps will you take to guarantee confidentiality, and how can you reassure respondents so that they will be confident on this issue?
- Length. Obviously, the longer the survey, the more information you will get. On the other hand, response rates on long surveys may be very low, and the more time your employees spend taking surveys, the less time they are spending on contributing to the mission.
- Survey data. Once the survey has been administered and the responses collated and analyzed, what will you do with the information? Will employees be given the results of the survey? What if the attitudes expressed are not what you are hoping for?

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Of course, you will have your own tried and true ways of finding out how employees feel about the demonstration project, from keeping an open door policy to drop-by visits to employees at their desks just to see how things are going.

Another great source of information is the CCAS counseling sessions that occur. You may want to suggest convening a meeting of rating officials to compare notes after one of these counseling sessions. This is a good way to find out whether certain attitudes are widespread or isolated, and whether other managers and supervisors are facing the same challenges as you.

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Use the form below to search for documents in this web containing specific words or combinations of words. The text search "engine" will display a list of matching pages. Each item in the "Results" list is a link to a matching page.

OCS

Search

For best results enter just one or two words.
Searches on more than one word will be treated "as a phrase".

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Directions

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On this page you will find directions on how **BEST** to use this tutorial. By following these directions, you will be able to complete the tutorial faster, easier, and more enjoyably.

Three Main Things

There are three (3) main things that you need to understand clearly before embarking upon the tutorial.

1. First is the **configuration** assumptions upon which the design was based. If you wish, you may click above, or see your system administrator to compare your current hardware and software configuration with the specific requirements for this tutorial.
2. The second area you need to understand addresses the **conventions** used to move through the pages of the tutorial and how you can "navigate" them in the most sensible (also the quickest) manner.
3. Last but not least is the tutorial's **organization**: what's where, and why it's there.

Let's look at the specific requirements of the last two (2) areas.

Conventions		
1. Underlined words and phrases indicate links to other pages or a different spot on the same page.	2. Most pages contain more than one screenful of information. Use the scroll bar on the right to scroll down the page.	3. Use the "next" and "back" buttons at the end of the text the first time through the tutorial.
4. To use the tutorial as a reference, use the navigation buttons on the left and at the bottom of the screen.	5. Use the "go to bottom" link at the top of each page to quickly move to the bottom of the screen. Use the "back to top" link to move back up again.	6. Use the "Site Map" page to quickly locate a particular page.

Organization		
1. The tutorial is divided into two major sections: *utiliity* screens and *content* screens.	2. *Utility* screens like this one help you use the tutorial to best advantage. You access the utility screens by selecting the links in the black bar at the bottom of the page. (Hint: use the "go to bottom" link to get to these buttons quickly.)	3. *Content* screens discuss the various components of the Demonstration Project. The major Project topics are accessed by using the buttons on the left side of the screen.
4. If a content topic has more than one page, the next page is listed on the left as p. 2, p. 3, etc.		

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If you do not have the required hardware and software on the machine from which you plan to run the tutorial, then you will not be able to view it as anticipated. In that case, you may want to download software to come "up to snuff" or change to a different computer to take the tutorial.

Here are the specific configuration requirements:

Configuration Assumptions		
Hardware	***Software***	***Knowledge***
At least a 486/66 PC	Windows 95 or higher, or NT	Knows basics of working with the operating system
Video card that supports at least 256 colors and a 600 x 800 screen resolution that is set to at least 600 x 800. (Click here to find out how to check/change colors and screen resolution)	A 4.x or later version of either Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer (Both browsers are included in this CD-ROM.)	How to use one of these browsers. (Click here for a tutorial on these browsers.)

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Configuration

Adjusting Your Monitor Settings

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For Windows 95/98, click on the "Start" button at the bottom of your screen and then select "Settings" and then "Control Panel." When the Control Panel window appears, double click the "Display" icon. Once the Display program opens, click on the "Settings" tab. You can move the slider on the **right** side of the screen to whatever resolution your computer supports. If it's available, move the slider to 800 by 600 pixels or higher. Note: The higher the numbers, the more "stuff" you can fit on your screen and the lower, the less stuff. You may or may not need to restart your computer after you change the resolution. But in any case, be prepared to do so.

You can also change the number of colors available to be displayed—again, depending on your computer. This can be accomplished on the **left** side of the Display:Settings screen. We recommend that colors should be set to at least 256 or more. This will help ensure that you see the colors we used.

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Internet Tutorials

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Below you will find a link to a tutorial on how to "surf the Internet."

The free Internet tutorials here cover everything from setting up your Web browser to adjusting your monitor for the best Net experience. Information is frequently updated, the terminology is well-explained, the design is easy on the eyes.

http://www.learnthenet.com/english/index.html

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You may be one of those who hates to read directions and prefers to plow on ahead. In this case, however, reading the directions for the tutorial will save you both time and effort. In fact, if this is your first time through, we suggest you use the "next" button at the end of each page. By using the "next" button, you'll advance through the tutorial in a logical sequence. (Hint: the "next" button at the bottom of this page will take you to the directions page.)

As we've mentioned above, at the end of each page are the small "navigational" buttons—

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—to allow you to move back and forth through the tutorial. We recommend you use these buttons the first time through the tutorial. Once you've completed the tutorial, you may use the buttons on the left to move directly to a particular topic. At the bottom of the screen is a set of buttons for "utilities"—in other words, web pages to facilitate your working with the tutorial. The "topic" buttons on the left and the "utility" buttons at the bottom are briefly explained below.

CAUTION: *This tutorial has been designed for a screen resolution of 800 x 600 pixels or higher. If you have to scroll left and right to see all the information on the screen, your monitor is probably set to 640 X 480 pixels . In this case, you have several options. First, you may contact your system administrator for help. Second, you may click* ***here*** *for instructions on changing your monitor's settings. Third, you can move to another computer that has its monitor set at 800 x 600 pixels.*

The Utility Pages	
Home	The section you are in.
Directions	How to use this tutorial for best results and common conventions used throughout. You should definitely read this section first!
Search	Search for specific information contained within this web site.
Site Map	See how the tutorial is organized by selecting this page. You can also see which pages you have visited and which you haven't.
Glossary	Look up the definition of AcqDemo-related words and acronyms—such as CCAS—in the Glossary.
Feedback	Forms for you to let us know how you did in the tutorial and what you think might be improved. You can also report any errors you find.
Links	Links to relevant web sites.

The Tutorial Sections	
Communications	Ideas for increasing the flow of AcqDemo communications within your organization.
Training New Employees	How to organize and plan AcqDemo training for new employees.
Counseling Supervisors	How managers can assist supervisors in meeting AcqDemo challenges.
Counseling Employees	The heart of the tutorial: tips and techniques for effectively counseling employees on CCAS
CCAS Appraisals	CCAS factors, self-assessments, and feedback
Contribution Improvement Plans (CIPs)	How and when to use CIPs to improve employee contribution
Resources	Tutorial resources for AcqDemo managers and supervisors.

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Along with broadbanding, the Contribution-based Compensation and Appraisal System (CCAS) is undoubtedly the most important of the AcqDemo initiatives to most employees. For the first time, there is clear linkage between an employee's contribution to the organization and his or her compensation. That's why it's so important for managers and supervisors to get employee appraisals right: ensuring that top contributors are recognized and compensated accordingly is what CCAS is all about.

From the organizational perspective, rewarding top contributors motivates them to even better contributions in the future. Conversely, under CCAS it is now possible to send a message to those who are not contributing at the expected level by denying them some or even all of an annual pay increase (with the exception of locality pay, which is not affected by CCAS).

Unlike other government ratings systems, which often had little or no real effect on employee performance, this system has teeth. And because it has teeth, managers and supervisors must take care to insure they are following the guidance and procedures laid down for CCAS; after all, these appraisals can have significant consequences for employee livelihoods and even quality of life.

The fundamentals of the appraisal process are covered in the Operating Procedures (Chapter 6) and the basic AcqDemo tutorial. This section provides additional hints and tips for managers and supervisors on CCAS topics that have been shown to be areas of concern across the demonstration project to date.

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In focus groups, surveys, and informal comments, employees have said that they need help in fitting the six CCAS factors to the mission and their own jobs. While they understand each of the factors, they are often at a loss to see how what they do on a daily basis relates to the factors.

Let's briefly review the factors (which are the same for all three career paths):

- *Problem Solving*. Describes personal and organizational problem-solving results.
- *Teamwork/Cooperation*. Describes individual and organizational teamwork and cooperation for both formal and informal teams.
- *Customer Relations*. Describes the effectiveness of personal and organizational interactions with customers, both internal and external.
- *Leadership/Supervision*. Describes individual and organizational leadership and/or supervisory contributions.
- *Communication*. Describes the effectiveness of oral/written communications.
- *Resource Management*. Describes personal and organizational utilization of resources to accomplish the mission. (Resources include, but are not limited to, personal time, equipment and facilities, human resources, and funds.)

As you recall, these factors are further refined by descriptors and discriminators.

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How these factors relate to your organization's mission is probably clear to you—but it may not be so clear to some of your employees.

We've already discussed how you can communicate your organizational mission to your employees. What we're talking about in **this** section is helping them understand how the rating factors relate to that mission. For example, if your organization's mission is to acquire supplies and services for some larger organization or unit, how can you help an administrative assistant see how *resource management* in his or her job can contribute to accomplishing that mission? He or she may feel that the scale of any resources managed in a clerical position is so minor that there could be very little impact on the mission. But as you know, even in relatively low-level positions, everyone manages his or her own time—that too is part of resource management. And after years of downsizing and hiring freezes in some organizations, employee time—labor hours—is a critically important resource.

And that gets us into a related area: helping employees see how what they do relates to the factors.

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Many employees can easily see the relationship between the six factors and their daily activities. Others have more difficulty, especially if their position is a supporting one—clerical, administrative, base support, or technical. Of course, one good starting place for discussion with an employee is the Position Requirements Document (PRD), which is written in terms of the six factors.

Let's examine each of the factors to see in greater detail how they may be interpreted to apply to any AcqDemo position:

- *Problem Solving*. Most employees will not find difficulty in understanding how their job involves problem solving. Any job has problems and challenges, and performing that job successfully—i.e., contributing to the mission—means finding solutions to those problems. At the lower broadband levels of each career path, the problems may be small and may relate only to that position, while at the higher levels the scope, impact, and complexity of the problems addressed will be expected to increase, as will the creativity of the solution found. For example, an administrative assistant may only be expected to solve problems affecting accomplishment of his or her job—such as prioritizing tasks—while a senior engineer may take the lead in solving a technical problem affecting an entire project or program.
- *Teamwork/Cooperation.* Some employees view AcqDemo—and specifically CCAS appraisals and payouts—as working against teamwork and cooperation. They feel that they are competing against colleagues for a limited pot of money.

  This is a sticky one. You probably should not try to talk them out of it if they see it that way. Instead, you may want to emphasize the value that the **organization** places on teamwork as a means of achieving strategic objectives. You may also want to point out that you personally value teamwork and cooperation, and that the best way for employees individually to do well is to work effectively collectively.

- *Customer Relations*. The primary problem with this factor for some employees is in understanding who the customer is. Some employees almost never deal with anyone from outside the organization, and therefore may not feel that the factor is relevant to them.

  You should point out that the definition of customer relations is drawn extremely broadly. It includes *internal* customers as well as external. So for an administrative specialist who is maintaining files for a group of engineers in the office, or providing other clerical support, the customers are the engineers. For a training specialist who helps plan training activities for the organization, customers could include all those who participate in the training.

  The point is that we all have customers to satisfy, and how we relate to those customers is an important dimension of our contribution to the organization.

- Leadership/Supervision. For many employees, this factor is clearly important to their positions. However, some employees, especially those in lower broadband levels, may not see an obvious connection to their own work. How can someone who is not a supervisor or manager show leadership or supervision?

  Close examination of the factor descriptors for each career path helps provide an answer to this question. For example, the level I descriptors for Technical Management Support are:

  - "Takes initiative in accomplishing assigned tasks. Asks for assistance as appropriate.
  - Provides input to others in technical/functional area.
  - Seeks and takes advantage of developmental opportunities."

  These descriptors really are pretty basic and certainly within the realm of possibility in any position. Even at the lowest broadband levels, employees can show their leadership characteristics, perhaps

volunteering to take on new tasks. And the descriptors for higher broadband levels provide plenty of room for employees who do contribute more in this factor to demonstrate their leadership abilities. Your part in this equation is to insure that you provide your subordinates an opportunity to demonstrate those qualities of leadership, even if for only a short time. You may be pleasantly surprised by what they can accomplish!

- Communication. We all have to communicate, whether orally or in writing. Your employees know this, but they may not know what your expectations are in this regard.

  For example, do you expect your employees to tell you when they finish a task? If you do expect it, do your employees know that you do, and do they know how (what form) of communication you want? Is a simple "I finished that summary report and sent it off" OK, or do you want something more formal?

  How important to each position are communications skills, and what steps have you taken to make sure that your employees can improve their skills to the standards you want and need? This can sometimes be a problem where long time employees, hired initially at lower grades, have progressed to a level where they have to write or brief effectively in order to be successful and contribute to the organization's mission. Unfortunately, it sometimes happen that their communications skills have not kept pace with other aspects of their job performance.

  If communications skills are important to you and the organization, you have to *communicate* that to your employees.
- Resource Management. Although we may not think of it in these terms, everyone manages resources. The resources we manage may be only those within our immediate grasp—such as copier paper or printer toner—or they may be connected to a project or program, such as appropriated dollars or labor hours. And of course, we all manage our own labor hours.

  It's obvious but worth reiterating with employees that all of the resources we manage have been entrusted to us by taxspayers. Beyond the need to be efficient and effective in using resources to accomplish objectives, we owe the American public our best efforts not to waste the wherewithal they have given us. At the lowest broadband levels this may mean simply planning our own time to accomplish assigned tasks; at the highest level it can mean developing innovative ways to get the most bang for programmed bucks. In every case, it's a critical part of our jobs

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Many employees report that the process of preparing self-assessments (CCAS Salary Appraisal form, Part III) has been extremely frustrating and worrying. Common concerns that have been described in focus groups and surveys include:

Time. Some employees indicated that they did not have enough time to do a good job on their self-assessment. Sometimes they mean they did not get enough advance warning of when the assessment was due. Or they feel that they weren't given enough time during the course of the business day to complete the form in depth and detail.

As a manager or supervisor, you play a critical role in this process. You have to communicate to your subordinates that employee self-assessments are important to the organization, and that employees must be given the time to do a thorough job. Remember, your role in the CCAS appraisal process will be much more effective and smooth if you can start with helpful and functional self-assessments.

Writing Skills. Employees may feel that their writing skills put them at a disadvantage in comparison with their peers, even though writing may not be a critical component of the job itself. For example, a child care specialist working in an installation child care center may not have to write anything as a part of the job, but still has to assess his or her contribution in writing effectively to insure a good appraisal.

Ideally, all employees would be given the opportunity and resources to improve their writing skills, but this may be impractical, especially in those circumstances where good writing isn't critical to the job itself. But as a supervisor, you still need a good employee self-assessment, so how do you get there?

Here is where some personal coaching may be necessary. Remember, your goal is to get self-assessments with substance and content, so you don't have to be too concerned with appearance or slickness. You're only looking for bullets, anyway, not complete narrative descriptions of accomplishments. Review the Part IIIs when you get them, and if you feel they need additional work, it's probably time for an informal counseling session in which you can offer suggestions for ways in which the employee can better reflect his or her contributions.

Guidance. Some employees have said they received little or no guidance on how to do self-assessments. Some were simply handed the form and told to fill it out and give it to the supervisor.

Whether or not your Service, Agency, or organization chooses to publish additional guidance on how to fill out self-assessments, you have the responsibility to make sure that your subordinates know what is expected of them.

Unless you have some employees who are new to AcqDemo—or your organization joins the demonstration project after the first round of implementation—everyone should have gone through the process at least once by now. Nevertheless, don't assume that they know what is expected of them, or how to provide good input to the appraisal process.

At the beginning of the self-assessment cycle—around the first of September—you may want to consider some small group sessions with employees and supervisors to review the basics of self-assessments, emphasize any relevant local policies or procedures, and perhaps provide some examples of good and bad self-assessments (which you can find in the basic AcqDemo tutorial). These sessions will help to underscore the importance of the process and give employees an opportunity to clear up misconceptions. It's also your chance to remind employees of the fundamentals, such as avoiding use of too much technical jargon or acronyms,

and that they can use the description in their Position Requirements Document—which uses the six CCAS factors—as a jumping-off point and to help them see how their position relates to the factors.

Page Limits. Some employees have complained that unrealistic limits on their assessments prevented them from fully describing all of their contributions.

There is no page limit on self-assessments in the AcqDemo Operating Procedures. However, your Service, Agency, or organization may have chosen to establish some limitation. If that's the case, your task is to stress brevity and clarity with your subordinates, explaining that you only need bullets to describe contributions, not full narrative descriptions. They may need reassurance that the length of the text is less important than the content of their contribution.

For an example of employee and supervisor assessments linked to an organization's mission, click here.

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Mission and Assessment

Once an employee understands the mission of the organization, he or she is better able to prepare a contribution assessment linked to the mission. Keep in mind that contribution-based assessments are not just "how" well you did "what," but "why" the task benefited the mission and "who" the customer was. The employee and the supervisor should be able to use the "why" and "who" questions as a basis for completing each of the six critical factors on the employee self-assessment (Part III) and the supervisor assessment (Part II).

Not all the assessments, particularly by the supervisor, will be positive. The supervisor must provide enough information on the employee's contribution to render a fair and objective score. An example of a mission statement and related assessments follows:

Mission Statement: "Develop effective weapon system platforms to protect our nation."

Each factor assessment should be linked to this mission statement.

Factor 1 – Problem Solving

Employee Self-Assessment: Developed an up-dated computer program to track material storage and delivery of weapon system parts from the Supply Department to the customer. This tracking system cut reorder costs by 20% and improved delivery time on average by 20 days.

Supervisor Assessment: The previous material tracking system was not capable of tracking the volume of parts now handled by the Supply Department, causing items to be misplaced. Reorders were repeatedly received and shipments were delayed because some supply items could not be located. This new tracking system will save the department millions of dollars over the next few years.

Factor 2 – Teamwork/Cooperation

Employee Self-Assessment: Worked with a team of twelve in the development of a $1.5M rotary rig for the vertical wind tunnel facility. This rotary rig was developed nearly $.5M under cost. This achievement enhanced our capability to support other test programs.

Supervisor Assessment: Due to the success of this team, we are now the recognized leader in program testing for DoD.

Factor 3 – Customer Relations

Employee Self-Assessment: Worked with over 30 field customers in an effort to provide them with parts/supplies to complete the development of various weapon systems. Improved the delivery rate by 10% during this rating period. Received several letter of appreciation from customers for my efforts to locate parts within the Supply Department and, when necessary, from contract sources.

Supervisor Assessment: Employee improved supply delivery rates to his customers by 10%. In addition to the letters of appreciation, I received several phone calls during the rating cycle commending this employee on his efforts and willingness to help his customers.

Fact 4: Leadership/Supervision

Employee Self-Assessment: Volunteered to lead a re-engineering effort for a radar improvement initiative for the F-14 weapons system

Supervisor Assessment: Employee did volunteer to lead this project. However, many complaints were received concerning employee's failure to follow through with numerous tasks on this project. Documentation showed that the employee delegated her responsibilities to a subordinate employee who actually acted as the lead on this project. This fact was confirmed with the contractor assigned to the initiative. On another occasion the employee was tasked with leading a group of three in the development of an Operating Guide covering the procedure for purchasing weapon parts from DLA. She failed to lead the group in this function, even after she was given specific instructions on her role in the tasking. The task was assigned to another employee.

Factor Five – Communication

Employee Self-Assessment: Prepared a computer-based tutorial for blue-collar employees on the safety operation of various platform cranes. Taught several classes to blue-collar employees on the subject. The

majority of ratings received following this training were "Excellent" and accidents reported have fallen from 11 last year to 2 this year.

Supervisor Assessment: The computer-based tutorial is now on our website and used by a number of DoD activities. This employee did an outstanding job in both the written and the oral presentation of this material.

Factor Six – Resource Management

Employee Assessment: Designed and implemented a new procedure for handling TDY orders via the Internet. The new procedure is less time consuming and eliminates the need for paper copies or faxes

Supervisor Assessment: TDY orders now take approximately 15 minutes to process, whereas the previous system took at least 30 minutes. Although this is a resource savings in time, in general the employee's management of his time is inefficient and ineffective. Tasks are frequently reassigned because the employee fails to complete them in a timely manner. In some cases, other employees must re-do work because he fails to perform the task properly. Example include letters to contractors with typographical errors or inadequate information, purchase orders prepared with incorrect data, and travel vouchers prepared with incorrect travel dates. This causes others to spend time correcting and/or performing the work that should have been accomplished by the employee.

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Diversity and Equity Considerations

In any appraisal system, there is the potential to disadvantage some group or another, perhaps inadvertently. However, there is even greater possibility for employee dissatisfaction in a system, such as CCAS, which links compensation to how employees do their jobs, because peoples' livelihoods are affected. And since this system is still very new, and very different from the old system, there is some suspicion about it to begin with.

You can be sure that your subordinates are closely scrutinizing your role in the CCAS appraisal cycle for any signs of favoritism (or the opposite) towards any ethnic, cultural, or other group. Similarly, the actions of the pay pool panel will be watched very closely to detect any apparent patterns of this type.

This is not to say that you should consider in any way modifying your honest judgements about the contributions of any employee—that would defeat one of the primary objectives of AcqDemo: recognizing and rewarding the top contributors. But it does mean that you should be sensitive to diversity and equity considerations, and you should recognize that appraisals could easily be misinterpreted.

To learn more about diversity concerns, read OPM's *Diversity - A Business Necessity for the Millennium*, available from the originating office (OPM), *Building and Maintaining a Diverse, High-Quality Workforce*, or *Workforce Diversity*, available from fedamerica.com.

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Other CCAS Issues

Split Pay Pools

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Pay pools that are geographically split face special challenges.

Employees may be concerned that pay pool panel members who will play an important role in the CCAS process do not know them or their contribution. This view has repeatedly surfaced in focus groups (not just for geographically split pay pools, but also for large pay pools.) Indeed, focus groups of pay pool panel members have confirmed that pay pool panel members often do not know all of the employees in the pool.

This is another issue on which shedding a little light can allay some—though not all—employee fears and suspicions. The workings of pay pool panels are generally NOT understood by employees: they may see it as a black box process in which self-assessments go in, then something mysterious happens inside, then OCS scores and compensation adjustments come out.

It may be worthwhile to provide an opportunity for a pay pool panel member—one who has been through the process at least once—to address these concerns. He or she can explain how the panel works, how the member representing each part of the organization acts as an advocate for the employees in that section, and the degree of care and attention paid by the members to supervisor draft assessments. Some pay pools have established procedures, formal or informal, for going back to the supervisor before finalizing employee assessments. If that's the case in your organization, take the time to explain these procedures and safeguards to the employees.

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Geographically Split Pay Pool

Feedback to Supervisors

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Whether or not your organization has established special procedures for referring back to the first line supervisor in the case of pay pool panel disagreement with the draft assessment, it is essential that some process be instituted to provide feedback to the supervisor at the conclusion of the panel. After all, it is the supervisor who will have to be the one to face the employee and provide end-of-cycle counseling when the OCS scores and compensation adjustments are finalized. The last thing any organization needs is supervisors telling employees "I gave you a real high rating, but the pay pool panel marked you down and I couldn't find out why." That's a recipe for a dysfunctional organization, and demonstration project failure.

Feedback to supervisors need not be formal, especially in small pay pools where everyone knows everyone else. But it must be timely, and it must be in sufficient detail to permit the rating supervisor to plan and conduct meaningful employee counseling at the conclusion of the current cycle and the beginning of the new one.

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Feedback to Supervisors

Feedback to Employees

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Supervisors are required to provide feedback to employees at the conclusion of the CCAS process. At a minimum, the final OCS, factor scores, and pay adjustments must be included—see Supervisor-Employee Counseling earlier in this tutorial.

Beyond that mandatory information, senior leaders in organizations may want to consider providing aggregate information so employees can see how they fared in comparison to their colleagues. For example, a scattergram showing every OCS score and base salary in the organization can be provided; in combination with the individual scattergram employees receive in the new Part I, employees will be able to see how they fit into the overall pattern. Organizations may also wish to publish data on the average pay adjustment (by category—GPI, CRI, and awards) or average OCS scores by broadband level. Your pay pool CCAS Expert can provide information and advice on what your options are.

Most of us want to know where we stand relative to our peers. However, organizations must take care not to subject any employees to embarrassment or risk compromising the identity of individual OCS scores or compensation. For that reason, small pay pools may choose to avoid providing aggregate scattergrams or tabular data where individual employees could be identified.

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Feedback to Employees

Special Circumstances

- **Contribution Improvement Plans**. Procedures for CIPs and counseling requirements are discussed elsewhere in this tutorial.
- **Capped employees**. As you will remember from the AcqDemo Tutorial, employees who are capped at the top of their pay band are not eligible for any contribution rating increase (CRI) which would place them above the maximum salary for their current broadband level.

  Some capped employees have expressed unhappiness with this situation. They perceive that others around them are getting larger increases in compensation. If some of your employees are in this category, your counseling might include the following points:

  - In the regular General Schedule system, which they were under before AcqDemo, they were not eligible for any step increase.
  - Under AcqDemo, pay pool panels have considerable latitude to reward superior contributions by capped employees with contribution awards.
  - Capped employees do get their full locality pay, and they can get up to the full general pay increase if their OCS puts them in the appropriately compensated or below-the-rails zones.
- **Employees not in CCAS for 180 days or away from normal duties for an extended period**. Under certain circumstances, employees may receive an expected or presumptive rating of record rather than a full CCAS appraisal.
  - When employees have served less than 180 calendar days in CCAS as of September 30—the end of the appraisal cycle—or have been away from the worksite for an extended period (i.e. long-term training), it may not be equitable to be rated in the new pay pool by supervisors and a pay pool panel that has not had sufficient time to evaluate the employee's contribution. In that case, the employee may receive what is called an expected rating. An expected rating is the OCS based on the employee's current salary.

Proposal Awaiting OPM Approval:

When employees change pay pools within AcqDemo and will have served less than **90** calendar days in the new pay pool as of September 30—the end of the appraisal cycle—it would not be equitable to be rated in the new pay pool by supervisors and a pay pool panel that has not had sufficient time to evaluate the employee's contribution. In that case, the employee will receive what is called an expected rating. An expected rating is the OCS based on the employee's current salary.

When an employee receives an expected score, he or she receives the full GPI.

Some employees who receive an expected rating may be very happy; others may feel that they would have received a higher OCS and a larger increase in compensation had they remained part of their previous pay pool. Your task, as the rating official, is to recognize the unique circumstances which resulted in this rating and reassure them that you are prepared to assess their contribution in the following appraisal period. You should structure your end of the appraisal period counseling session accordingly.

- Employees who are away from their normal duties for an extended period of time during a rating cycle present special problems for the rating official. If you cannot observe their contributions, you will not be able to fairly assess it. In those circumstances, you have two options:
  1. Use the employee's previous OCS as the new assessment. This is called re-certifying the assessment.

     Re-certifying may be appropriate in some cases. But suppose that employee Sue B. had a relatively low OCS the previous year. For eight of the last twelve months, Sue was voluntarily deployed to carry out special acquisition tasks in connection with US military operations in Macedonia. You know that her temporary boss was happy with her work. Is it fair to stick Sue with another low OCS—and compensation—for another year?
  2. Presume the employee is contributing consistently with his or her pay level. In this case, the employee receives the expected rating for his or her OCS, and will be given the full general increase.

  Whichever option you choose, your counseling session with Sue should

emphasize the specials circumstances of this rating period, and your plans to more fully assess her contribution over the next year.

- **Employees on retained pay**. Some employees may be under retained pay, which means that they have taken a lower level position but are entitled to retain their compensation.

  In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 5363, employees on retained pay automatically receive a portion of the general pay increase regardless of their OCS score. This is true whether they are above the rails, within the rails, or below the rails. They are not eligible to receive any CRI increase, but they could receive a contribution award. Of course, they receive any locality pay increase, as do all AcqDemo participants.

  As a supervisor, you may feel you lack the tools to effectively motivate an employee on retained pay. Your counseling sessions should include frank discussions of the organization's needs, the employee's objectives and concerns, and your own expectations about the contributions of all employees.

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Special Circumstances

CCAS
Initial Counseling Template

Date_____ Employee _____ Supervisor _____

(Note: Your service or agency may have a template or checklist for counseling that you must use. Consult with your human resources office.)

Preparation:

- Review the Managers/Supervisors Tutorial, especially the section on Counseling Employees, unless it's fresh in your mind.
- Know the employee's work record.
- Review:
  - Employee's personnel file,
  - Position requirements document (PRD), and
  - Previous appraisals.
- Schedule the appointment with the employee.
- Make an agenda.
  1. Introduction
  2. Discussion topic
  3. Discussion topic
  4. Discussion topic, etc
  5. Employee comments and concerns
  6. Closing
- Choose an appropriate setting.

Conduct:

You must address the following items (you may use the space provided for notes):

- Career path, broadband level
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Factors
  - Problem solving

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Teamwork/cooperation

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Customer relations

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Leadership/supervision

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Communication

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Resource management

    _____
    _____
    _____

- Factor weights, if any

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Overall OCS score which corresponds to the employee’s base pay

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

You—or your employee—may also want to talk about:

- Your expectations of the employee

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Organizational mission

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Long term goals or objectives

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Education and training

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Any other assistance or guidance you can give the employee

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

CCAS
Mid-Point Counseling Template

Date_____ Employee _____ Supervisor _____

(Note: Your service or agency may have a template or checklist for counseling that you must use. Consult with your human resources office.)

Preparation:

- Review the Managers/Supervisors Tutorial, especially the section on Counseling Employees, unless it's fresh in your mind.
- Know the employee's work record.
- Review:
  - Employee's personnel file,
  - Position requirements document (PRD), and
  - Previous appraisals.
- Schedule the appointment with the employee.
- Make an agenda.
  1. Introduction
  2. Discussion topic
  3. Discussion topic
  4. Discussion topic, etc
  5. Employee comments and concerns
  6. Closing
- Choose an appropriate setting.

Conduct:

This is your opportunity to let the employee know how you assess his or her contribution at the halfway point of the appraisal period:

- Use the six rating factors, along with the descriptors and discriminators, as the framework for your discussion of contribution

- Problem solving

_____
_____
_____

- Teamwork/cooperation

_____
_____
_____

- Customer relations

_____
_____
_____

- Leadership/supervision

_____
_____
_____

- Communication

_____
_____
_____

- Resource management

_____
_____
_____

- Any inadequate contribution in one or more of the factors

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- Positive comments about the employee's strengths and areas of significant contribution

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- Any professional or career development activities that could help improve contribution or lead to greater job satisfaction

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

CCAS
End of Appraisal Period Counseling Template

(Note: Your service or agency may have a template or checklist for counseling that you must use. Consult with your human resources office.)

Preparation:

- Review the Managers/Supervisors Tutorial, especially the section on Counseling Employees, unless it's fresh in your mind.

- Know the employee's work record.

- Talk to the pay pool panel member who represented the employee during pay pool panel discussions.

- Gather any documentation you may need, especially as relates to the employee's contribution.

- Review:

  - CCAS *Counseling Video*,

  - Employee's personnel file,

  - Position requirements document (PRD), and

  - Previous appraisals.

- Schedule the appointment with the employee.

- Make an agenda.

  1. Introduction
  2. Discussion topic
  3. Discussion topic
  4. Discussion topic, etc
  5. Employee comments and concerns
  6. Closing

- Choose an appropriate setting.

Conduct:

- Overall score and pay adjustments on Part I of the CCAS Salary Appraisal Form

  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

- Review the factor scores that were used to determine the OCS score

  - Problem solving

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Teamwork/cooperation

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Customer relations

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Leadership/supervision

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Communication

    _____
    _____
    _____

  - Resource management

    _____
    _____
    _____

- Strengths

  _____
  _____
  _____

_____
_____

- Weaknesses

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- Any opportunities for increasing contribution in the upcoming appraisal period

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Make sure you and the employee sign the original copy of Part I of the CCAS Salary Appraisal Form, and give the employee a copy.