

Final Findings Presentation Briefings

Tips for Successfully Writing and Delivering Appraisal Findings

One of the key purposes of conducting an appraisal is for an appraisal team to deliver comprehensive, accurate, and actionable findings to an organization for continuous improvement. Accordingly, it is imperative that Lead Appraisers (LAs) craft appraisal findings in compliance with the CMMI Appraisal Method Definition Document (MDD). The intention of MDD Final Findings requirements is to help the LA community provide consistent and high-quality appraisal results to customers. With CMMI model version and MDD updates, some LAs have expressed confusion about, or lack of awareness of, certain aspects of the MDD Final Findings requirements during appraisal reviews or other conversations with Quality Management. This Quality Tip serves as a guide for LAs to write and deliver MDD-compliant and actionable findings for their appraised organizations.

Final Findings Format

The MDD permits LAs to use any form of presentation to deliver the final findings (e.g., PowerPoint, executive summary, Excel workbook). However, regardless of the format, the appraisal findings must be both **traceable** to CMMI model practices and **actionable** for the organization for future improvements.

To aid in this regard, CMMI Institute provides a template for Final Findings deliveries contained in the [MDD Toolkit](#). Most flags issued for final findings presentations during quality reviews are for LAs who choose to use their own templates that do not meet MDD minimum requirements. The MDD requires, per *section 2.3.1 Derive Final Findings*, that “all Final Findings must be recorded and presented to the OU during the Final Findings session(s) in accordance with the content specified in the Final Findings template from the MDD Toolkit.” For LAs who use their own templates, CMMI Institute recommends thoroughly reviewing and updating their templates to ensure that the content specified in the Final Findings template from the MDD Toolkit is fully covered. This is especially true for LAs who have been using the same templates or have not updated their templates since prior versions of the method and/or model.

Final Findings Categories

Final Findings presentations are required to include the categories below, if the findings exist, corresponding to their definitions included in the MDD Glossary:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses

Two common issues seen by the Quality Performance team when reviewing appraisal records are LAs including gratuitous Strengths (i.e., findings labeled as “Strengths” where the Organizational Unit’s (OU’s) processes are simply meeting the intent and value of a model

practice), and LAs misidentifying Weaknesses as “Improvement Opportunities”. The latter issue has been observed stemming from different reasons: 1.) LAs wishing to avoid the term “weakness” for the negative connotations of the word, 2.) LAs failing to realize that any findings which impact characterizations negatively must be labeled as weaknesses, or 3.) LAs failing to realize that findings should negatively impact characterizations per the model.

Optionally, LAs may include the following categories per the MDD Glossary definitions if the LA believes these types of findings would provide value to the OU:

- Notes
- Improvement Opportunities
- Improvements in Progress
- Recommendations/Next Steps

LAs may not create their own categories of findings or their own definitions or interpretations of approved findings categories. These categories should be defined and labeled clearly for the appraised organization to avoid misrepresentation.

Characterization and Ratings Inconsistencies

The Quality Performance team has flagged several instances where LAs have included characterizations and/or ratings that differed between the CMMI Appraisal System (CAS) and the Final Findings presentation. LAs should ensure that these entries are consistent across both locations; otherwise, this will lead to quality review flags and discussion in order to understand and resolve these discrepancies.

Appraisal Findings Language Requirements

While Final Findings may be presented to appraised organizations in languages other than English, CMMI Institute requires that an English version of the findings be submitted to CMMI Institute per the Appraisal Data Language Requirements Policy ([PA008](#)). If no translation is provided, the findings will be flagged during quality review, and the LA will be required to produce a translated version prior to the appraisal being accepted.

Addressing Quality Review Feedback

Unfortunately, Quality Management is only able to flag issues with Final Findings presentations post-appraisal. It is imperative that LAs incorporate the reminders and guidance from appraisal review flags into future Final Findings presentation deliveries to ensure compliance with the MDD and to prevent appraised organizations from being presented with findings that are inaccurate or misrepresent the model or method. If LAs repeatedly violate MDD requirements or present Final Findings to organizations without adhering to the above standards and the content included in the Final Findings template in the MDD Toolkit, CMMI Institute will assign corrective action per the Corrective Action Policy ([PQ002](#)).

Questions about this Quality Tip may be directed to quality@cmminstitute.com.