

Prior Appraisals

Reporting Past Appraisals Performed on an Organizational Unit

Each year, the retention rate for appraisals remains high. As organizations reap increasing benefits by adopting CMMI and improving their process performance, reestablishing their maturity level rating every few years has become a necessity.

The CMMI Appraisal System (CAS) allows Appraisal Team Leaders (ATLs) to map their appraisals to earlier ones performed on the Organizational Unit (OU). The appraisal entry tool includes fields for information related to a prior appraisal such as the ID number. Entering data in these fields allows Quality Management to search for the previous appraisal and match it to the master list of OUs. This creates a living appraisal history for that OU in CMMI Institute's archives.

When entering information about a prior appraisal in a CAS record, the following are key elements to remember:

- **The OU of the current appraisal should be the same area of work within the organization(s) appraised.** This is not to say that the OU *name* must be identical, as that often changes over time. If the organization is the same, but a different area of work is being examined, then the prior appraisal should not be mapped to the current one.
- **The reference model and appraisal method are *not* required to be the same for the new appraisal to be considered a reappraisal.** An Evaluation Appraisal performed as a gap analysis or "lead up" to a Benchmark Appraisal, for example, should be identified as a prior appraisal. Similarly, an OU that has previously been appraised for CMMI for Development can later undergo a CMMI for Services appraisal. Again, the key is the area of work being examined.

There are two exceptions to this rule:

- First, if the prior appraisal was an Evaluation Appraisal, it must have been submitted through CAS if the current appraisal will be mapped to it.
- Second, the prior appraisal must be a CMMI v1.1, v1.2, v1.3, or later appraisal. Records pertaining to former SEI models and methodologies such as SCAMPI v1.0 and CBA IPI are not stored in CAS or current systems.

There have been multiple instances where ATLs have not identified prior appraisal information when completing CAS records, but quality reviews have uncovered earlier appraisals performed

on the same OUs—sometimes overseen by the same Appraisal Sponsors. When meeting with the Appraisal Sponsor(s) during Phase 1 (Plan and Prepare for Appraisal), it is important that they understand not only the above characteristics of a prior appraisal, but also the importance of accurately reporting this information to CMMI Institute. It can also be a valuable tool for an ATL to leverage during Phase 2 (Conduct Appraisal) data collection. If artifacts or affirmations contradict the Appraisal Sponsor's assertion that no prior appraisal has taken place, the inconsistency should be further explored. In extreme cases, it could indicate a serious ethics concern.

Questions regarding this Quality Tip can be sent to quality@cmmiinstitute.com.