

Appraisal Teams

Selecting Qualified Appraisal Team Members

Guidance for assembling an eligible team

An appraisal is only as strong as the team that performs it. Finding and assembling a capable team is critical to a Lead Appraiser's ability to deliver an appraisal that achieves accurate, actionable results. Quality reviews of appraisals have occasionally identified teams that have fallen short of the requirements defined by the Method Definition Document (MDD). It is the LA's responsibility to ensure that their team is compliant with the MDD, and LAs are cautioned to exercise due diligence when selecting appraisal team members (ATMs).

In review and discussion of recent appraisals, a trend has emerged in which inadequate screening has been performed on team members prior to selection. When an LA does not examine background information to a sufficient degree, there is a strong risk of an underqualified person being selected, which in turn risks the validity of the appraisal itself. Potential ATMs should be able to provide valid photo identification, as well as resumes (CVs) that reflect relevant training and experience.

In addition, it is advised that LAs carefully scrutinize the details provided about an ATM's background when they do not seem accurate. An example: In an audited appraisal, ATMs had been provided by the consultancy working with the appraised organization. Upon meeting them, though, the auditor noted that most of these ATMs were very young, and not likely to have the combined field experience of over 25 years that they had reported to the LA. Ideally this would have been caught by the LA prior to the start of Phase 2. If not for the presence of an auditor, this information would give us doubts regarding the validity of the OU's maturity level rating.

There have also been times when the team's lack of experience has been plainly stated in the appraisal plan. Quality Analysts have found plans that, in stating a team's qualifications, provide numbers that fail to meet the minimum requirements for field and/or management experience. Thankfully, this is often a typographical error in the document; for example, the LA may have typed "1" when they meant to type "11" in the field experience column.

In a few instances, however, the LA has explained the insufficient team experience to be a result of a more experienced ATM leaving the appraisal due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstance. For this reason, backup team members should be identified during planning if possible, to ensure the sudden departure of a selected ATM does not jeopardize the team's legitimacy. If the backup ATMs do not have enough experience to bring the team into compliance with the MDD, the appraisal should be postponed until a time at which a qualified team can be assembled.

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