

Effective Appraisal Planning and Reporting

Guidance for Inputting Appraisal Information into the CMMI® Appraisal System

The CMMI Appraisal System (CAS) is designed to function as both a planning and a reporting tool for CMMI appraisals. Unlike the SCAMPI Appraisal System (SAS) for CMMI V1.3, the CAS reporting fields are intended to encapsulate all CMMI Method Definition Document (MDD) and appraisal planning and reporting criteria established by CMMI Institute. Since the launch of CAS, Quality Management has observed recurring issues with planning and reporting performed within the system. Some common issues that have been identified include timing issues with Randomly Generated Sample (RGS) requests, Appraisal Team Leaders (ATLs) omitting CAS fields not denoted as “required”, and minimal plan tailoring for the Organizational Unit (OU) undergoing appraisal. This month’s Quality Tip will address these issues.

RGS Timing Concerns

In the current appraisal method, the RGS represents a critical part of the data collection planning efforts for an appraisal. Per the [Random Sample Generation Policy](#) and the MDD, ATLs may submit an OU scoping for review no more than 60 days and no fewer than 35 days before the Phase 2 start date of an appraisal. In addition, once the appraisal scoping is approved, the RGS must be generated and accepted at least 30 days before Phase 2 starts per MDD requirements. Since the initial quality review of RGS requests can take up to five days, this has created issues with timing when ATLs submit the sample close to the 35-day mark or do not respond to quality review feedback in a timely manner. To avoid these issues, we recommend that ATLs submit RGS requests closer to the 60-day mark, promptly respond to and address quality review feedback, and ensure that the RGS is generated as soon as possible after the RGS request is approved. Submitting the RGS request with sufficient lead time ensures that it meets timeline requirements outlined in the RGS policy and benefits the appraised organization’s data gathering and planning efforts as well as the ATL’s plans for data collection during Phase 2. For further guidance regarding RGS timelines, refer to the [Random Sample Generation Quality Tip](#).

Incomplete CAS Fields

During appraisal reviews, Quality Management has flagged fields that are not specifically marked as “required” in the system, and although CAS will let the ATL continue with the appraisal setup without this information, these fields are still required from a reporting perspective. These flags include omission of key project and support function details; mini-team and specific team member responsibilities; Appraisal Sponsor and team member information

and organizational affiliation; and objectives, success criteria, and outcomes of readiness reviews.

ATLs have expressed confusion and concern as to why these fields are being flagged if they are not denoted as “required” in CAS. While these data points are not a system requirement from the standpoint of submitting an appraisal, CAS was developed based on MDD requirements. Therefore, ATLs will be asked during quality review to complete these essential fields if they are incomplete. Omission of this information could suggest that ATLs are minimally reporting appraisal information to bypass appraisal submission requirements, instead of using these fields and CAS to thoroughly plan and document the appraisal during Phase 1 as intended.

Plan Tailoring

When it comes to planning and reporting, some ATLs have taken a “one-size-fits-all” approach. While this method may result in less time dedicated to completing the appraisal record in CAS, this practice has the potential to severely impact the quality of appraisal deliveries. Each organization differs in terms of size, structure, process, and needs; therefore, appraisal plans should be tailored to the unique organizational context being appraised. Particular areas of concern include risk mitigations, logistics, and constraints. Tailoring these components of planning has become even more crucial with the introduction of virtual methods in CMMI appraisals. Quality Management has observed that many ATLs use generic plan templates for virtual information. However, as each organization has its own unique needs and constraints pertaining to virtual infrastructure, security, and protocols, a “one-size-fits-all” approach is insufficient, and ATLs should tailor their plans to adapt to the individual needs and constraints of the appraised organization.

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