

**EMPLOYEE'S GUIDE**

**FOR WRITING**

**CONTRIBUTION-BASED  
COMPENSATION & APPRAISAL  
SYSTEM  
(CCAS)**

**SELF-ASSESSMENTS**

**June 2000**

Prepared by PEO C3S Human Resources Office  
For the DoD Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Office  
Distributed by the Army Project Office

## EMPLOYEE'S GUIDE FOR WRITING CCAS SELF-ASSESSMENTS

### 1. INTRODUCTION.

Following the first Contribution-Based Compensation and Appraisal System (CCAS) evaluation process for the rating period ending 30 September 1999, Employees throughout DOD expressed concern about the lack of guidance on how to prepare Part III Employee Self-Assessment, of the CCAS evaluation form. Concerns focused on "contribution" -- what it is, how it ties to the Position Requirements Document (PRD), how to link contribution to mission, how factors are interpreted, and what are acceptable assignments and/or opportunities to contribute.

The concerns are valid and in an effort to address them, the PEO C3S Human Resources Office (HRO) contacted the Air Force -- the service who has had several years under CCAS in their S&T Laboratory Demonstration Project.

The information in this Guide will demonstrate that Employees are to be assessed based upon the substance of their contribution and *not* on how well they described that contribution. This should relieve the concern that those individuals with better writing skills are at an advantage over those who may not express themselves well in writing.

There is no single magical approach to self-assessment. Employees should not view the self-assessment as the make-or-break for contribution determination. The self-assessment is an opportunity for Employees to emphasize the things that they have accomplished during the rating cycle that are most indicative of their contribution to the mission.

The Employee's input does not relieve the Supervisor of his or her responsibility to assess subordinates' contributions. It is possible that the Supervisor may use the Employee input as it was submitted but that is left to the discretion of the individual Supervisor. The CCAS Employee Self-Assessment is not an exercise in writing bullet statements and does not shift appraisal responsibility from Supervisors to Employees.

### 2. GETTING STARTED.

Employees should begin with their PRD. While the PRD may not reflect all that the job entails, it is meant to outline significant aspects of the job. The duty statements should have a reasonable tie or relationship to the six factors that pertain to the career path and broadband level to which an individual is assigned. The responsibilities of many jobs will not match the factors exactly since the wording for the factors reflect contribution expectations for the highest level of the broadband. Employees who need a copy of their PRD, can contact their Administrative Office.

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It would be beneficial to have a copy of the factors for the broadband level immediately above and below the one to which the Employee is assigned. For example, an NK-II will want factors for NK-I and NK-III. This information will provide a better understanding of the distinctions made between factor levels. A broadband encompasses a range of jobs with different values assigned to them. To better appreciate what the contribution range is for the assigned broadband, one must consider what contributions might fall to the levels below and above the current level. The factor descriptors of different broadbands will provide a better perspective of what kinds of contributions can be expected to be most valued by the Pay Pool Panel. Factors can be found in the Federal Register, DoD/Army Operating Procedures or local CCAS handbooks. If a hard copy is not available, the factors can be accessed from the Army Acquisition Corps home page at <http://dacm.sarda.army.mil/demo>.

Next, it is recommended that the Employee group contribution examples under each factor with little consideration of form. The first concern should be capturing the substance of what has been contributed. Anyone who contributes in line with the content of his or her PRD will be making a substantive contribution. Once the input has been gathered in this manner, it can be put in the form described below.

### 3. DETERMINING A CONTRIBUTION.

Contribution is the result of doing one's job. Webster defines contribution as *the act of playing a significant part in bringing about an end or result*. If an Employee carries out the duties and responsibilities that have been assigned, he or she will contribute. The likely response is, *"fine, I contribute, but will it be enough to sustain my current salary and hopefully, warrant a pay adjustment."* The definitive answer to that will come out of the Pay Pool Panel deliberations, but Employees who conscientiously work within the scope of their assigned PRD will rarely need to be concerned about receiving at least the annual General Pay Increase (GPI).

To write useful contribution statements, think in terms of cause and effect:

*"I did A that resulted in B which is related to the mission..."*

When writing contribution inputs, constantly apply the "So what?" test. Ask, *"Does this activity I am submitting have an impact on achieving our purpose? If so, what is the specific impact?"* If an Employee cannot reasonably answer these questions, then that particular activity may not really represent contribution. Remember that under CCAS, "busy-ness" is not being measured. Results related to the mission are being measured. If the self-assessment input leave the Employee with the question, "So what?" then the results probably need to be clarified as to how the results relate to the mission (or processes/procedures of the work unit).

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What is mission? Employees should think about the duties of their job and what their immediate work unit does. Unless there is direct involvement with it, the linkage between what an individual does and the activity's mission may not be obvious. But, Employees should keep in mind that all our jobs exist because managers at every level have determined that there is a mission need to be met. Therefore, if an Employee provides contribution examples based upon their understanding of their job, there is expected to be an inherent link back to the activity's mission. If it ever turns out **not** to be the case, management will need to reassess the duties assigned to the Employee.

There are no "bad" contributions -- all contributions are good. With CCAS, contributions are measured relative to salary level. The objective of the process is to equitably compensate Employees at all levels of contribution.

#### 4. SELF-ASSESSMENT.

The set of descriptors for a particular factor and broadband level are to be taken as a group to decide whether an Employee fits the level. Not often will anyone perfectly match all of the descriptors in the set for a particular level, and it is not necessary to match every descriptor. Thus, Employees should be trying to relate to the factors -- not match them -- and then it will be up to Supervisors and the Pay Pool Panel to interpret the descriptors to get a reasonable and equitable assessment of contribution.

Being evaluated under CCAS is a complete reversal of the way performance was evaluated using the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES). It requires everyone to modify their thinking from "WHAT" (the activity) and "HOW" (the level of performance) to "WHY" (the benefit that helps meet the mission) and "WHO" (the customer). The Self Assessment is not a laundry list of what was done during the rating period but rather a set of statements that indicate what you did and how it helped your office/division/directorate/PM/PEO meet the mission.

Employees must be specific when writing contribution statements. Do not leave it to others to presume contribution. For example, stating, "*I published three technical journal articles during this assessment period,*" implies a contribution but does not state one. A more complete statement of contribution might be, "*This year, I published three technical journal articles on <technical subject> which resulted in <some desired advancement in the technology> in direct support of our mission to <specify goal>.*"

It is important to remember that what an Employee may think of as a singular work activity may result in contributions that apply to several contribution factors. A contribution in an individual factor is not necessarily represented by a discrete activity; it may be but one facet of the activity.

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More simply put, a Problem Solving contribution could frequently have aspects to it that could/should be recorded under the factors of Teamwork/Cooperation and Communication. And, contributions to the Teamwork/Cooperation factor can correlate to Leadership/Supervision factor.

### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS.

Many of the bullets on the first CCAS Employee Self-Assessments fell short of the mark in addressing "*I did A that resulted in B which is related to the mission...*" Most Employees addressed the "*I did A*" part fine but unfortunately, stopped there.

While Employees are free to do so, it is not necessary to provide long, narrative descriptions of what contributions were made during the rating period. It is best to write the assessment in concise bullets, stating what was done, the results achieved, and how those results related to the mission.

To write effective contribution statements, Employees must modify their thinking from "what" (the activity) and "how" (the level of performance) to "why" (the benefit that helps meet the mission) and "who" (the customer). Remember to think in terms of cause and effect.

Be factual and emphasize how the task/action supports the mission.

Be specific; use dollar figures, program names, number of people supervised, time saved, percentages, dollars controlled, etc., where and when appropriate.

Link the task to a system, mission(s), organization, and those who depend on the work that was accomplished.

Be accurate. Was the contribution made while the team leader or a team member?

Begin bullets with action verbs and a named task, followed by the impact to the mission of the unit.

An activity may warrant mention under more than one factor.

Place the most significant contribution first.

Focus on results and stress mission impact.

Remember to address: "*I did A that resulted in B, then state how it was related to the mission.*"

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Following are some examples of effective contribution statements for each of the six factors:

**Problem Solving.**

- ◆ Participated in the TRADOC JCF AWE TOC Requirements Laydown, which identified additional requirements and acquisition strategy resulting in elimination of the stalled effort of the JCF AWE TOC.
- ◆ During the mini-POM process, justified and defended program requirement to support the PEO and Army Force XXI vision, resulting in a \$50 million increase in RDTE and OPA funding over the mini-POM years.
- ◆ Worked with the Army Acquisition Career Management Office to improve the efficiency of obtaining PM charters in time for presentation at ceremonies. The process has resulted in the ability to obtain charters in a more timely manner and without errors allowing more time to obtain signatures and prepare for presentation ceremonies.

**Teamwork/Cooperation.**

- ◆ Coordinated with a number of Air Force elements and contractors to resolve a classified E-mail problem that resulted in the enhancement of operational security for all parties involved.
- ◆ Served as team leader for the Integrated Baseline Review by interfacing with each contract work breakdown element to assure work was properly baselined. The end result verified the contractors baseline in accordance with DOD 5000M.
- ◆ Worked with members of two PMs on a merger plan resulting in no adverse actions to personnel remaining in the new organization and allowing for continuity of assigned programs.

**Customer Relations**

- ◆ Forged strong relationships with the PEO, DFAS, support organization, and contractors to reduce support costs and free resources for product improvement.
- ◆ Visited the staffs of SAALT and AAESA to discuss issues and share ideas to improve relations. These visits served to keep the headquarters level apprised of the impact of their decision and actions on the PEO/PMs and have fostered a more efficient and effective working relationship.

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- ◆ Established an effective relationship with the AMSAA survey team and the PEO/PMs to clarify requirements and ensure a successful outcome for the PEO.

### **Leadership/Supervision.**

- ◆ Led a team of civilians, military and contractors to ensure maximum productivity both individually and as a team. Instilled the concepts precipitated by the Army values to foster an environment that ensure that all who have business with the office are treated with dignity and respect.
- ◆ Performed full range of supervisory duties for xx soldiers and civilians. Ensured all performance counseling and evaluations were completed on time, and appropriate recognition given. Actively promoted Acquisition training, resulting in improved morale and a better-trained workforce.
- ◆ Inspired cooperation among a diverse team with background knowledge in different functional areas in order to maximize productivity of the office.
- ◆ Served as Acting Chief during Supervisor's absences ensuring problems were solved or spearheaded which resulted in a continuation of service to customers.

### **Communication.**

- ◆ Established contact with matrix activities, PEO, HQDA, and other services and agencies to provide/maintain accurate information, and assure uniform understanding of the PM's mission and programs.
- ◆ Worked with Employees, ACOM, AWSS, and FASs to ensure Employees received acquisition certifications; thereby ensuring a professional acquisition workforce.
- ◆ Developed written guidance and posted to the Knowledge Center on a variety of issues to provide advice and assistance to all levels of the workforce.

### **Resource Management.**

- ◆ Oversaw year-end closeout with all accounts meeting or exceeding HQDA execution goals for the FY.
- ◆ Created an improved and more efficient process for government credit card ordering, extensive file maintenance and reconciliation of records; which has resulted in supplies being acquired more quickly and records readily available when needed for budget coordination and audits.

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- ◆ Prioritized work load in order to satisfy the greatest need first yet maintain a level of service that enabled the staff and PMs to accomplish their duties.

Following are some examples of Self-Assessment Bullets that do not address contributions and Employees should try not to write accomplishment in this manner. It is clear that none of these statements can answer the "So What?" question.

### **Problem Solving.**

- ◆ Modified and added new filters to the <program> tracking system.
- ◆ Provided instructors and training logistical support for off station activities.
- ◆ I have reviewed and provided comments and recommendations on applying new or revised ORD. I have coordinated with our TSM regarding these requirements and objectives.

### **Teamwork/Cooperation.**

- ◆ Served as key government representative on program change review board at contractor's facility.
- ◆ Established configuration manager network between Fort Hood Field Office and Fort Monmouth LMT.
- ◆ Mentor staff on management of complex and critical tasks.

### **Customer Relations.**

- ◆ Established myself as the liaison between the National Training Center and the PM.
- ◆ Served as technical director and advisor to PM on technical issues.
- ◆ Fully responsive to direction/requests for support from the PEO leadership, staff and PMs.

### **Leadership/Supervision.**

- ◆ Served as Acting Chief of the Field Office.
- ◆ Assign off post training support.



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- ◆ Approve all class schedules and curriculum.

**Communication.**

- ◆ Provided weekly status report to the PM on activities of the office.
- ◆ Attend all SYNC meetings.
- ◆ Assist in preparation and presentation of Army position to OSD and Congressional levels, in addition to the PM presentation.

**Resource Management.**

- ◆ Maximize use of minimal resources.
- ◆ Develop/manage the PM MIS Staff and system.
- ◆ Have brought on an individual with contract management as prime responsibility.

**6. ACTION WORD LIST.**

The following list of action words, though not all inclusive, can be used in writing contributions:

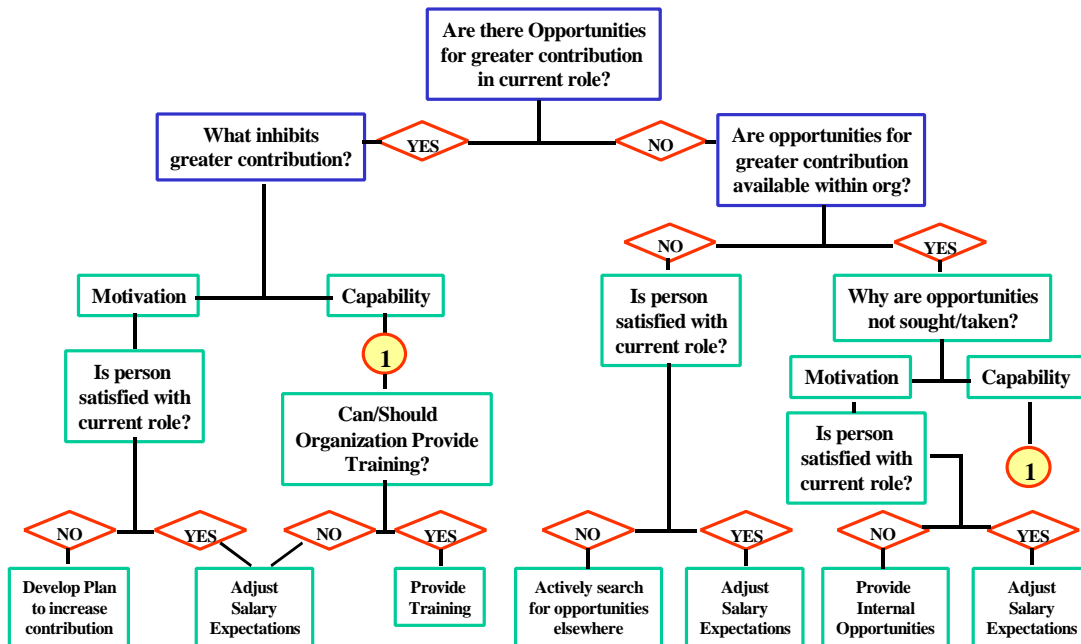
Accelerated	Converted	Extracted	Monitored	Reported
Accomplished	Coordinated	Forecasted	Motivated	Researched
Achieved	Corrected	Forged	Negotiated	Resolved
Acquired	Counseled	Formed	Obtained	Reviewed
Activated	Created	Fostered	Operated	Revised
Adapted	Cultivated	Framed	Orchestrated	Revitalized
Administered	Decentralized	Galvanized	Organized	Revolutionized
Advanced	Decreased	Hired	Originated	Saved
Advised	Defined	Implemented	Performed	Scheduled
Advocated	Demonstrated	Improved	Pioneered	Selected
Analyzed	Designed	Increased	Planned	Settled
Anticipated	Determined	Initiated	Prevented	Simplified
Appointed	Developed	Inspected	Processed	Sold
Appraised	Devised	Instigated	Procured	Solidified
Approved	Directed	Instructed	Produced	Solved
Arranged	Discovered	Integrated	Programmed	Spearheaded
Assessed	Displayed	Interpreted	Promoted	Standardized
Audited	Documented	Interviewed	Proved	Stimulated
Augmented	Doubled	Introduced	Provided	Studied
Authored	Edited	Invented	Published	Succeeded
Averted	Employed	Investigated	Purchased	Supervised

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Avoided	Enforced	Launched	Recommended	Supported
Brought	Engineered	Led	Recruited	Surveyed
Build	Ensured	Liquidated	Rectified	Systematized
Captured	Established	Localized	Redesigned	Taught
Centralized	Estimated	Located	Reduced	Terminated
Championed	Executed	Maintained	Regulated	Tested
Closed	Exhibited	Managed	Rejected	Tightened
Commanded	Expanded	Marketed	Related	Traded
Conceived	Expedited	Minimized	Renegotiated	Trained
Controlled	Exploited	Modernized	Reorganized	Upgraded

**7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED CONTRIBUTION.**

When trying to determine where there may be opportunities to increase contributions, the following flow chart can be used.



Broadband Level Descriptors

NH	Problem Solving	Teamwork/Cooperation	Customer Relations	Leadership/Supervision	Communication	Resource Management
I	Assigned Tasks  Routine Problems  Limited Area of Responsibility	Routine tasks  Own area of expertise  Assignments	Routine customer requests  Team member  Interacts with customers on routine issues	Assigned tasks  Own functional area  Seeks developmental opportunities	Explains status/results of routine/assigned tasks  Provides data/written analyses	Uses assigned resources to accomplish tasks  Plans individual time and assigned resources to accomplish tasks
II	Project/Program Focus  Functional/Technical  Adapts plans/techniques  Recommends improvements	Project/Program  Facilitates cooperative interactions w/others  Guides/supports others  Proactive	Guides functional efforts of team interacting w/customers  Initiates meetings to understand customer needs	Recommends changes/sols  Proactively works w/others to accomplish projects  Pursues individual/team development opportunities	Communicates results for team/group tasks  Writes/contributes to mgt/tech reports  Presents informational briefings	Plans/utilizes resources to accomplish proj goals  Optimizes resources to accomplish multiple goals
III	Complex Programs/Projects  Multiple Disciplines  Anticipates Problems  Establishes Precedents	Complex programs/projects  Innovative approaches  Promotes cooperation/teamwork  Leads/guides others in team  Expertise is sought by peers	Seeks innovative ways to satisfy customers  Establishes alliances  Anticipates needs  Interacts w/customers to develop strategies	Functional expert; Provides guidance to team  Resolves Conflict  Defines, assigns activities to accomplish program goals  Fosters team development	Communicates program results to all levels  Reviews/approves reports  Provides input to policies  Presents briefings to obtain consensus/approval	Plans/allocates resources to accomplish multiple goals  Optimizes resources across multiple projects
IV	Organizational focus  Generates New Concepts  Provides strategic direction  Converts strategic goals into programs/policies	Leads/guides/mentors workforce  Broad organizational issues  Participates on high-level teams  Sought for consultation	Leads organizational interactions with customers  Assess factors affecting customer needs  Stimulate customer alliances at senior levels	Establishes/leads team for complex program  Create climate of empowerment  Integrates efforts of teams  Encourage cross-functional growth to meet org needs	Determines/communicates organizational positions  Reviews/approves reports  Resolves controversy  Conveys strategic vision	Develops, acquires and allocates resources  Develops innovative approaches to attain goals and minimize expenditures
Discriminators	Scope/Impact Complexity/Difficulty Independence Creativity	Scope of Team Effort Contribution to Team Effectiveness	Breadth of Influence Customer Needs Customer Interaction Level	Leadership Role Breadth of Influence Mentoring/Employee Development	Level of Interaction (Audience) Written Oral	Scope of Responsibility Planning/Budgeting Execution/Efficiency

## Broadband Level Descriptors

NK	Problem Solving	Teamwork/Cooperation	Customer Relations	Leadership/Supervision	Communication	Resource Management
I	<p>Activities/Segment of Task</p> <p>Routine Tasks</p> <p>Select/Implement appropriate procedures</p>	<p>Routine tasks</p> <p>Contributes ideas on routine problems</p> <p>Regularly completes tasks</p>	<p>Assists w/routine customer support requests/activities</p> <p>Interacts with customers on routine issues</p>	<p>Assigned tasks</p> <p>Own admin/functional area</p> <p>Seeks developmental opportunities</p>	<p>Communicates routine task/status results</p> <p>Writes timely/accurate draft documentation; explains status of tasks</p>	<p>Uses assigned resources to accomplish tasks</p> <p>Plans individual time and assigned resources to accomplish tasks</p>
II	<p>Admin activities for projects</p> <p>Develop/modify/apply rules or procedures</p> <p>Resolves problems; adapts in order to handle deviations</p>	<p>Works with others to accomplish tasks</p> <p>Resolves admin problems; facilitates cooperation</p> <p>Guides others; proactive</p>	<p>Guides admin efforts of individuals/team members</p> <p>Independently interacts with customers to understand needs and communicate info</p>	<p>Contributes as team member</p> <p>Proactively works w/others to accomplish projects</p> <p>Pursues individual/team development opportunities</p>	<p>Communicates admin procedure/task both in and outside organization</p> <p>Prepares, coordinates and consolidates documents</p>	<p>Plans/utilizes resources to accomplish proj goals</p> <p>Accomplishes projects within established resource constraints</p>
III	<p>Plans/conducts complex admin activities</p> <p>Develops rules for complex organizational tasks</p> <p>Initiates action to resolve issues/conflict</p>	<p>Complex issues/across functional areas</p> <p>Applies expertise to complex admin issues; promotes cooperation</p> <p>Lead/guides the formulation and execution of plans</p>	<p>Identifies, defines, guides admin efforts supporting customer interactions</p> <p>Establishes customer alliances</p> <p>Works independently with customers to define/resolve non-routine issues</p>	<p>Provides guidance to individuals and teams; expertise solicited by others</p> <p>Guides/accounts for activities of individual/teams</p> <p>Promotes individual/team development; leads programs</p>	<p>Explains/communicates admin/functional procedures at all levels - both in and out of the organization</p> <p>Prepares, reviews, approves documents/reports/etc</p>	<p>Plans, acquires, allocates resources to accomplish objectives</p> <p>Coordinates resources across projects</p> <p>Optimizes resources</p>
Discriminators	<p>Scope/Impact</p> <p>Complexity/Difficulty</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>Creativity</p>	<p>Scope of Team Effort</p> <p>Contribution to Team</p> <p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>Breadth of Influence</p> <p>Customer Needs</p> <p>Customer Interaction Level</p>	<p>Leadership Role</p> <p>Breadth of Influence</p> <p>Mentoring/Employee Development</p>	<p>Level of Interaction (Audience) Written</p> <p>Oral</p>	<p>Scope of Responsibility</p> <p>Planning/Budgeting</p> <p>Execution/Efficiency</p>