

General Best Practices for Observations



Best Practice: Setting Expectations

Meet with Candidates Early

- Set expectations and a check-in schedule for which activities and artifacts you want to see and when.

Set Expectations for Feedback

- Review the Observers role in providing feedback. Feedback should be provided throughout the Observation and daily through the main event. Make Candidate aware that they should be implementing feedback as provided.

Explain Candidate and Observer Roles to Avoid Confusion

- Review with Candidate that participation should be proactive by taking initiative to research information they are not sure about and then discuss with the Observer to seek guidance.

Best Practice: Planning Observations



Remind Candidate of All Resources They Should Be Referencing

1. MDDAP Policies
2. M-MDD (ATL), BOK, ATM Playbook
3. Observation Guide for Candidates
4. MDDAP Course Materials

Plan Early and Often, especially for Virtual Observations

- Risks (virtual or otherwise) should be discussed and planned early and often with the Candidate along with testing the logistics, e.g., virtual platform, well in advance.

Best Practice: Observer Responsibilities

Make Sure to Take Notes Related to the Observation

- Observers should capture all highlights and lowlights during activities to review with Candidate. These should be opportunities for coaching or areas where the Candidate exceeded. General activities performed do not have to be recorded. If too many notes are taken that do not help in the pass/fail of the observation, it is hard to pick out items that would be beneficial to the Candidate to be coached on or given feedback.

Review Risks with Candidate

- Continuously review risks with Candidate and when needed keep ISACA updated if there is a significant risk to the event.

When in Doubt, Seek out Assistance from Mentoring Observer or ISACA

- Reach out for assistance early and be proactive about bringing up issues that could potentially cause disruption.

General Best Practices for Appraisal Observations



Best Practice: Appraisal Planning

Establish a Timeline of Activities

Establish a timeline for all observation activities, including date of completion and dependencies.

Example milestones for an appraisal observation:

1. Expected meetings with the Candidate
2. ATM finalization - ATL
3. OUC and Interpreter finalization - ATL
4. CAS actions
5. Appraisal planning and execution deliverables - ATL

Best Practice: Appraisal Plan Review

Review Appraisal Plan Early - ATL

- A deep, early, and iterative review of the Appraisal Plan is crucial.

Confirm Accurate Scoping - ATL

- Observers should treat scoping conversations with Candidates as the same way they would converse with the Appraisal Sponsors e.g., ask lots of questions and review an Organizational Chart. Verify scope is reflected accurately.

Best Practice: Candidate Interaction for Appraisal Observations

Do not Assume Candidate Experience

- Avoid the assumption that Candidates fully understand all aspects of the ATM Playbook, BOK, and M-MDD. Pay attention to details and verify that the Candidate is following policy and requirements.

Effective Appraisal Team Management - ATL

- While focus on the BOK and M-MDD is crucial, also coach Candidates on soft skills, e.g., management of the appraisal team members, importance of communications.
- The Candidate should not fully rely on ATMs, both internal and external, while maintaining their command of all appraisal activities.

Let Candidate Make Mistakes

- If mistakes are not major or derail the appraisal, pull Candidates aside for feedback during the appropriate time and then let them guide the appraisal team back to the correct course of action.

Ask Questions, Rather than Give Answers

- When interacting with the Candidate rather than telling them what to do or giving them the answer, start by asking about what the ATM Playbook, BOK, M-MDD (ATL) says and have them work through the issue.

Best Practice: Candidate Interaction for Appraisal Observations - 2

Have Open Communication With Candidate

- Keep providing continuous unambiguous feedback to the Candidate.
- Be flexible to personal/health issues that Candidate or Key Stakeholders may face during the event.
- Have more than one communication mechanism with Candidate (even though a formal email may be used to record final conclusions and key milestones). This facilitates quicker turnaround/timely interactions.

Best Practice: Planning for the Unexpected during Appraisals

Review Scenarios of Activities that can occur that Trigger Replanning - ATL

1. Loss of ATM during Phase 2
2. Conflicts of Interest
3. Unprofessional behavior
4. Confidentiality or Ethics breaches
5. Adverse environmental conditions that might disrupt the appraisal
6. Candidate health challenges or mental stress
7. Postponement situations of the Appraisal

Best Practice: Suggested Candidate Tasks during Appraisal

Create an Appraisal Tracking Chart - ATL

- Candidate prepares an appraisal tracking chart to track various sub-processes of an appraisal. This chart gives a clear picture of the progress and reduces unnecessary discussions about knowing the finished and unfinished parts of each subprocess of the appraisal.

Have Candidate Create Daily Logs

- Suggest Candidate to document a daily log for all working days of Appraisal Team Training, Readiness Review, and Phase 2. Candidate writes about significant events completed, key experiences, learnings, feelings, insights, improvement suggestions, and coaching received. This brings a higher and more proactive awareness in the Candidate to perform well in advance, and for each day coming up.

We want your feedback!

Tell us what is working or not working.

**We will continue to identify opportunities to
update and streamline processes and
onboarding.**

