

## Comment Guidelines

<b>Comment Guidelines</b>	<p><b>DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe how specific approaches relate to the applicant’s progress in meeting the central requirements of the Criteria</li><li>• Use a single, complete thought to clearly specify the strength (using specific examples from the application) or OFI (using specific omissions or concerns identified from the application).</li><li>• Write process comments so they contain a subject identified from the Criteria, the application, or the Scoring Guidelines; verb(s) and requirements from the Criteria; examples from the application; and figure numbers, as appropriate.</li><li>• Write results comments so they contain a subject identified from the results or Criteria requirement being addressed, from/to time frames, from/to performance levels, linkages to key factors, “so whats,” and figure numbers, as appropriate.</li><li>• State observations in a factual manner, for example, “Customer satisfaction rates have increased from 75% in 2005 to 94% in 2008 and now exceed best-in-class levels.”</li><li>• Provide a figure number when reference is made to information from a chart, table or graph.</li><li>• Draw linkages across Categories/Items or between a Category/Item and the applicant’s Organizational Profile.</li><li>• Place the comment on the correct Item Worksheet based on the Criteria, not based on where the information appears in the application.</li><li>• If not apparent, create a “so what” statement that explains why the comment is relevant and important to the applicant.</li><li>• Ensure that each comment is consistent with other comments in the same or other Items or in the Key Themes.</li></ul> <p><b>DO NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Go beyond the requirements of the Criteria or assert your personal opinions.</li><li>• Be prescriptive by using “could,” “should,” and “would.”</li><li>• Be judgmental by using terms such as “good,” “bad,” or “inadequate.”</li><li>• Comment on the applicant’s style of writing or data presentation.</li></ul>
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<p><b>Comment Writing Style Guidelines</b></p>	<p><b>DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a polite, professional and positive tone.</li> <li>• Use good grammar, proper punctuation and correct spelling.</li> <li>• Use active voice and present tense (e.g., “completes” rather than “is completed”).</li> <li>• Use vocabulary and terminology from the Criteria and the Scoring Guidelines.</li> <li>• Spell out acronyms the first time they are used (“TENNESSEE CENTER FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE [TNCPE]” vs. “TNCPE”).</li> <li>• For Stage 1 and 2 scorebooks, tell what is missing if something “is not clear.” For Stage 3, clarify all “not clear” statements. After the site visit, “it is not clear” or “there is no evidence” is no longer appropriate.</li> <li>• Use such words as “the applicant” or “the organization” to refer to the applicant in Stage 1 and Stage 2 scorebooks.</li> <li>• Use the applicant’s name in Stage 3 (site visit) Final Scorebooks.</li> <li>• Use the applicant’s terminology when appropriate.</li> <li>• Highlight an applicant’s strength or OFI, not its writing style or graphics.</li> <li>• Remember that “data” are plural. For example “data <i>are</i> factual information,” not “data <i>is</i> factual information.”</li> </ul> <p><b>DO NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use jargon or acronyms unless they are used by the applicant.</li> <li>• Criticize the applicant’s writing style. For example, avoid phrases such as “should be addressed in Item 3.2,” “x axis is not clear,” or “is poorly described.” These observations are not related to the applicant’s performance system.</li> </ul>
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**Consensus Item Worksheet Guidelines**

<p><b>Consensus Item Worksheet Guidelines</b></p>	<p><b>DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include 4-6 key factors based on the Criteria requirements for the Item. These will differ depending on the Item.</li> <li>• For higher level applications, include six to ten comments per Item that are most relevant and important to the applicant based on its key factors. Item Worksheets for lower level applicants are likely to have fewer comments. For higher level applicants, after site visit, you will select the six most important Item comments to include in the Final Scorebook.</li> <li>• Ensure that the Item’s score is supported by the balance of comments between strengths and OFIs.</li> </ul>
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