



Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service
Scientist Professional Advisory Committee



Scientist Category Handbook: Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER)

Last Updated: May 2022

Overview

The Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER) is the performance evaluation for PHS officers that is used as the primary tool for identifying an officer's accomplishments and areas in need of development. It also provides a continuing documented record of an officer's assignments and duties and is used extensively in the evaluation of officers for various personnel actions. There are two types of COERS: annual and interim ([COER Types](#)).

The annual rating period is one year, which extends from October 1 through September 30 of the subsequent year, unless the officer experienced a rater/supervisor change (transfer, separation, or retirement of the officer or rater) during the evaluation year. Officers are not required to have an interim COER; interim COERs are optional and used to cover period(s) not covered by the annual COER. However, officers may have one or more interim COER(s) during an evaluation year if they experience one or more rater changes. If a rater change occurs, the officer's period of evaluation will be divided as applicable between the different raters to reflect the period the raters supervised the officer. The officer's annual COER will be captured by the COER that covers a period of ≥ 6 months of supervision; the remaining period can be covered by an interim COER.

COER Resource Materials

The online COER system is used to complete all COERs on or after October 1, 2020.

- Overview of the COER ([COER Overview](#))
- Policy Implementing the COER ([CCI 351.01](#); "Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report")
- COER Personnel Operations Memorandum ([POM 821.73](#); "Annual COER for 2021 Forward")
- COER Forms ([COER Forms](#))
- Important Dates for the COER Cycle ([COER Dates](#))
- Online COER Workflow: Step-by-Step Process ([COER Workflow](#))
- COER System User Guide ([Guide & FAQ](#))

COER Scoring Information

- [COER Performance Elements](#)

The Rater will evaluate the officer on the following 8 performance elements in relation to the

needs of the position. Starting in 2020, each of the 8 performance attributes has a corresponding textbox for raters to enter comments and/or examples. The elements are as follows:

1. **Leadership** – Demonstrates and communicates vision and sense of purpose; nurtures an environment conducive to accomplishing the organization’s mission
2. **Initiative and Growth** – Recognizes and acts on programmatic and personal developmental needs, resulting in advancement of programmatic goals and growth in professional skills
3. **Communication Skills** – Conveys clear and succinct written and verbal messages that are appropriate to the audience. Listens to and understands information from others
4. **Interpersonal Skills** – Facilitates relationships in a manner that motivates others to maximize their abilities, skills, and knowledge to affect the desired outcomes
5. **Planning and Organization** – Balances workload to ensure timely completion of projects, accommodating multiple and changing priorities
6. **Professional Competencies** – Demonstrates knowledge, skills, and abilities to function successfully in the position
7. **Analysis, Judgment and Decision-Making** – Identifies and considers information in order to reach sound conclusions and take appropriate actions
8. **Overall Effectiveness** – Synthesis of Officer’s performance, and impact on program in current position

The Rater will score the officer on a 7-point scale for each performance element. The scoring is as follows:

- <2.0 Unsatisfactory
- ≥2.0 to <4.0 Marginal
- ≥4.0 Satisfactory

A detailed view of the Performance Elements can be found in the updated COER Form ([COER Form](#)).

Tips for COER Preparation and Completing the COER ([COER Tips](#))

- COER Preparation
 - Maintain a working file throughout the year of all your duties and accomplishments.
 - Communicate regularly with your supervisor throughout the year so that there are no surprises when you are evaluated.
 - Make sure your Rater and Reviewing Official are familiar with your COER evaluation. If they are not familiar, educate them.
 - Follow COER guidance and deadlines issued by your Agency Liaison
- Completing the COER
 - All users should save text in an external word processor (Microsoft Word, Notepad, etc.) then copy-and-paste the text into the COER system.
 - After the COER is complete, officers should ensure their COER scores are reflected in their PIR, the COER is uploaded into the eOPF, and each page of the COER is without errors.

- Raters and reviewing officials should not close a COER because it was assigned to the incorrect rater or reviewing official – they should contact their agency liaison or PHSCOERS@hhs.gov; closing a COER will delete all entered data.
- Officers should only include information from time as a USPHS officer.
- Users should not include any classified information or make false/misleading statements.