

**INTERPRETATION GUIDE
FOR
SUPERVISORS FEEDBACK**

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

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SUPERVISORS FEEDBACK PROGRAM

PURPOSE

This guide provides suggestions on how to interpret the information contained in the supervisors feedback report.

BACKGROUND

The College has instituted a program to formally give feedback to supervisors on how they do their jobs. The goals of the Supervisors Feedback Program are: (1) Provide Miami Dade College employees an opportunity to give feedback to their supervisors on their performance; (2) Provide supervisors with information to help them understand the impact of their actions on the individuals they supervise; and (3) Provide the supervisor of the individual receiving feedback one source of information for the Performance Review.

PROCESS FOR COLLECTING DATA

Full-time employees are asked to provide feedback to their immediate supervisor(s) (one primary and up to two alternates). The survey forms identifying the individual(s) to whom to provide feedback are administered via a secured online process. The survey consists of 16 items and one optional item asking for the classification of the person providing the feedback as staff, faculty, or administrator.

Responses are anonymous and no identifying information is asked from respondents. The survey results are made available via myMDC (click on My Personal Records) to each supervisor who received feedback, his/her immediate supervisor(s), and the respective Area Head.

1. WHOSE FEEDBACK IS INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT?

Employees who were able to provide feedback to their Level 1 immediate supervisor(s) and up to two alternates. To ensure *anonymity is maintained*, results from all employees are aggregated in the reports.

2. HOW ARE RESULTS PRESENTED?

A. General Information

The Supervisors Feedback Report consists of identifying information about the supervisor being reviewed (e.g., name, job title, campus). Additionally, the report includes the total number of responses received, the number of responses that could have been received, and the percent responding. The information also includes a brief description of the data which are included. The results of the multiple choice feedback items and the optional informational item(s) are included in the report.

B. Data

The survey items are presented on the left hand side of the report with *the number and percent of respondents endorsing each choice* on the right side. The five rating choices are: Almost Always, Usually, Occasionally, Almost Never, and Unable to Rate/Does not Apply which is labeled only as Unable to Rate. These are followed by the total number of responses to the item and an “Adjusted Positive” column which presents the number and percent of respondents who chose “Almost Always” or “Usually.” The percent is computed excluding the “Unable to Rate” responses. For the optional item(s), only the number and percent responding are presented.

2. Continued.

Example A illustrates and explains the data presented for the 16 multiple choice items. For each of the five possible choices, the number of respondents is presented under the heading “#” and the corresponding percent under the heading “%.” The column labeled “Count” indicates the total number of individuals responding to the item and is the number used to compute percentages in Part I. This number may vary across items since not everyone responds to every item.

Example A:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCASSIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	5	33.3	2	13.3	2	13.3	5	33.3	1	6.7	15	7	14	50.0
	Part I										Part II			

Part I.

In *Example A*, 5 individuals (33.3%) indicated this supervisor was “Almost Always” receptive to feedback while 2 (13.3%) felt this was “Usually” the case. A total of 15 individuals responded to this item. One person chose the option “Unable to Rate/Does not Apply” and the other 14 people chose one of the other options. Again, note that the column headed by “Unable to Rate” actually represents “Unable to Rate/Does not Apply.”

Part II.

Following the “Count” column is an “Adjusted Positive” result. The value under “#” is the sum of the #'s for “Almost Always” and “Usually.” This sum and “N,” which represents the number of respondents not selecting “Unable to Rate,” are used to compute the “Adjusted Positive” percent. For this example, 5 respondents chose “Almost Always” and 2 respondents chose “Usually.” These numbers are added to get the 7 under “#.” A choice other than “Unable to Rate” was selected by 14 respondents. These values were used to compute the “Adjusted Positive” percent of 50.0%.

3. WHAT ROLE SHOULD FEEDBACK RESULTS PLAY IN THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF SUPERVISORS?

The Supervisors Feedback Report is an important source of information about a supervisor and should be part of a Performance Review. How supervisors are perceived by those they supervise is critical. **The views of those supervised, however, represent only one perspective of total performance and there are elements relating to effective supervision beyond those included on the feedback survey. Therefore, feedback results *must not be used* as the sole basis for the evaluation of a supervisor.**

Further, these results represent a snapshot of perceptions at a particular point in time. It is important to gather evidence about the performance of the supervisor over the entire period covered by the Performance Review. Other sources of information must be used for this purpose.

4. HOW DO I INTERPRET THE RESULTS?

There are two main types of results and interpretations to consider for each item. The first set is the “Adjusted Positive” rating, and the second set is the interpretation of the results of the individual categories. Because of the way the items are worded, options “Almost Always” and “Usually” are considered positive responses, and the “Adjusted Positive” rating indicates the percent of respondents who were able to rate the supervisor and chose one of the positive options.

Example B:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCCASIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	5	33.3	2	13.3	2	13.3	5	33.3	1	6.7	15	7	14	50.0

In *Example B*, 50.0% of the respondents who were able to make a rating indicated that the supervisor was “Almost Always” or “Usually” receptive to feedback.

4. Continued.

Example C:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCASSIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	4	26.7	3	20.0	2	13.3	5	33.3	1	6.7	15	7	14	50.0

In *Example C*, the number of responses for “Almost Always” and “Usually” are each different by one number from the data in *Example B*. Now for all respondents, the percent for “Almost Always” drops from 33.3% to 26.7%, but the “Adjusted Positive” result remains the same. In both examples, the supervisor received an “Adjusted Positive” rating of 50%. **One must resist the temptation to over-interpret small differences especially when the number of responses is relatively small.**

In addition, patterns in the responses should be reviewed. In *Example B*, there is a wide range of disagreement among the responses. This can be seen in the large number of responses for “Almost Always” and “Almost Never.” The people who responded for this supervisor have widely divergent views of the supervisor’s receptiveness to feedback. **Information from other sources would be needed before a valid conclusion could be drawn on this matter.**

When reviewing and interpreting the results, it is also helpful to look for a pattern across items. For example, is there consistency across related items? Are there results that seem inconsistent?

5. HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RESPONSES TO A PARTICULAR ITEM?

In general, if the majority of responses are in the positive categories, one can assume the results are at least acceptable. The best approach is to use the “Adjusted Positive” rating to determine if this threshold has been passed. However, the number of responses in the “Unable to Rate” category may affect the proportion of “positive” and “negative” responses.

Example D:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCASSIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	5	33.3	2	13.3	2	13.3	5	33.3	<u>1</u>	<u>6.7</u>	15	7	14	50.0

Example E:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCASSIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	5	33.3	2	13.3	1	6.7	1	6.7	<u>6</u>	<u>40.0</u>	15	7	14	77.8

In both *Examples D* and *E*, the “Almost Always” and “Usually” response rates are identical; however, the results are not necessarily the same. In *Example D*, 6.7% of the respondents were unable to rate the supervisor on this item. The results in *Example E* show that 40% of the respondents were unable to rate their supervisor. Compare the “Almost Never” ratings in each example as well.

With the type of response pattern in *Example E*, only 9 responses were used to compute the “Adjusted Positive” percent. Even though the “Adjusted Positive” in *Example E* is higher than that in *Example D*, the fact that a large number of people selected “Unable to Rate” has had a significant effect on the result.

6. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FEEDBACK RESULTS AND THE CLIMATE AT THE COLLEGE AT THE TIME THE SURVEY WAS COMPLETED?

The responses people make to surveys are affected by their feelings about their work environment. As you review feedback results, you should be aware of any issues which might influence the way individuals respond. The survey may inadvertently serve as a vehicle to vent frustrations, or an opportunity to deliver praise, even though the supervisor may have played little or no role in the matter. **Remember, the feedback results provide a snapshot in time. Other sources of information must be used to corroborate or question the results of this survey.**

7. IF ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF RESPONSES ARE IN THE REPORT, ARE THE RESULTS STILL USEABLE?

Even if the numbers of responses to an item are small, they still provide useful information. **With small numbers, however, results can vary greatly if only one or two people would mark an item differently.**

Example F:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCASSIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	3	30.0	4	40.0	1	10.0	2	20.0	0	0.0	10	7	10	70.0

Example G:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCASSIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	3	30.0	2	20.0	3	30.0	2	20.0	0	0.0	10	5	10	50.0

In *Example F*, 70% of the respondents marked either “Almost Always” or “Usually.” However, if just two respondents who initially marked the “Usually” category would have instead marked “Occasionally” (shown in *Example G*), the positive results would drop to 50%. Care must always be exercised when interpreting data from a small number of responses. This is another reason why feedback data should provide only one source of information when a supervisor is assessing his/her own performance or when his/her supervisor is preparing a Performance Review.

8. HOW IS THE “UNABLE TO RATE/DOES NOT APPLY” RESPONSE INTERPRETED?

This response has two different concepts. “Unable to Rate” is not the same concept as “Does not Apply.” “Unable to Rate” means that for any number of reasons the person completing the form does not have sufficient knowledge or experience to rate the supervisor. On the other hand, “Does not Apply” means that the item is addressing something the respondent believes is not part of this supervisor’s responsibilities.

It is legitimate to ask why individuals were unable to respond to a particular item or the survey as a whole; however, one should resist the temptation to make assumptions about why people did not respond. **Yet again, it is very important to have more than one source of information for Performance Reviews.**

Example H:

	ALMOST ALWAYS		USUALLY		OCASSIONALLY		ALMOST NEVER		UNABLE TO RATE		COUNT	ADJUSTED POSITIVE		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	N	%
7. IS RECEPTIVE TO FEEDBACK	5	33.3	2	13.3	1	6.7	1	6.7	6	40.0	15	7	9	77.8

In *Example H*, this supervisor received an adjusted positive rating from 77.8% of the respondents. One may ask, “Why did 40% feel they were unable to comment on the supervisor’s receptivity to feedback?” One possibility is that these respondents did not report directly to this supervisor, and felt they lacked sufficient contact to respond. As mentioned previously, it cannot be determined who responded to the items since results are combined for three classifications (faculty, staff, and administrators) and two levels (those for whom this is their immediate supervisor and those for whom this is their primary supervisor’s supervisor).

It is also legitimate to consider why employees might feel that an item is asking about a concept that is not part of a supervisor’s responsibilities. Follow-up on these matters would help an evaluator to make better use of the information under this option.

In summary, keep these important points in mind:

- ◆ **Use the Supervisors Feedback report in conjunction with other sources of information to form an overall judgment about a supervisor’s performance.**
- ◆ **Look for patterns across items and across time before drawing conclusions.**
- ◆ **Do not over-interpret the results.**
- ◆ **Assume the feedback is valid; perceptions of those supervised about supervisory practices play an important role in the effective functioning of work units.**