Appendix C

HONG KONG AIR CADET CORPS

Headquarters

**Common Rating Errors to be avoided when completing the**

***Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps Senior Member***

***Performance Appraisal Report***

Before assigning ratings to an appraisee’s performance, it is recommended that you watch out for the following five common rating errors:

(1) **Recent Events**

* People tend to over-emphasise recent events when judging an appraisee. This is natural because we tend to remember those things we have recently been involved with. For a performance appraisal to be credible, it should reflect an appraisee’s performance over the entire appraisal period.

* Remembering significant events, both positive and negative, that occur during the appraisal period is not easy. Informal discussion throughout the appraisal period and continual review of performance against expectations will help. Review of all relevant documentation and information/self-assessment from the appraisee also gives a more complete view.

(2) **Personal Bias**

* All of us have a tendency to be more impressed by people who we like and those who are similar to us in appearance and attitudes. These personal baises can unfairly influence assessments.
* Your own needs may also influence your judgement. For example, if you are under pressure to achieve an objective and are relying on the appraisee to assist you, this may prevent you from being sufficiently objective when assessing his/her performance
* The best way to avoid the influence of personal bias is to be aware of your own motives and biases and to question their effect on your assessment. Having clearly identified duties and responsibilities against which a person can be assessed will also minimise the effect of personal bias.

(3) **Halo Effect**

* A common error is to assess different aspects of an individual’s performance as being of equal standard. There is a tendency for good or poor performance in oen area of work to ‘colour’ the assessment in other areas of work. For example, if a person is very competent in people management practices, there may be a tendency to over-rate work output as a result. Conversely, a lack of people management skills may lead to harsh assessment in all aspects of the individual’s work.

-2-

* Careful observation throughout the appraisal period and review of all relevant information are the main ways of avoiding these ‘halo’ effects. It also helps if the duties and responsibilities are discussed and assessed one at a time during appraisal discussion. Halo effects often result from a general discussion of job performance which does not clearly separate performance against different duties and responsibilities.

(4) **Comparison**

* The comparison effect occurs when an assessment of one member inappropriately influence the assessment of another member. Certain aspects of an individual may stand out because they compare sharply with those of a predecessor or a colleague, yet under other circumstances you might attach less importance to them. You may, for example, be disappointed that an appraisee is less enthusiastic to meet face to face, yet tend to ignore that he/she nevertheless keeps all work up to date. As another example, an appraisee who has replaced a poor performer is likely to look good by comparison, but do they meet the requirements of the position?
* Different members will approach the same duties in a variety of ways. Appraising officers should focus on the effectiveness of an appraisee’s approach in achieving the duties and responsibilities rather than on how it compares with that of other colleagues.

**(5) Leniency**

* A final obstacle to fair assessment is the tendency to appraise more leniently than is warranted. This might be done for a variety of reasons, e.g. to reward an appraisee for efforts rather than for results; to avoid confronting an appraisee about weaknesses; or because rumour suggests that this is what other appraising officers are doing, and no appraising officers wish to disadvantage their own appraisees.
* Whatever the reason, the effect of leniency is to invalidate the performance planning and appraisal process. If the majority of appraisees are rated as ‘excellent’, a member whose performance is very high will be indistinguishable from colleagues whose performance is less impressive; also the member who could be developed further will not have the benefit of honest and constructive feedback.

April 2015