



## **CHECK-IN GUIDE**

### **INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR'S GUIDE**

## INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to help employees prepare and participate in Align check-ins that occur twice per year per your school or unit's schedule. It provides information about steps employees need to take prior to the check-in conversations, things to consider when assessing your own performance, and what is important to communicate throughout the process.

Check-in conversations are an opportunity to quickly reflect on your progress, which provides you and your leader direction on what to focus on going forward. During check-in conversations, both you and your leader assess what was accomplished, the outcomes you realized, and the behaviors you displayed relative to what was agreed to and expected. Both of you can share where there were successes, where there were challenges or missed opportunities, and how to move to the next level of performance.

### PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND

Performance excellence doesn't just happen; intentionality and time is required. The most effective check-ins occur when conducted in combination with regularly occurring one-on-one conversations. Refer to the [Align One-on-One Guide](#) or [Setting Key Deliverables Guide](#) for additional information.

- Check-ins primarily benefit you. It is an opportunity to reflect on your accomplishments, discuss areas of improvement, and support your growth and aspirations.
- No surprises! One-on-one discussions serve as the foundation for check-ins. Neither party should be surprised by the status of the key deliverables during check-ins as progress should have been discussed during one-on-ones.
- Focus on the degree to which key deliverables were accomplished and the frequency of displayed behaviors.
- Participate in a productive session by actively engaging in open dialog about each person's perspective.
- You should have a clear understanding about your accountability for your own performance and be ready to discuss results.

## PREPARING FOR CHECK-INS

Plan to participate in check-in meetings with your leader at least twice a year per your school or unit's schedule. Check-ins are based on the results of regularly scheduled one-on-one conversations occurring throughout the check-in period. They summarize results and progress on key performance areas and close out the period by assessing and rating the accumulated results and progress made on expectations.

**Check-in sequence and flow:** Productive conversations are more likely when employees and leaders properly prepare and complete their respective pre-check-in tasks. Establishing clear expectations prior to the check-in increases the likelihood for a productive meeting.

- **Prior to Check-in:** Your leader will use a scheduled one-on-one conversation to review the purpose, sequence, timing, flow of the check-in process, and any progress updates. They will schedule this meeting at a minimum of least two to three weeks prior to the check-in to allow both of you to complete your respective tasks.
- **Check-in:** Depending upon what you and your leader agree to, the sequence of form completion and conversation flow will likely be:
  1. Begin by filling out the check-in form and include your ratings and assessment for the key deliverables and behaviors. Submit your assessment to your leader for review.
  2. Your leader reviews your ratings and comments, then drafts their appraisal comments and ratings.
  3. Have your check-in discussion with your leader.
  4. Your leader finalizes their ratings and appraisals (or is done before #3). They submit the form back to you for final review and acknowledgement.
  5. Review and acknowledge the final ratings and comments. This concludes your check-in for this period.

**Understand the ratings:** Understanding the ratings and their definitions is key to assessing and discussing performance results.

- The rating scale for key deliverables considers how much of the deliverable was completed within the specified criteria. Determine how much of the key deliverable was accomplished, and then identify which criteria were met or missed.
- The scale for key behaviors indicates how frequently the behavior was displayed throughout the check-in period. Key behaviors apply to all work-related situations and not limited to time spent working on key deliverables.

See page 3 for rating scales and next steps.

RATING SCALE FOR KEY DELIVERABLES	RATING SCALE FOR BEHAVIORS
<p><b>4: SURPASSED</b> – Successfully completed more than the specified key deliverable and exceeded all established criteria (time, quality, results, etc.).</p> <p><b>3: ACCOMPLISHED</b> – Successfully completed the specified key deliverable and met all established criteria.</p> <p><b>2: PARTIALLY ACCOMPLISHED</b> – Completed part of the specified key deliverable, missed on some established criteria.</p> <p><b>1: NOT ACCOMPLISHED</b> – Did not complete any of the specified key deliverable within the established criteria</p>	<p><b>4: ALWAYS</b> – Consistently models the behavioral anchors.</p> <p><b>3: MOST OF THE TIME</b> – Displays the behavioral anchors often.</p> <p><b>2: SOMETIMES</b> – Displays the behavioral anchors inconsistently.</p> <p><b>1: RARELY</b> – Seldom displays the behavioral anchors.</p>
<b>OVERALL RATING CALCULATION</b>	
<p>Overall rating is automatically calculated. It is equal to the sum of the averages of the key deliverables rating and behaviors rating. The overall rating calculation will be a score up to a maximum of 8.0</p>	

**Suggest an appropriate environment:** The environment should provide a safe space appropriate to the conversation, such as a conference room or office for privileged or sensitive topics. Take into consideration that it is your performance review and share your preference with your leader.

**Gather supporting information:** To have meaningful and objective check-ins, gather a wide range of information and examples supporting your self-assessment. Share details from your perspective. Similarly, your leader will have prepared the same to support their perspectives and ratings.

- Note tangible outcomes or results from your key deliverables that you achieved or examples of when you demonstrated the key behaviors.
- Review prior one-on-one conversations about the status of tasks and deliverables, how your behaviors were demonstrated, and recent accomplishments.
- Consider interactions with clients and peers you collaborated with during the check-in period. Your leader will also collect information and observations about your interactions.

## PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Use this section of the worksheet to perform a preliminary assessment and prepare comments to share with your leader. Refer to the ratings charts found earlier in this guide as needed.

<b>KEY DELIVERABLES</b>		
<b>Insert key deliverable, rating, and comments, examples and evidence to support the rating.</b>		
<b>Key Deliverable</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>

<b>BEHAVIORS</b>		
Insert behaviors, frequency ratings, and include comments, examples and evidence to support each frequency rating.		
Behavior (School/Unit)	Rating	Comments
ARIISE VALUES (FOR UCI HEALTH ONLY)		
Accountability		
Respect		
Integrity		
Innovation		
Service		
Excellence		
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS		
Establish Alignment & Direction		
Engage Employees		
Deliver Results		

## PARTICIPATING IN CHECK-IN CONVERSATIONS

Keep the following points in consideration during your check-in conversation. Take notes and ask questions when clarification is needed.

### CONTEXT

- **Assume positive intent:** Check-ins and performance reviews are not punitive. However, open and honest dialogue is necessary to identify and jointly find solutions for challenges and roadblocks.
- **Intention is for progress, not perfection:** This is a point-in-time snapshot of one's performance trajectory, which can go up, down, or stay as is. The goal is to help employees progress, grow, and perform at their highest potential.
- **Future focused:** Quickly reflect on the progress you've made to see what to focus on next. Take note of lessons learned but both parties need to avoid staying stuck in the past.

### FLOW

1. The meeting should start with you sharing your assessment of each key deliverable citing outcomes achieved and other information to support the selected rating.
2. Continue with sharing your assessment of the key behaviors.
3. Your leader should follow up with the ratings they assigned each key deliverable and their feedback about the outcomes. They will speak to what was accomplished and what was short of expectations, if applicable.
  - Use active listening when your leader is providing their commentary.
  - As well as receiving feedback, be open to providing your leader with feedback on how they have or need to support you.
4. Anticipate that there may be some differences of perspective about ratings and be prepared with supporting evidence and examples.
  - Ask questions if vague feedback is being provided. Be prepared to answer questions if your commentary was vague or lacking examples.
  - Both parties should withhold judgement and keep an open mind while listening to understand.
  - Consider both points of view. Attempt to come to a common understanding and note where differences remain.
  - Refer back to your key deliverables or the key behavior definitions as needed.
5. Your leader may add or suggest additional areas of improvement or opportunities that they identified. They may ask how you would like to be supported throughout the next check-in period.

6. Discuss and agree on the areas of focus. Identify any immediate action items for either party. Take note of these items.
7. Your leader should summarize the conversation. You will be invited to share any final comments.
8. Next steps will be shared, which includes leader finalizing the ratings, adding any additional comments, communicating any change in ratings (if applicable), and sending the completed form to you for your acknowledgement and final comments.