Baldrige Comment Guidelines

The applicant is the customer for your feedback comments. Your goal is to meet the customer requirements below.

Actionable
The applicant can take action based on the comment and understand the potential benefit.

Include these elements in your comments. Arrange them in the most readable way for the applicant.

- **A concise opening statement of the main idea (the "nugget").** Include only one main idea per comment. If you have several, either choose one, or combine them into a higher-level, more general nugget. If something "is not clear," describe what is missing.
- **The relevance of this main idea to the applicant.** Use a key factor to show the relevance—why the comment is important to the applicant. Include just one point of relevance per comment.
- **One or two examples to support and clarify the main idea.** Choose examples from the application that clarify the strength or opportunity for improvement. If you have many, choose the most important ones, or group them.

Aligned
The comment reflects the Criteria and reflects the scoring range you have chosen.

Write comments on the basic, overall, or multiple **Criteria questions** that are most important to the applicant; ensure that the comments align with the score. Use language from the Criteria.

Use only enough Criteria language to add clarity. Seek to **add value rather than restate information**.

Point out areas of strength or opportunities for improvement based on the **evaluation factors (ADLI or LeTCI)**. Use language from the Scoring Guidelines. In each comment, focus on just one or two evaluation factors.

Ensure that the comment **does not contradict other comments** in the same item or other items.

Accurate
The facts and data are correct.

Use the **applicant's terminology**.

Use the **correct names and terms** (e.g., for the applicant's processes and for figure names).

Check the facts and data in your comment. For example, if you state that "there is no evidence," check text and figures to ensure that this is true; if you note adverse trends or a lack of comparative data, make sure this is true.

Don't "parrot" the application; seek to **add value rather than restate information**.

Appropriate
The tone is professional and polite.

Don't comment on the applicant's **style of writing or data presentation**.

Don't use **jargon or acronyms unless they are the applicant's terms**.

Don't be **judgmental** by using terms such as "bad" or "inadequate."

Don't be **prescriptive** by telling the applicant what it "should" do or recommending specific practices that are **beyond the Criteria**.

Don't assert your **personal opinions**.