

Common Business Functions for Correctional Management Systems



IJIS Institute



Volume 2 – Business Scenarios
Part C – Classification

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1. BUSINESS FUNCTION: CLASSIFICATION

The dynamics of the offender classification system require that it be a key component of any correctional environment. It is essential to ensure that all offender assignments are based on risk, security, and programmatic needs. There is not always consensus among the three in combination, and so the requisite for public safety demands that security and risk have primary consideration. Many systems have objective based classification systems. This requires that the same set of factors or objectives are applied to all offenders during their initial inception into prison and at frequent intervals, or as required by policy. From this assessment, a custody level is identified that helps sort the offenders to specific facilities and assignments within the system.

These custody levels can also limit access to certain privileges, specific programs, or business functions (i.e. commissary, visitation). The foundation for prudent correctional management is supported through a classification system that has been validated on how well the risk level of each offender is determined with regard to their threat to the public, other offenders, staff and visitors. Sorting high risk inmates into low security can result in serious incidents of escape, assault and other similar security breaches.

When the scored custody level is determined to be inappropriate for any justified reason, then a variance to this level can be requested in order to raise or lower the custody level. This process is referred to as an override and is supported by reasons that are determined to be either mandatory or discretionary. Mandatory overrides may be supported by policy or law that requires certain category offenders not be assigned to specific custody levels or that they are assigned only to specific prisons. Discretionary overrides are those that are justified by staff request that are supported by sound correctional analysis.

Discretionary overrides help assess the overall system validity. A classification system with high override rates is not providing an accurate assessment of the offender's risk levels and may need to be revised to ensure that the proper factors are being applied in order to accurately determine the risk and threat levels.

Classification Use Case Diagram

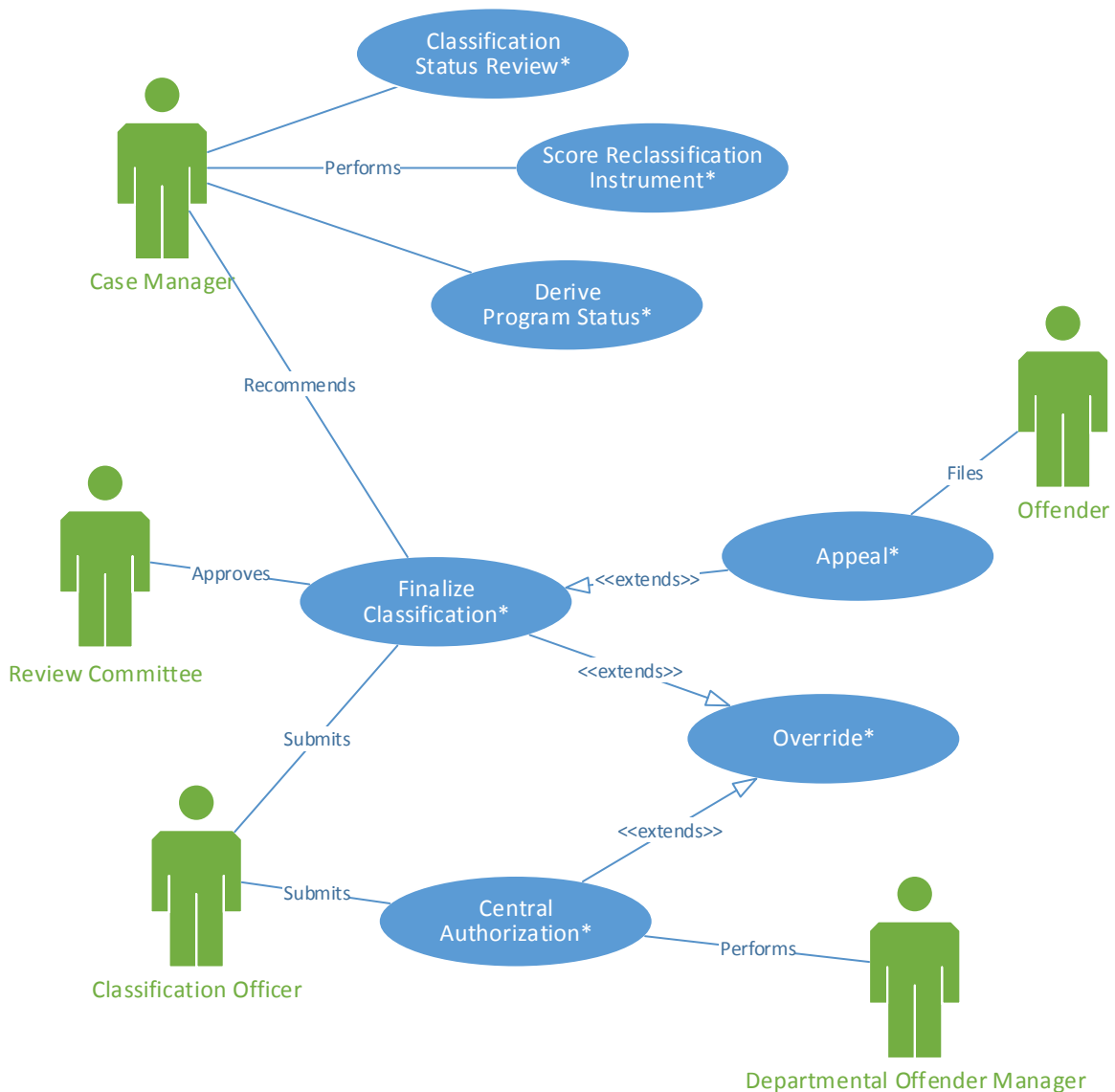


Figure 1: Classification Use Case Diagram

1.1 Use Case Specification: Classification Status Review

The case manager monitors events that require routine mandatory classification actions or initiates discretionary classification action under the case manager's authority.

Associated Actor	Relationship	Description
Case Manager		

Classification Status Review Activity Diagram

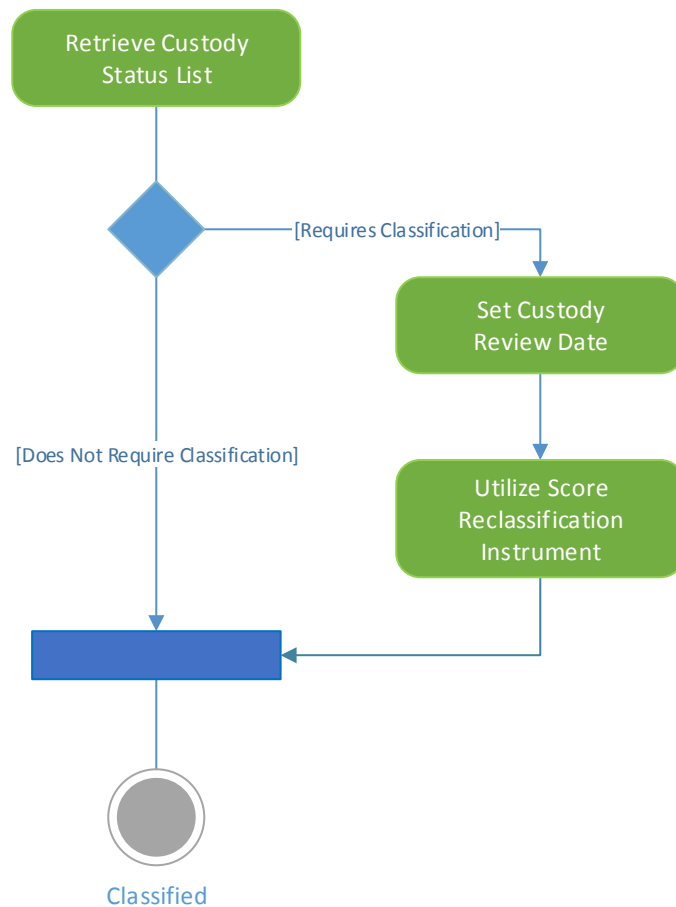


Figure 2: Classification Status Review Activity Diagram

1.1.1 Flow of Events

Retrieve Custody Status List - A classification tracking list is generated for offenders scheduled at a pre-set time for consideration, either through routine time requirements, or due to prescribed aggravating or mitigating factors. The offenders may be in various stages of consideration, and the list will provide offenders relevant to the staff person's role and the stage they are interested in viewing.

- Data provided: Next Classification Date, Offender Identifiers, Classification Change Reason.
- Alternative Flows:

Detail
Classification review may be performed following a defined time schedule. Some jurisdictions review every six months during the first three years and the last three years of incarceration.

- Special Requirements:

Standard	Description
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4300: Classification Status Review	The written plan for inmate classification specifies that each inmate's classification status is reviewed at least every 12 months.

(If requires classification) Set Custody Review Date - If an offender requires classification as a result of appearing on the custody status list, there will be a mechanism to initiate the process and schedule the classification.

- Data provided: Classification Date.

Utilize Score Reclassification Instrument - Separate criteria are used once the offender has been previously classified during the current incarceration. This criteria will include institutional behavior.

- Data provided: Next Classification date.

Pre-Condition	Description
None	
Post-Condition	Description
Classified	Assigned to a category of custody.

1.2 Use Case Specification: Override

Instances where is determined that a custody level score is inappropriate a variance is requested. This allows for discretion on the part of the system to adjust for information that is contrary to the individual factor scores. This request is referred to in most jurisdictions as an override. Some of the reasons for override consideration are prior supervision history, medical status, cases that have been reduced by plea agreement but the affidavit clearly reflects a higher level may be warranted, or those cases that are listed but non-violent are not in need of mandatory needs reducing programs. If sufficient justification is determined, a variance to the scored level is approved, otherwise the custody level resulting from the original score is sustained.

1.2.1 Flow of Events

Retrieve Override Request - The override request document is obtained from the appropriate storage location.

- Data provided: Override Request Document.

Override Activity Diagram

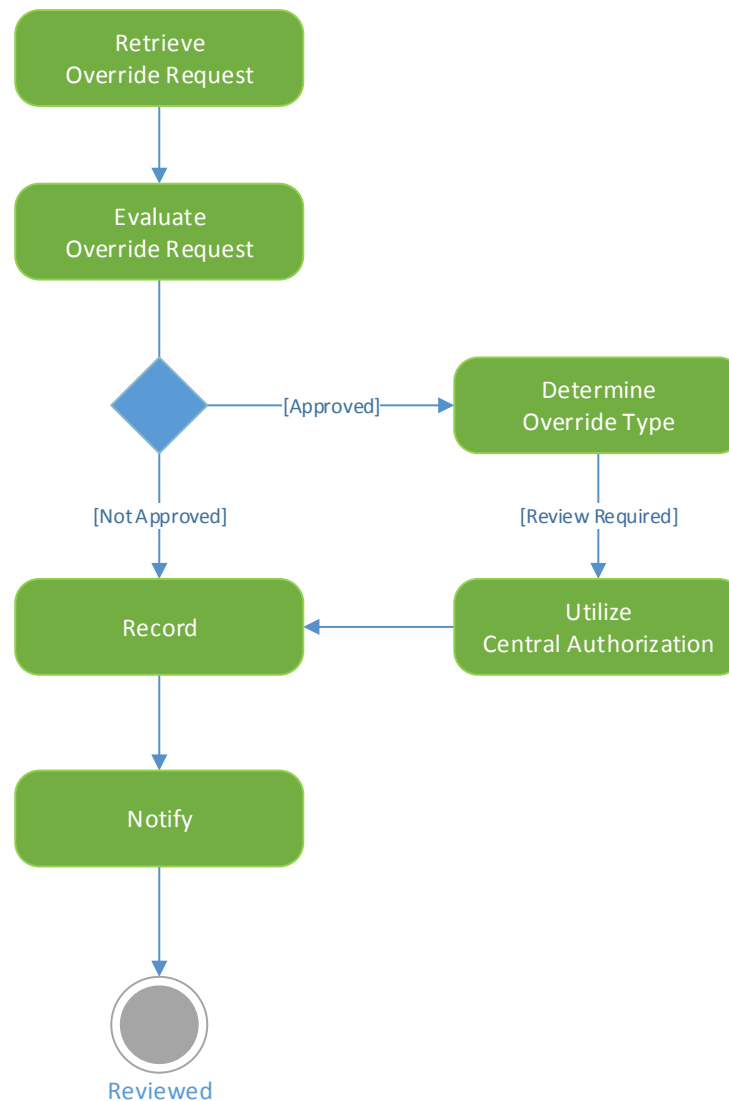


Figure 3: Override Activity Diagram

Evaluate Override Request - Determine if the reasons documented in the override request support a variance to the custody level score. If there is sufficient information to approve the override request the variance custody level is approved. If there is insufficient information the override is denied and the custody level resulting from the original score is sustained.

- Data provided: Authorization Data, Approval Reasons, Denial Reason, Denial Notification.

Detail

When a variance to the custody level is approved, the offender record is updated to reflect the justification of the variance. In instances where a variance is not approved, the reasons for the denial are not required and, therefore, are not recorded.

Detail

A denial of an override request is an affirmation of the original custody level classification. The denial of the override request does not result in another classification review.

(If Approved) Determine Override Type - Overrides for custody classification may be approved at the facility level for instances that involve intra-facility movement. For example, an offender's custody level may prevent that individual from performing a work assignment outside the security perimeter. The facility needs are considered sufficient to approve the override to a lower security level.

When a facility level override is intended to prevent an inter-facility movement, the override is subject to approval from a central authorization review process. For example, a facility in need of the skills of a specific offender may override a classification recommendation, but the central authority will deny the override in favor of the offender movement to another facility to complete program needs.

As a general rule, the type of override is determined by whether the approval will result in the movement of the offender to another facility. Intra-facility overrides do not require a review from a central classification authority. Overrides affecting inter-facility movement will be reviewed by a central classification authority.

(If review required) Utilize Central Authorization - Central Authorization is the review of all actions on behalf of the corrections department where policy dictates a decision is to be made at a level above that of the facility administration. Review examples include approval of offender classification, inter-facility movement, and facility assignments.

The facility staff may submit their recommendations for classification and movement to the central offender management office. The offenders classification information will be reviewed, this review may include:

- Victim Information
- Sex Offender Information
- Movement History
- Legal Issues (warrants, detainment orders, fines outstanding, pending charges)
- Probation/INS
- Security (escape, disciplinary, Security Threat Groups or STG, segregation units, enemies/co-defendants)
- Medical/Mental Health Restrictions
- Suicide Attempts
- Official Version of the Offense
- Criminal History by Categories
- Totals by Crime Type
- Risk Reduction Plan
- Academic Degrees
- Vocational Trades,
- Family Information
- Incarceration Summary (notes from case manager to include program involvement such as response to risk reduction plan)

Record - The act of documenting any form of action, decision, or information that is to be placed among official records.

Notify - The notification activity produces and disseminates appropriate information for the purpose of making staff aware of an event and/or initiating action. The staff needing to know must have been identified for each event.

Pre-Condition	Description
None	
Post-Condition	Description
Reviewed	Staff review of past behavior or conditions in respect to future action.

1.3 Use Case Specification: Score Reclassification Instrument

Separate criteria are used once the offender has been previously classified during the current incarceration. These criteria will include institutional behavior.

Score Reclassification Instrument Activity Diagram

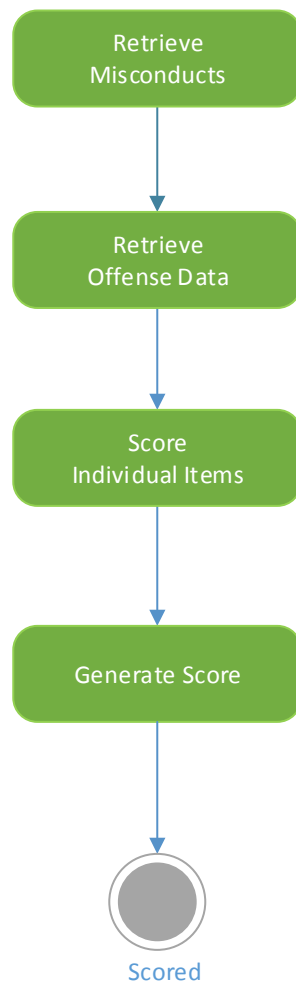


Figure 4: Score Reclassification Instrument Activity Diagram

Associated Actor	Relationship	Description
Case Manager	Performs	

1.3.1 Flow of Events

Retrieve Misconducts - Misconduct and Infraction history must be available at the time of scoring as it is utilized significantly in a reclassification instrument. The facility response to the infraction may be the triggering event in determining the need for a classification to take place.

- Data provided: Misconducts and Infractions, Responses to Misconducts.

Retrieve Offense Data - Criminal history based on current RAP sheet data must be available. In addition, the current conviction offenses and expected time to serve make up factors in the instrument and must be current. Other related criminal history such as escapes and the nature of the offenses, i.e. assaults, are critical data that the classification and assessment process will require. This information may be available through the pre-sentence investigation. Where the corrections department/agency is responsible for the pre-sentence investigation (PSI), this may be readily retrievable. Where the corrections department/agency is not responsible for producing the PSI it may be less.

- Data provided: Criminal History, Conviction Offenses, Expected Time to Serve, Escape History.

Score Individual Items - It is required that the data from the various sources identified populate the factors used in the scoring instrument.

- Data provided: Classification Item Scores.

Generate Score - Processing of item scores, identifying the range the scores fall into, and the level or issues the ranges suggests.

- Data provided: Classification Score.

Pre-Condition	Description
None	
Post-Condition	Description
Scored	The official score result obtained by applying testing or evaluation methods in order to determine the placement of an individual in a category or ranking for management purposes.

1.4 Use Case Specification: Derive Program Status

The offender's program status is reviewed for program needs, which may affect classification to another custody level beyond the information utilized in the scoring instrument.

Associated Actor	Relationship	Description
Case Manager		This function is a team effort from several business areas.

Derive Program Status Activity Diagram

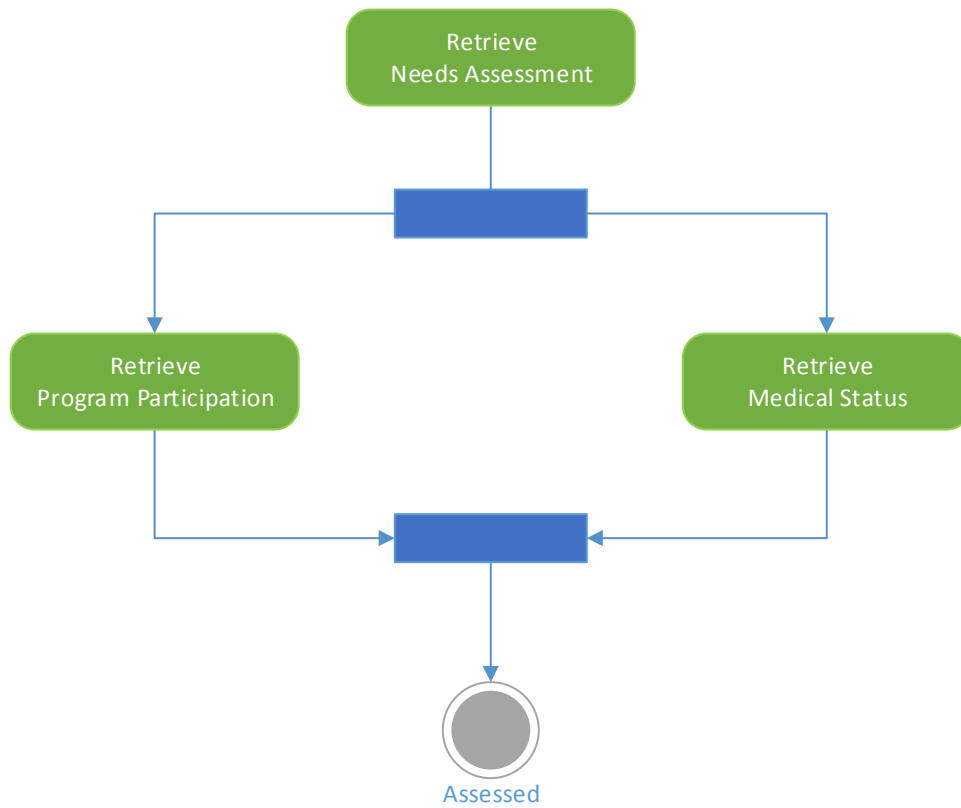


Figure 5: Derive Program Status Activity Diagram

1.4.1 Flow of Events

Retrieve Needs Assessment - Offenders have ongoing needs assessments conducted, upon intake and then as needed by various disciplines. These areas could include medical, psychological, substance abuse, education and various other needs. This information will need to be retrieved and reviewed against current participation.

- Data provided: Program Needs Data, Clinical Data.
- Special Requirements:

Standard	Description
ACA Standard: Classification Plan 4-4298: Use of Pre-institutional Assessment Information.	The institution or parent agency solicits and uses pre-institutional assessment information regarding the inmate’s progress and adjustment.

Retrieve Program Participation - Offender program participation should include the status in the program, whether currently assigned, attendance, and the level of participation the offender put forward.

This information is needed in measuring program performance as it relates to the offender's identified needs.

- Data provided: Program Holds, Program Participation.

Retrieve Medical Status - Medical treatment information, restrictions, and current conditions may impact the offender's ability to function or obtain treatment. This information will need to be available at the time of classification.

- Data provided: Medical Holds, Medical Care.

Pre-Condition	Description
None	
Post-Condition	Description
Assessed	The official end result of applying testing or evaluation methods in order to determine the placement of an individual in a category or ranking for management purposes.

1.5 Use Case Specification: Finalize Classification

The custody risk level will be approved by the Classification Officer. This level could differ from the original scored custody rating through an override.

Associated Actor	Relationship	Description
Case Manager Classification Officer Review Committee	Recommends Submits Approves	Some jurisdictions have neither a Classification Review Hearing nor a Board. The classification is approved at the facility level and then passed to the Classification Review Officer for approval.

- Alternative Flows:

Detail
In some jurisdictions the override process will result in a recommendation that is then directed to the administrative level for final approval.

Finalize Classification Activity Diagram

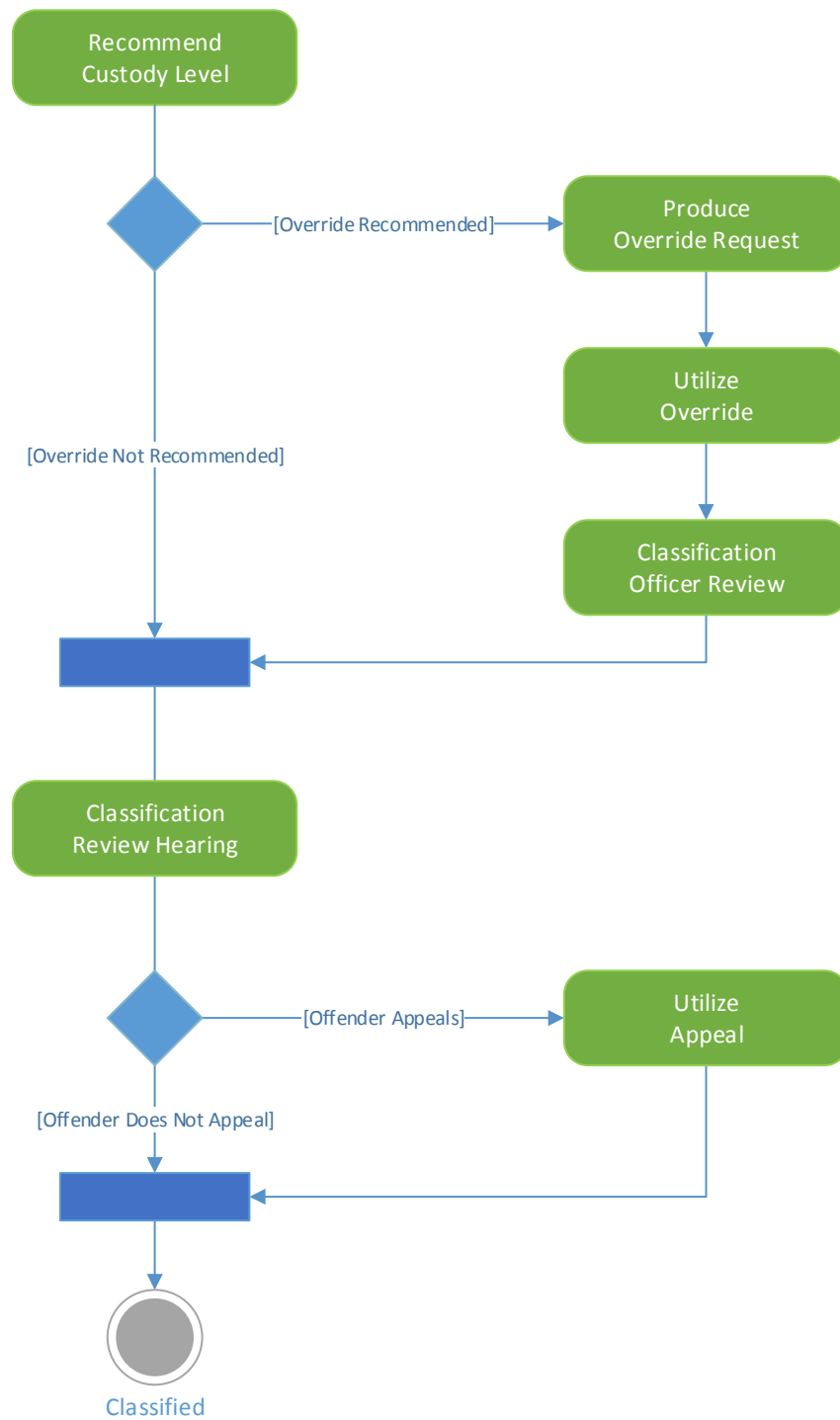


Figure 6: Finalize Classification Activity Diagram

- Special Requirements:

Standard	Description
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4301: Plan includes at least one level of appeal	The classification plan specifies criteria and procedures for determining and changing an inmates program status; the plan includes at least one level of appeal.
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4301: Plan includes at least one level of appeal	The classification plan specifies criteria and procedures for determining and changing an inmates program status; the plan includes at least one level of appeal.
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4301: Plan includes at least one level of appeal	The classification plan specifies criteria and procedures for determining and changing an inmates program status; the plan includes at least one level of appeal.

1.5.1 Flow of Events

Recommend Custody Level - The case manager must be able, after reviewing the scored custody level and the program/risk factors, to make a recommendation as to the appropriateness of the scored custody index. If the case manager believes this is appropriate, the scored custody level can stand as the recommended level to the Facility Classification Board. If the case manager does not believe it to be appropriate, an override can then be requested.

- Data provided: Classification Score, Classification Report, Recommended Custody Level.
- Special Requirements:

Standard	Description
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4302: Inmates appear at their classification hearing	Written policy, procedure, and practice require that unless precluded for security or other substantial reasons, all inmates appear at their classification hearing and are given notice 48 hours prior to the hearing; such notice may be waived by the inmate in writing.

(If Override Recommended) Produce Override Request - When it is determined an override is warranted a formal request is produced listing the reasons for the recommendation. The recommendation must be factually based, listing specific details necessary for the decision making authority to make a determination. This information will eventually be recorded to support the override decision.

- Data provided: Override Request Document.

Utilize Override - Instances where is determined that a custody level score is inappropriate a variance is requested. This allows for discretion on the part of the system to adjust for information that is contrary to the individual factor scores. This request is referred to in most jurisdictions as an override. Some of the reasons for override consideration are prior supervision history, medical status, cases that have been reduced by plea agreement but the affidavit clearly reflects a higher level may be warranted, or those cases that are listed but non-violent are not in need of mandatory needs reducing programs. If sufficient

justification is determined, a variance to the scored level is approved, otherwise the custody level resulting from the original score is sustained.

- Data provided: Override Reason, Classification Score, Classification Report.

Classification Officer Review - There should be an intermediate review process for custody level recommendations that meet defined business rules. An override request should trigger a review by a classification officer or supervisor. This would result in a recommendation passed to the Facility Classification Board.

- Data provided: Recommended Custody Level.

Classification Review Hearing - The classification recommendation should be scheduled with the Facility Classification Board for a hearing. The board should have available the classification report and the custody instrument. The board will make the final custody level decision, which could uphold the recommendation or change to one they deem more appropriate.

- Data provided: Custody Level, Custody Level.

(If Offender appeals) Utilize Appeal - A redress process is provided to offenders as a recourse avenue resulting from a formal proceeding such as classification, grievance, or disciplinary hearings. The offender can initiate an appeal process after a final decision or finding has been rendered by submitting required documentation to support the appeal. The documentation must be submitted following established guidelines, to the proper authority, within a defined time period.

- Data provided: Custody Level.

Pre-Condition	Description
None	
Post-Condition	Description
Classified	Assigned to a category of custody.

1.6 Use Case Specification: Appeal

A redress process is provided to offenders as a recourse avenue resulting from a formal proceeding such as classification, grievance, or disciplinary hearings. The offender can initiate an appeal process after a final decision or finding has been rendered by submitting required documentation to support the appeal. The documentation must be submitted following established guidelines, to the proper authority, within a defined time period.

Associated Actor	Relationship	Description
Offender	Files	Some jurisdictions do not offer the offender an appeal process.

Appeal Activity Diagram

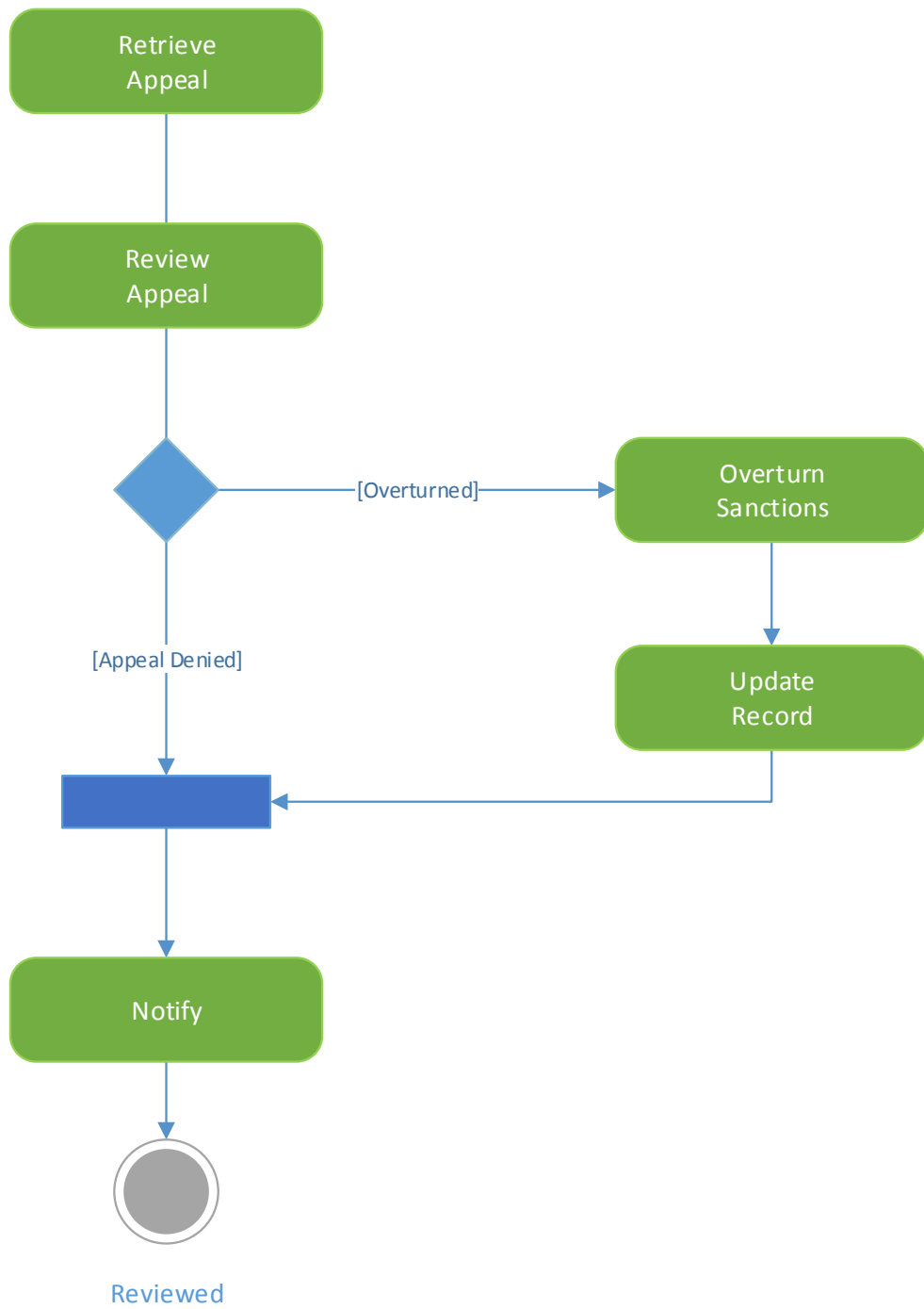


Figure 7: Appeal Activity Diagram

- Special Requirements:

Standard	Description
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4301: Plan includes at least one level of appeal	The classification plan specifies criteria and procedures for determining and changing an inmates program status; the plan includes at least one level of appeal.
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4301: Plan includes at least one level of appeal	The classification plan specifies criteria and procedures for determining and changing an inmates program status; the plan includes at least one level of appeal.
ACA Standard: Classification Status Reviews 4-4301: Plan includes at least one level of appeal	The classification plan specifies criteria and procedures for determining and changing an inmates program status; the plan includes at least one level of appeal.

1.6.1 Flow of Events

Retrieve Appeal - Obtain the appeal document from the appropriate source or storage location.

- Data provided: Appeal Document.

Review Appeal - When an offender submits a document appealing a decision or finding, a review of the information is performed to ensure procedures and policies were followed in prerequisite processes. A decision is rendered either supporting or overturning the preceding actions, with appropriate notification issued.

- Data provided: Denial Reason, Approval Reasons.

(If overturned) Overturn Sanctions - The result of an appeal review may reverse a previous decision of guilt. If so, sanctions that were imposed will be terminated, and adjustments made where feasible.

Update Record - When information is obtained for an established record, the pre-existing information in the record is amended or an addendum is added for future reference or communication.

Notify - The notification activity produces and disseminates appropriate information for the purpose of making staff aware of an event and/or initiating action. The staff needing to know must have been identified for each event.

Pre-Condition	Description
None	
Post-Condition	Description
Reviewed	Staff review of past behavior or conditions in respect to future action.

1.7 Use Case Specification: Central Authorization

Central Authorization is the review of all actions on behalf of the corrections department where policy dictates a decision is to be made at a level above that of the facility administration. Review examples include approval of offender classification, inter-facility movement, and facility assignments.

The facility staff may submit their recommendations for classification and movement to the central offender management office. The offenders classification information will be reviewed, this review may include:

- Victim Information
- Sex Offender Information
- Movement History
- Legal Issues (warrants, detainment orders, fines outstanding, pending charges)
- Probation/INS
- Security (escape, disciplinary, Security Threat Groups or STG, segregation units, enemies/co-defendants)
- Medical/Mental Health Restrictions
- Suicide Attempts
- Official Version of the Offense
- Criminal History by Categories
- Totals by Crime Type
- Risk Reduction Plan
- Academic Degrees
- Vocational Trades,
- Family Information
- Incarceration Summary (notes from case manager to include program involvement such as response to risk reduction plan)

Associated Actor	Relationship	Description
Classification Officer	Submits	
Departmental Offender Manager	Performs	

1.7.1 Flow of Events

Retrieve Custody Status List - A classification tracking list is generated for offenders scheduled at a pre-set time for consideration, either through routine time requirements, or due to prescribed aggravating or mitigating factors. The offenders may be in various stages of consideration, and the list will provide offenders relevant to the staff person's role and the stage they are interested in viewing.

- Data provided: Classification Decisions, Classification Report.

Central Authorization Activity Diagram

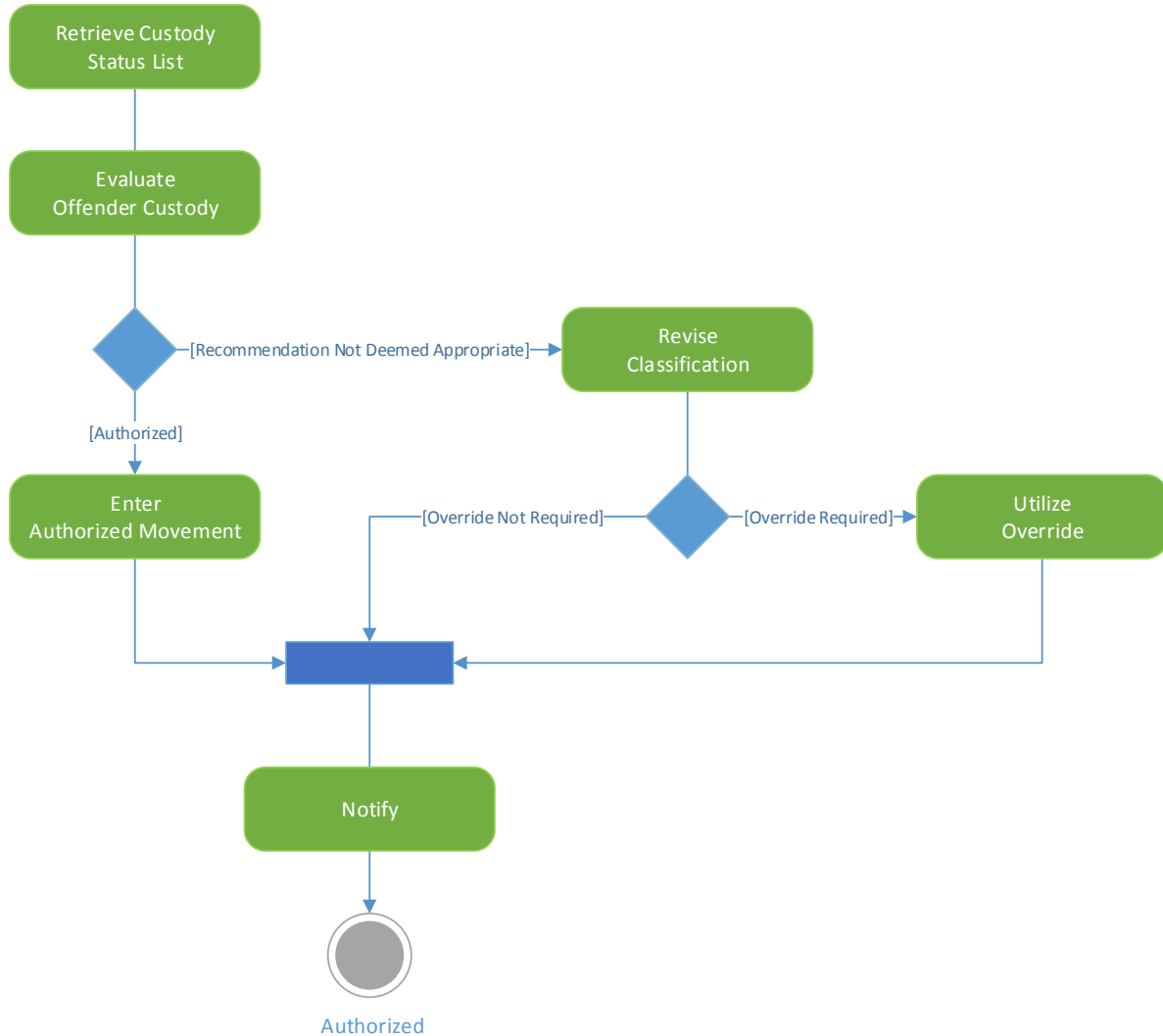


Figure 8: Central Authorization Activity Diagram

Evaluate Offender Custody - The recommended classification coming out of the facility has a second step or review through central offender management. The offender classification is often only reviewed if it involves a change in classification, which would result in a move between custody levels. The information available to the facility is also available to the central office staff upon demand. Summaries of all the previous actions and facility board recommendations accompany the information.

- Data provided: Classification Decisions, Classification Change Reason.
- Alternative Flows:

Detail

Not all movement is based on classification change and, conversely, not all classification change requires a move as some facilities can handle multiple custody levels. Central offender management may not become involved in classification unless movement is an issue.

(If authorized) Enter Authorized Movement - A request for movement will have been evaluated and upon approval flagged as approved. The approved candidate will then be available for placement on a transportation waiting list.

- Data provided: Classification Decisions, Authorized Moves.

(If recommendation not deemed appropriate) Revise Classification - At a review step, the reviewing authority has the option to revise the recommended classification level. This revision may be based on the offender's situation and/or institutional needs. The offender's situation may have changed since the recommendation and the reviewing authority will need to have this information available. The change reasons will be documented.

- Data provided: Classification Decisions, Classification Change Reason, Classification Decisions, Classification Change Reason.

(If override required) Utilize Override - Instances where is determined that a custody level score is inappropriate a variance is requested. This allows for discretion on the part of the system to adjust for information that is contrary to the individual factor scores.

This request is referred to in most jurisdictions as an override. Some of the reasons for override consideration are prior supervision history, medical status, cases that have been reduced by plea agreement but the affidavit clearly reflects a higher level may be warranted, or those cases that are listed but non-violent are not in need of mandatory needs reducing programs. If sufficient justification is determined, a variance to the scored level is approved, otherwise the custody level resulting from the original score is sustained.

- Data provided: Classification Decisions, Classification Change Reason, Override Reason.

Notify - The notification activity produces and disseminates appropriate information for the purpose of making staff aware of an event and/or initiating action. The staff needing to know must have been identified for each event.

Pre-Condition	Description
None	
Post-Condition	Description
Authorized	The formal approval given by an individual in authority.