



Performance Calibration is a two- step process that includes supervisors who are responsible for conducting the performance evaluations and the reviewer who examines the employee evaluations. The calibration process provides a forum for discussion of employee's performance with the goal of making sure supervisors apply similar standards for all employees and eliminate biases to the greatest extent possible.

What are the benefits of calibrating performance ratings?

- ensures supervisors are well versed in the definitions and application of the rating scale;
- helps supervisors have well thought through reasons as to why they gave a particular rating to an employee;
- helps prepare supervisors to have better performance discussions with their
- employees; provides supervisors with more confidence in their ratings after discussing the rating in a calibration meeting;
- ensures a more consistent and fair evaluation of an employee's performance by identifying potential supervisor and reviewer biases; and,
- provides a well thought out basis for merit increases based on performance.

When does calibration occur? Calibration occurs after an employee has provided self-reflection feedback for the evaluation and the supervisor has completed the evaluation but BEFORE the FINAL evaluation has been presented to the employee and signed by both the employee and supervisor.

Step 1. Upon completion of employee evaluations, and prior to holding the evaluation meeting with the employee, the evaluations should be sent to the reviewer. The reviewer is usually the supervisor's manager, but that may vary in certain colleges and departments.

The reviewer reads each evaluation, looking in particular for constructive supervisory comments and ensuring evaluations are thorough and logical. If the reviewer decides a supervisor should alter a particular evaluation, the reviewer sends the evaluation back and waits for revision.

Once all employee evaluations have been examined and agreed upon by the reviewer – and any necessary changes are made, then a meeting is scheduled between all college/department reviewers. Supervisors may also be in attendance at these meetings if desired. It is up to the

particular college and department to determine the level of participation at the calibration meeting.

Step 2. The HR Liaison pulls together the ratings distribution within that college/ department to be discussed in the calibration meeting. The executive Leader holds a meeting with all the reviewers, and supervisors if desired. In this meeting, the participants look at the rating distributions for the entire college/department and ensure the ratings are being consistently and fairly applied to all employees, and that no single supervisor is giving all employees the same numeric rating.

The group may ask questions about specific ratings and may suggest adjustments based on their experience with the employee. Following the discussion, reviewers ensure that the supervisors understand any changes that need to be made to the evaluations and that these changes are made prior to having the in-person performance evaluation meeting with the employee.

Tips for a Successful Calibration Process

- **Communicate College/Department Goals.** Goals for each area should be communicated in advance and as thoroughly as possible so employees understand how their daily work contributes to the success of the college/department, and so that employees understand the measures on which they will be evaluated.
- **Educate supervisors.** They need to understand what calibration is, why it is necessary, how it works, and what their role is.
- **Don't hide the process from employees.** It could de-motivate employees, if the calibration process is seen as secretive. Be open about the process, but maintain confidentiality outside of the calibration meeting.
- **Don't expect perfection.** The calibration process is imperfect because the people using it are imperfect. Each calibration meeting should have checks and balances built in so leaders are held accountable for their evaluation decisions.
- **Get the right people involved.** Make sure that the reviewer can adequately represent the employees being discussed at the calibration meeting or invite the supervisors if their input is needed.
- **Set appropriate ground rules for meetings.** Participants must feel open to challenge and debate. They must also feel comfortable asking their peers for advice if they need help in determining or communicating a rating.
- **Leverage the information gathered during the process.** The power of calibration goes beyond performance ratings. These discussions yield important insight into your top performers and your employee's who are struggling. Keep this in mind as you set up goals think about your talent pool for the next performance cycle and beyond.