

Enhancing Consistency Through Calibration

What is calibration?

- Performance calibration is the process of ranking employees on Missouri S&T's performance rating scale in order to differentiate top performers from low performers and to ensure consistency among raters.

Why is calibration important?

- Consistency: Calibration provides an opportunity for managers to ask questions about and discuss definitions of the rating scale, which should eventually result in more consistent definitions of the scale between managers
- Fairness: Calibration is an effective way to ensure that performance reviews are more accurate by providing a process in which ratings are discussed among more than one individual in order to have multiple sources of information.
- Accountability: Because ratings are discussed with others, calibration ensures that managers are writing thoughtful and well-informed reviews.

Who participates in calibration?

- Calibration can occur at each level of the organization. It is recommended as a "bottom-up" process. For example, managers in a department will calibrate together. Afterward, the leader of the office, their director calibrates with the rest of the directors in a division. Therefore, the calibration process moves from the "bottom" to the "top" of the organization.
- In Missouri S&T's informal calibration, a group of peer managers get together to discuss individual employee performance to help ensure that one manager's 'successful' is not another manager's 'outstanding' rating.
- In Missouri S&T's formal calibration phase, the Chancellor's cabinet meets and calibrates across campus to ensure that each division rated their employees following the same guidelines.

When does calibration happen?

- In the performance appraisal process, calibration should occur after managers have drafted their appraisals and before they've finalized them.

Calibration Tips:

- Start with “outliers” as they are often more clear-cut, and then move on to the other employees from there. “Outliers” are employees who land at both ends of the spectrum, with either very high performance ratings or very low performance ratings.
- If multiple types of ratings need to be discussed, it's ideal if these conversations are held separately (e.g. have two separate calibrations for performance ratings and merit increases).
- Consider having a facilitator present during the meetings. Establish rules and norms ahead of time (e.g. only extreme ratings discussed, start with extreme ratings, display ratings visually, etc.) so the meeting is conducted in a timely manner.