

Section III: Calibration & Scoring

Calibration Sessions

A calibration session is a communication process in which peer supervisors within a defined organizational unit establish goals and metrics to ensure consistent application of performance expectations and ratings **across similar positions**. Calibration sessions don't need to be a standalone process; we recommend adding them as an agenda item during already-scheduled leadership meetings.

For more detailed information see the NinerTalent STAKES [Calibration Guide](#) or [video](#).

Who participates in a Calibration Session?

Peer supervisors and their managers within an organizational work unit should participate in each calibration session. These groups may request calibration assistance from other management or Human Resources staff.

When should we hold Calibration Sessions?

We recommend holding at least one calibration session in February, prior to the annual appraisals. Supervisors may consider holding additional calibration sessions throughout the performance cycle to share and discuss progress, successes and setbacks, and make any necessary changes or improvements.

What should we discuss in a Calibration Session?

It is important to discuss ratings and performance over the previous cycle and goal setting and expectations for the upcoming cycle.

1. *Rating-Setting*

Discuss and compare employee performance and progress over the past cycle. We also recommend determining appropriate and fair rating criteria within units and establishing consistent practices for conducting crucial conversations and writing performance reviews.

2. *Goal-Setting*

Discuss the application of institutional goals to employees, including defining what merits an "exceeds expectations" rating for each. Leadership will also discuss individual goals, which may include developing a unit or position-wide individual goal for the upcoming cycle. Additionally, we recommend revisiting what worked well in past cycles and what needs tweaking.

Why do we have Calibration Sessions?

Things can get "out of whack" for a number of reasons, including changes in budget, staffing, resources, technology, and even management priorities. These changes might affect organizational structure, an employee's position design, performance expectations, and/or job duties. Calibration sessions offer units the chance to align performance expectations and ratings with current business needs.

Calibration sessions serve many purposes, including establishing clear, coordinated and consistent rating practices among supervisors and managers. This will result in fair and accurate performance appraisals for each cycle, and encourage continuous improvement and progress for all employees.