

Calibration Resource Guide

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Content Overview

The Calibration Resource Guide is provided as a resource to assist organizational units with calibrating performance appraisals.

Topics in the guide include:

- an overview of the calibration process,
- the benefits of the calibration process,
- a checklist for administering the calibration process, and
- a checklist for facilitating the calibration meeting(s).

Calibrating Performance

As part of UCR's new performance management process, organizational units shall be required to calibrate the performance of its staff employees.

Calibration is a process by which the organizational unit ensures a consistent application of performance standards in the rating of staff employees.

The purpose of calibrating employee performance is to encourage a common understanding of performance standards and expectations across the organization.

Calibrating performance is an interactive process that provides a forum for organizational leadership to:

- discuss the proposed ratings of staff employees,
- determine alignment with the rating scale,
- ensure individual evaluators are applying consistent rating levels for comparable performance,
- ensure that performance is evaluated in a meaningful way to distinguish between differing levels of performance, and
- agree to final performance appraisal ratings for staff employees.

Calibration requires a common understanding by the organization of:

- rating guidelines/descriptions,
- performance factors and their elements, and
- behavioral indicators for rating each element.

Debunking Calibration Myths

Calibration **is not**:

- rating all staff employees the same, regardless of their performance/contribution,
- arbitrarily reducing the performance ratings of staff employees, or
- a forced distribution of ratings (e.g. a bell curve).

Benefits of the Calibration Process

When understood and well-executed, calibration can result in:

- a common understanding of performance standards and expectations,
- consistent application and justification of rating levels for comparable performance, no matter who the supervisor is,
- increased ability for supervisors to provide employees with meaningful, articulate feedback that reflects the behavioral indicators,
- more equitable merit-process outcomes, and
- increased perception of fairness and consistency in the overall performance management process.

Calibration Process Tools

Campus organizations are responsible for determining the most effective way to administer the calibration process within their units. The following tools are provided to assist organizational units with the process and are intended to serve as guidelines only.

Administering the Calibration Process: Checklist for a Sample Procedure

- Describe and discuss the calibration process with organizational leadership
- Establish calibration team(s)
 - The calibration team is responsible for ensuring that the organization consistently applies performance standards in the rating of staff employees. The team is generally comprised of representatives of the organization's leadership at each level.
- Establish a calibration timeline
- Discuss the calibration process and timeline with the calibration team(s)
- Schedule calibration meeting(s) of a meaningful duration. Considerations include:
 - sufficient time to meet, discuss and evaluate
 - managing the volume of drafted performance appraisals to be calibrated by scheduling more than one calibration meeting, if needed
- Discuss the calibration process and timeline with supervisors
- Communicate the calibration process to employees
- Collect drafted performance appraisals from supervisors
 - *Note:* as drafted performance appraisals have not yet been discussed with the employee, the submitted drafts should not contain any signatures
- Review drafted performance appraisals to ensure the following elements are present and return any incomplete drafts back to the supervisor:

- appropriate application of the rating rules
 - the *Reviewer Comments* section is completed for each performance factor, providing specific examples of performance that support the rating.
 - an overall rating has been assigned
- Facilitate calibration meeting(s) (See “Checklist for Facilitating a Sample Calibration Meeting,” below)
- The facilitator is typically a representative from the organization’s HR or administrative unit. She or he is responsible for facilitating timely calibration discussions in alignment with the new Performance Management tools and resources.
- Provide supervisors with sufficient time to finalize their draft appraisals in accordance with the calibration team’s recommendations
- Provide supervisors with the Calibration Cover Note template along with instructions for completing
- Provide supervisors with the time to discuss performance appraisals with employees, and obtain the required signatures on the Performance Appraisal Form and Calibration Cover Note
- The supervisor is accountable for the final overall rating decision and represents it as their own during the performance appraisal meeting with the employee
- Collect completed Performance Appraisal Forms and Calibration Cover Notes from supervisors

Checklist - Facilitating a Sample Calibration Meeting

- Complete calibration meeting preparation
- Before the meeting, the facilitator sorts appraisals based on the tentative overall rating proposed by the supervisor (i.e., 5’s in one pile, 4’s in another pile, etc.)
- Calibration team members agree to maintain confidentiality of the calibration discussion and outcomes
- Begin with the drafted performance appraisals of employees who received a tentative overall rating of 3 – *Successfully Meets Performance Expectations*
- Review and discuss the proposed overall ratings and comments provided by the supervisor, ensuring alignment with the tools and resources provided in the new Performance Management system
 - Determine if the tentative overall ratings are supported by cited examples in the reviewer’s comments
 - Formulate a recommendation. For each employee, the calibration team will recommend only **one of** two options:
 1. The overall rating proposed by the supervisor demonstrates consistent application of rating levels for comparable performance. The calibration team agrees with the overall rating proposed by the supervisor.

2. The overall rating proposed by the supervisor does not demonstrate consistent application of rating levels for comparable performance. The calibration team does not agree with the overall rating proposed by the supervisor and instead, recommends an overall rating of ____.

- Select another group (i.e., those tentatively rated 4) and repeat the process
- The calibration meeting concludes once the calibration team has reviewed all drafted performance appraisals and provided its recommendation
- Per the above-referenced section, provide supervisors with sufficient time to finalize their draft appraisals in accordance with the calibration team's recommendations

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Name: | Click or tap here to enter name. | Payroll Title: | Click or tap here to enter title. |
| Review Period: | Click or tap here to enter review period. | Dept.: | Click or tap here to enter dept.. |

Overall Performance Rating: [Click or tap here to enter rating.](#)

Beginning with the 2016/17 review cycle, as part of an emphasis on creating a high performance work culture, UCR's staff performance ratings levels were revised and staff are now appraised through a process that measures performance against objective behavioral standards and achievement of pre-established goals and expectations. Additionally, performance appraisals are calibrated within each organizational unit. This is done to ensure common understanding and consistent application of performance standards; alignment of rating comments with ratings provided on the appraisal form; and to encourage and consistently recognize truly exceptional work.

"Exceptional Performance" is defined as performance that consistently exceeds goals, job requirements and expectations, resulting in an overall quality of work that was superior and either included the completion of a major goal or project or made an exceptional, or unique contribution in support of unit, department, or University objectives. This rating is achievable by any employee though given infrequently

An employee would be rated as "Exceeds Performance Expectations" when their performance frequently exceeds goals, job requirements and expectations and they frequently generate results above those expected of the position.

Performance that consistently meets goals, job requirements and performance expectations will be rated as "Successfully Meets Performance Expectations". Employees rated at this level make a solid, reliable and meaningful contribution to their department.

This change in performance standards and definitions will likely result in fewer employees receiving ratings of "Exceptional Performance" and "Exceeds Performance Expectations". Unless otherwise indicated in the individual's performance appraisal document, this change is not a reflection of a decline in the overall performance or effort of our valued employees, but rather a modification of our performance rating standards and definitions, an emphasis on recognizing successful achievement, an effort to ensure common understanding and application of performance standards by all supervisors, and our campus commitment to excellence.

This form should be attached as a cover to all FY 16/17 Performance Appraisal forms, and will become a part of the employee's permanent personnel record.

The attached appraisal has been calibrated by next level reviewers to ensure common application of performance standards. By signing below, the employee acknowledges that s/he received the performance appraisal and discussed it with her/his supervisor. Employee signature does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the content of the performance appraisal.

SIGNATURES

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Employee Signature | Date | Supervisor Signature | Date |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|

RETURN THIS FORM ATTACHED TO THE FRONT OF THE COMPLETED PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM.