

Selecting a Calibration Event Guide

A calibration event is a standardized scenario that observers rate individually to support a facilitated discussion aimed at building shared understanding and scoring alignment. Choosing the right calibration event is essential for strong agreement among raters. Use this guide to help you select an effective scenario.

A good calibration event is relevant, observable, realistic, rich in behavior, and capable of generating structured scoring discussion. The gold standard calibration event closely mirrors the conditions observers will face during live ratings.

1. Choose the Most Realistic Option Available (Live Is Best)

- Live exercises are the most effective calibration events because they mirror real data collection conditions and offer richer behavioral cues.
- If a live event is not available, use:
 - An official calibration video developed for your BARS rubric (preferred).
 - A recorded video (from cell phone or action camera) of Marines conducting the event
 - A relevant movie or online clip that clearly demonstrates target behaviors.

2. Select a Scenario with Clear, Observable Behaviors

- The event should consist of visible and audible actions: decisions, communication, coordination, problem-solving, planning, etc.
- Avoid clips where performance is implied rather than demonstrated.
- Ensure observers can easily note who is acting and what they are doing.

3. Ensure the Scenario Aligns with Your BARS Rubric

- The behaviors in the scenario should map cleanly to the items being assessed.
- Confirm the event includes opportunities to rate behaviors from multiple Key Performance Areas.

4. Choose a Scenario with Enough Complexity for Discussion

- A good calibration event should show behaviors that can be interpreted in multiple ways.
- It should naturally surface differences in judgment among observers.
- The goal is not simplicity, but rather to generate productive scoring variance for discussion.

5. Pick a Scenario of Manageable Length

- The calibration event should be long enough to show meaningful behavior.
- It should be short enough to keep observers focused and avoid cognitive overload.
- If using a longer video such as a movie, consider showing a specific segment.