

NS&T MANAGEMENT OBSERVATIONS

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Introduction and Background

The INL Management Observation Program (MOP) is designed to improve managers and supervisors understanding of work being performed by employees and the barriers impacting their success. The MOP also increases workers understanding of managements' expectations as they relate to safety, security, quality, and work performance. Management observations (observations) are designed to improve the relationship and trust between employees and managers through increased engagement and interactions between managers and researchers in the field.

As part of continuous improvement, NS&T management took initiative to focus on the participation and quality of observations in FY-14. This quarterly report is intended to (a) summarize the participation and quality of management's observations, (b) assess observations for commonalities or trends related to facility or process barriers impacting research, and (c) provide feedback and make recommendations for improvements NS&T's MOP.

Evaluation Methods

The NS&T Management Observation website provides managers with the guidance and tools to plan, perform, and document a management observation. The website outlines the purpose and goals of management observations, identifies the performance expectations, and provides guidance for addressing performance issues. Subsequent to performing an observation, managers use the website to document the results using time/date, binning categories, and narrative text boxes. Reviewers of the observations use the website to bin any of the issues identified, review the scope and content of the observation, and assign a quality score. This report uses the website data to track progress and report results.

The primary means for evaluating Management Observations is:

Participation - Tracking participation and completion of observations will be compared to the assigned frequency (quantity) over time.

Observation Quality - The documented scope and content of the management observation will be evaluated and graded against predefined quality criteria.

Observation Review - Results from management observations will be reviewed and analyzed for issues, trends, safety concerns, corrective actions, and areas for improvement.

Participation

Management observations tracked to monitor management participation. NS&T has established frequency requirements based on the levels and roles of management (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Frequency requirements for Observations.

MANAGEMENT OBSERVATION PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS		
◆	Associate Lab Director	Quarterly
	Chief Operations Officer	Quarterly
	Division Director	Quarterly
	Deputy Division Director	Quarterly
■	Department Manager	Monthly
	Operations Lead	Monthly
	Lab Manager	Monthly
	Lab Space Coordinator	Monthly
	Principal Researcher	Monthly
	Mission Manager	Monthly

The ‘participation’ metric uses discrete data to measure of the percentage of managers completing their assigned number of management observations for a given month. The thresholds for management participation are set as follows:

- **Green** = >85% completion rate
- **Yellow** = 70% – 85% completion rate
- **Red** = <70% completion rate
- **Acceptable performance** = not to drop below a 75% completion rate for two consecutive months.

Observation Quality

Observation quality converts qualitative evaluations of the observations into a quantitative measure. Using criteria to facilitate objectivity; each management observation is reviewed, evaluated, and graded using a simple 3-point system (3 being the highest quality; 1 being the least quality).

- 3 Points** Work tasks observed are of at least moderate complexity. The interaction between manager and worker is clearly documented. The observation provides insightful evaluation, analysis, and/or recommendations; which may result in specific actions or improvements (resolving of conditions, correcting behavior). Discussions reinforce expectations, provided behavior-based coaching or correction, and are specific to behaviors, practices, and performance. If identified, issues/conditions are entered into LabWay.
- 2 Points** Work (tasks) or work areas are observed and evaluated. Observations are generally neutral in evaluation and analysis (e.g., ‘good communication’, ‘proper PPE’, ‘good housekeeping’). Some discussion or feedback between manager and worker is apparent, but does not document or specify the reinforcement of expectations, behavior-based coaching/correction, or was not specific to work practice and/or performance.
- 1 Point** Observation involved little or no actual work (e.g., housekeeping in an empty lab). Documentation only provided a description of the task or work area observed. No documented interactions, communications, or feedback between manager and worker. No evaluation, analysis, or recommendation.

The thresholds for observation quality are set as follows:

- **Green** = >2.25
- **Yellow** = 1.5 – 2.25
- **Red** = <1.5
- **Acceptable performance** = not to drop below a value of 2 for two consecutive months.

Observation Reviews

Reviews of the management observations includes identifying facility and process barriers impacting research, safety concerns, corrective actions, and areas for improvement. Barriers, concerns, and issues will be entered into LabWay for tracking and trending.

Results, Analysis, Actions

Participation

Management participation was satisfactory. Directors completed all their assigned observations for each month in the first quarter (Figure 1). Managers completing their observations trended positively and increased each month, starting as 'red' in October, transitioning to 'yellow' in November and finishing in the 'green' in December. The threshold for acceptable performance was not negatively exceeded (i.e., not to drop below 75% for two consecutive months) and no immediate action or intervention is necessary.

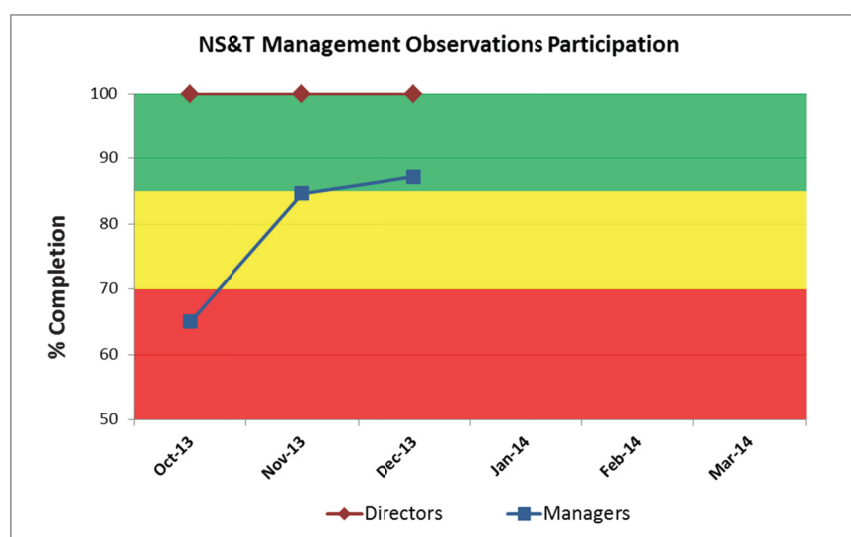


FIGURE 1. Management participation.

Observation Quality

The quality of observations fluctuated in the 'yellow' and dropped below a '2' in November (Figure 2). However, threshold for acceptable performance was not negatively exceeded (i.e., not to drop below a value of 2 for two consecutive months) and no action or intervention is necessary. Approximately half of observations received 2 points. The remaining observations were weighted towards 3 points.

Observations graded as 1 generally lacked, or did not document, an interaction or conversation with the worker(s) being observed and only provided a basic description of what was observed. Observations graded 2–3 documented the interactions and conversation and in some cases documented improvement opportunities and/or managers actively engaging with workers, facilitating barrier removal, promoting strategies to improve communications.

There are opportunities to improve the quality of observations in both content and documentation. To address this, the NS&T Performance Assurance lead and NS&T management will communicate the expectations and specific criteria used for evaluating observations. As a part of the NS&T Laboratory Operations Forum next quarter, the value of management observations will be reiterated with managers. The criteria used for evaluating management observations will be shared at the forum with emphasis on the benefits of having a dialog with worker(s). In addition, the importance of sufficient documentation (i.e., the narrative description of the observation) will be highlighted.

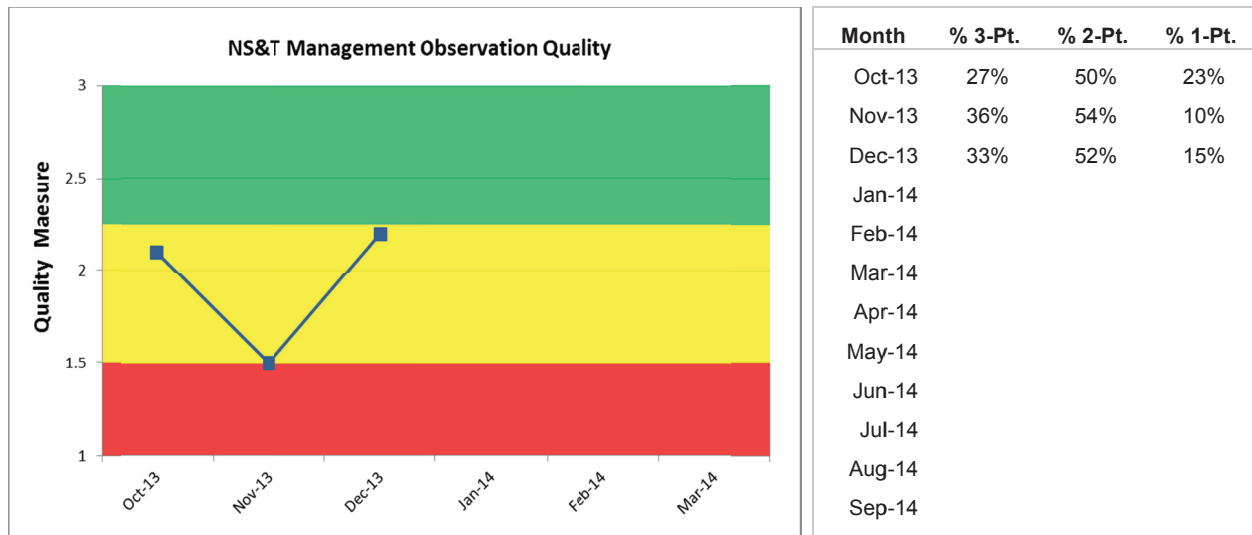


FIGURE 2. Management Observation Quality Index.

Observation Review

During FY-14Q1, 139 observations were performed with 85% identified as ‘meeting expectations’ and 15% identified as ‘shows room for improvement.’ Observation focus areas were broadly distributed and included defining and planning work scope, hazard identification, work execution, communications, and general housekeeping. Actions taken, issues identified, and improvement opportunities included the following:

- **Housekeeping** – Minor housekeeping issues associated with trash removal, equipment storage, bench-top clutter, glovebox cleanliness. Managers communicated their expectations for keeping a clean and well maintained work area.
- **Facility Improvements** – Actions were taken at Research and Education Laboratory (REL) for assigning a LM and/or LSC for the Human Systems Simulation Lab (HSSL) and signage for the laboratories.

- **Configuration Management** – Reviews and approvals for instrumentation pressure systems were identified for needed action.
- **Process Improvements** – Lack of clarity regarding the interpretation and application of Conduct of Operations for MFC research activities.
- **Procedure/Documentation** – Revision/updates to EDF-4037 (*TRA-666 And TRA-666A, STAR Facility, Radiological Control Program Requirements*) and GDE-607 (*Experiment Engineering Design Process*).
- **Work Practices** – Increased attention and reinforcement of expectations for radiological work practices and PPE use.

No significant safety issues or NS&T-wide trends were identified. NS&T Performance Assurance analysts will review the content of future observations and work with managers to facilitate entries into LabWay as appropriate.