

FACULTY EVALUATION PROCESS

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Are quotas used in the faculty evaluation process?

A: There are **NO QUOTAS** for the various evaluation ratings.

Faculty should be evaluated fairly and consistently, based solely on their performance during the previous year. The evaluation ratings of two faculty members whose performance is similar should be equivalent. Likewise, the ratings of two faculty members whose performances are highly variable should be different. Supervisors (chairs, directors, deans, VPs) should be able to defend their relative evaluations of faculty using documented evidence of their performance.

Q: Is there an average rating to which units should adhere?

A: There is **NO** prescribed average merit award to which units should adhere.

It's expected that various units will exercise appropriate standards when completing their evaluations of faculty. One way to measure those standards is to compute the average number of merit steps recommended per eligible faculty member. When a unit deviates significantly from the university-wide average for this measure, then that unit should be prepared to explain why this is appropriate. Absent a compelling explanation, units will be asked to re-assess their evaluations and bring them closer to the standards exercised by the university on average, just as we did last year.

This oversight of the overall evaluation process is important to ensure equity and fairness across the campus. Deans are expected to monitor the application of appropriate standards across the departments in their colleges, and vice-presidents are to do the same within their divisions. Nothing is more demoralizing than to have one unit exercise exacting standards of its faculty in the evaluation process, only to observe another unit essentially rate everyone "Excellent."

Q: How is the dollar amount for the merit step determined?

A: The dollar value of the merit steps is determined after the evaluations have been completed by dividing the total amount of dollars available for merit by the total number of merit steps.

Q: What has been the average merit award for faculty university-wide?

A: Last year, the average merit recommended per faculty member university-wide was about midway between the highest level of merit in the "Commendable" rating category and the lowest of merit in the "Excellent" rating category. It is then suggested that if this were to be used as a guideline, it would be roughly equivalent to an average of 2.5 steps of merit per eligible faculty member this year. This has been offered as a guideline only, and there has never been any suggestion that units **MUST** adhere to this average.

Q: Can I earn merit if I am on sabbatical or professional development leave?

A: Yes. Faculty on sabbatical or professional development leave are merit eligible and will be evaluated on the basis of their role statement and what they accomplished during their leave. The faculty member must provide a report including what they have accomplished during their leave. This can be the same as the report that must be submitted to the Provost's Office upon completion of the sabbatical. Role/goal statements should be adjusted as necessary.

Q: What does it take to get extraordinary merit?

A: Faculty may be nominated for "extraordinary merit" by their dean or VP. Each year the Provost reviews these nominations and makes final decisions concerning extraordinary merit awards, based on the supporting evidence provided by the dean/VP. These awards are equivalent to six steps of merit.

Extraordinary merit awards should be viewed as a rare merit awards, given only when a faculty member has received a special award or some other form of noteworthy external recognition. It may also be awarded for a particularly outstanding performance during the evaluation period. Typically, only 5% of merit-eligible faculty receive such an award in a given year, and these merit awards are generally NOT given to the same faculty member two years in a row.

**Q: Who determines the final rating and merit recommendation?
What role does the Provost play in this process?**

A: Except for the responsibility for evaluating his direct reports, the Provost will NOT be acting on any individual evaluations. The Dean or Vice President will be the final approval authority for the evaluation and rating for administrative and academic faculty. The Provost will, however, be reviewing the distribution of the evaluation ratings and merit recommendations to ensure that equivalent standards are applied throughout the university. Supervisors should include their recommended evaluation rating on the evaluation form, discuss the evaluation and the recommended rating with the employee, and sign the form as 1st reviewer. The exception to procedure is that the Provost will make final determinations on the extraordinary merit awards.

Q: Why can't I receive both promotion and merit in the same year? This policy doesn't seem fair to the employee.

A: When a faculty member receives a promotion, a 10% increase in salary is given using university resources. Promotion and the accompanying 10% are a form of merit award although the funding does not come from the merit pool. One can assume that there is a high correlation between the work that was performed as a result of the promotion and that of the reasons for receiving merit.

From a practical perspective, the total dollar value of the merit pool is 2.5% of total eligible professional salaries. If both promotion and merit are allocated to faculty members in the same year, the total value of the merit amount decreases. Therefore, the value of the merit is less significant for those who ultimately receive it. So the question becomes whether to reward faculty both for merit and promotion in the same year or provide a 10% increase in salary to those who are promoted and provide merit amounts to faculty that are reflective of the meritorious work performed.

Q: When do I sign my evaluation?

A: Academic faculty should sign their evaluation following a discussion of the evaluation with their Chair. If there are changes to the evaluation as it is reviewed at the higher levels, the new evaluation should be prepared and discussed with the faculty member. The new evaluation should be signed.

Administrative faculty should sign their evaluation once it has been reviewed at all supervisory levels.

Q: What does my signature on the evaluation mean?

A: Signing the evaluation is simply an acknowledgement that the faculty member has read the evaluation made by the department chair and/or supervisor. It does not mean that the faculty member agrees with the evaluation or is waiving any right to appeal. If the evaluation is not signed, the evaluation will go forward with the notation that the faculty member read the evaluation and refused to sign it.

Q: Can I earn merit if I am on sabbatical or professional development leave?

A: Yes. Faculty on sabbatical or professional development leave are merit eligible and will be evaluated on the basis of their role statement and what they accomplished during their leave. The faculty member must provide a report including what they have accomplished during their leave. This can be the same as the report that must be submitted to the Provost's Office upon completion of the sabbatical. Role/goal statements should be adjusted as necessary.

Q: What if I disagree with my evaluation and/or merit? What recourse do I have?

A: Faculty members, who disagree with their evaluations, can request a peer review through the Faculty Senate. A faculty member can grieve merit decisions through the Faculty Senate office within 15 days of being notified of their merit level.

Q: What is a role statement versus a goal statement?

A: A role statement is used in the evaluation of Academic faculty. A goal statement is used in the evaluation of Administrative faculty. It is important to understand that it is **QUALITY** of the performance that is evaluated. The role/goal statements are about what you hope to do. The evaluation is about how well you actually did it. See further definitions of the statement below.

Academic Faculty: A **role statement** is used in the evaluation of Academic faculty. The role statement is an outline the teaching and research goals and potential service for the coming year so that the faculty member and the chair can agree on what activities will be considered in the faculty member's evaluation at the end of the year.

A good role statement is a reasonably reliable snapshot of the contribution the faculty member expects to make to the department, the college and the university over the next twelve months. It serves to make sure the faculty member is evaluated against an agreed-upon plan, worked out in concert with the chair. It also serves to clear up any misunderstandings about expectations.

While the role statement stands as a cooperative agreement between the faculty member and the chair or department, it also helps insure faculty will be evaluated according to their own unique skills and interests rather than others' performance. It discourages cookie cutter approaches to evaluations.

Because the role statement is unique to the faculty member it can encourage individual growth and progress. Because it can change from year to year, it allows for flexibility in scheduling, shifts in direction, revised percentages of time given to of teaching, research and service, not to mention adjustments a person might need to manage changes in her or his life.

Administrative Faculty: A **goal statement** is used in the evaluation of Administrative faculty. The goal statement is an outline of the responsibilities, goals and tasks/projects of the faculty member for the coming year. The goal statement that the faculty member and the supervisor have jointly written will be considered in the faculty member's evaluation at the end of the year.

A good goal statement is a reasonably reliable snapshot of the contribution the faculty member expects to make to the department, the college and the university over the next twelve months. It serves to make sure the faculty member is evaluated against an agreed-upon plan, worked out in concert with the supervisor. It also serves to clear up any misunderstandings about expectations.

While the goal statement stands as a cooperative agreement between the faculty member and the supervisor or department, it also helps insure faculty will be evaluated according to their own unique skills, abilities and interests. It discourages cookie cutter approaches to evaluations.

Because the goal statement is unique to the faculty member it can encourage individual growth and progress. Because it can change from year to year, it allows for flexibility in shifts in direction, projects and goals, not to mention adjustments a person might need to manage changes in his or her life.

Q: How does the evaluation rating equate to the merit steps?

A: The evaluations (satisfactory, commendable, and excellent) are the basis for, and must be consistent with, the merit awards of level 1 or 2 for commendable, 3 or 4 for excellent. Merit is not given for ratings of satisfactory or unsatisfactory.