Policy on Merit Review

Approved: May 8, 2007;
Revised: September 8, 2010;
Revised: April 9, 2014;
Revised: December 14, 2016

Background

A general survey of department members revealed that many faculty members had concerns about the existing performance appraisal and merit allocation system. Follow up discussions at a department retreat revealed a groundswell of interest in examining and revising the system with the aim of improving it. A committee was struck with representation from across a variety of research groups and seniority levels. The committee designed a qualitative survey to assist in crafting policies for assessing faculty performance and allocating the appropriate merit increments to reflect that performance. In addition to the survey data, the committee was guided by university policies (e.g., the APT Manual and the Faculty of Arts FPC policy guidelines relative to appointment, increment, promotion and tenure) and advice from TUCFA on constructing a fair and thorough assessment system. Note that the committee was bound to adhere to the aforementioned guidelines which had to be reflected in the final policy recommendations.

Ultimately, any policies and procedures recommended by the committee are simply instruments to assist the Department Head in assessing performance and are non-binding. However, we believe adopting a transparent and inclusive approach to performance assessment will improve overall satisfaction with the system.

Key Features

Performance Domain

In keeping with faculty and university guidelines, performance should be based on success in research, teaching and service with the heaviest weighting being given to research and lesser weightings to teaching and service, respectively. Accordingly, the committee designed a system whereby each of these performance domains can be rated on a scale reflecting 'Excellent' through 'Unsatisfactory' performance**.** Each department member is rated on the three domains. These ratings, in turn, will be converted to merit increments based on weightings assigned to each domain and the available pool of merit increments (details are provided later in this document).

Quality and Quantity

Feedback from stakeholders suggested that performance ratings should reflect both the quantity of work done as well as the quality of the work performed. The rating system then reflects the desire to capture both of these forms of performance variance. In order to permit the PRC and the Department Head to evaluate quantity and quality of performance on each of the three domains, department members will have to provide detailed information regarding their activities and successes in research, teaching and service.

Expectations for Rank

Consist with university and Faculty guidelines, performance expectations for Full Professors will be higher than for Associate Professors which, in turn, will be higher than Assistant Professors. Expectations for Senior Instructors will be higher than for Instructors. These variations in expectations will be weighed by PRC in assigning ratings to individuals.

Buyouts, Teaching Releases and Research and Scholarship Leave

PRC and the Department Head need to be sensitive to the various contextual factors that may influence individual performance. Performance must be evaluated on the basis of the specific expectations of an individual's position during the reporting period. Individual circumstances will be provided to and considered by the committee in its evaluation processes. For example, faculty members with protected research time (e.g., research chairs; teaching releases for research) will be evaluated based upon increased research expectations. Faculty members should not be penalized for factors beyond their control that affect the amount of teaching assigned by the department or that may inhibit their performance on any of the three performance domains. For example, during research and scholarship leave periods, performance should reflect teaching and service performed in the year preceding or following the research and scholarship leave as appropriate.

Leaves and Accommodations

Individuals on maternal/paternal or sick leave or who have workplace accommodations will not be penalized for loss of productivity. Because of the confidential nature of such circumstances, PRC will simply evaluate performance as if no leave or accommodation has occurred. The Department Head, who is aware of the specifics of the leave or accommodation, will adjust ratings accordingly, following the policy outlined in the APT manual.

The following sections will provide the content and procedures for assessing research, teaching and service domains. These sections will be followed by administrative instructions for the calculation of merit increments.

Research

Consistent with the values of a research intensive university, the department emphasizes success in research as the single most important determinant of academic merit. Given the wide range of research practices in the department and the large number of factors to be assessed in weighing the value of a particular piece of research, a simple mechanical approach to assigning credit for research productivity is precluded. However, both departmental survey feedback and university and faculty guidelines provided explicit recommendations on what evidence should be weighed in determining research success as well as the relative importance of varying research products.

The department wishes to recognize both the quantity of work produced as well as the quality of the work and amount of contribution made by the faculty member toward each piece of research. Given the wide variation in the types of research outlets and norms associated with quantity and quality across sub-disciplines, it is the responsibility of the individual faculty member to make a case for their level of quantity and quality of their research. For example, faculty members may wish to provide PRC with information regarding limits to page lengths for journals, publishing norms in their areas etc. to facilitate evaluation of quantity of publications. Accordingly, faculty members are required to report the following evidence to support their case:

a. Number of research awards won
   i. Names and details of the awards
b. Number of books published
   i. Name of book publisher(s) and evidence of quality of these publishers
   ii. Number of authors and order of authorship
c. Number of books authored
   i. Name of book publisher(s) and evidence of quality of these publishers
   ii. Number of authors and order of authorship
d. Number of peer reviewed journal articles published (published online by the journal or in print)
   i. Full journal reference including page numbers or DOI
   ii. Short statement supporting contribution to each paper (e.g., order of authorship, stated contributions to the research as per the NSERC model).
   iii. Evidence of the quality of the journal within your sub discipline including the following:
        1. Rejection rates
        2. ISI (impact factor) rating
        3. Survey evidence on general accepted quality of the journal relative to others in the sub discipline (if available)
        4. Other evidence of prestige (e.g., APA journals; breadth of readership).
e. Number of invited journal articles with only editorial review
   i. Full reference
   ii. Number of authors and order of authorship
f. Number of book chapters with peer/editorial review relevant to your sub discipline or related area of psychology
   i. Number of authors and order of authorship for each chapter
   ii. Evidence of the reputation of the publisher and quality of the book
   iii. Evidence of the level of review and the likelihood of rejection
g. Number of invited (non-peer reviewed) book chapters on topics relevant to your sub discipline or related area of psychology
   i. Full reference including number of pages
   ii. Number of authors
   iii. Evidence of the quality of the book and publisher
h. Number of Technical Reports/Commissioned Reports
   i. Full reference including page numbers
   ii. Evidence of level of peer review
   iii. Rejection rates of the outlet
   iv. Number of authors and order of authorship
i. Number of Peer reviewed conference papers
   i. Rejection rates of the conference
   ii. Number of pages required for the paper
   iii. Poster versus symposium
   iv. Evidence of prestige of the conference
j. Number of Invited Talks/ Colloquia
   i. Local, national or international
k. Research Grants
   i. Funding source and amounts over the reporting period
   ii. Role on research grants (e.g. PI, Co-PI, Consultant)
l. Number of Patents
   i. Evidence of producing patents
   ii. Any other evidence of research productivity and comparators within their sub discipline to substantiate quantity and quality of their research

Research Ratings

Category	Quality	Quantity
R1 Excellent	The faculty member meets R2 criteria and in addition: either: a. Has received a research award or distinction from a source external to the university, b. Has published one or more high quality first or senior author publications with elite impact within one's sub-discipline or c. Has evidence of prestigious grants or other support for research	The faculty member demonstrates excellent research quantity that clearly exceeds expectations for their rank, position expectations and sub-discipline with some or all of the following criteria: a. # of publications/chapters/ reports/conference papers b. Contribution to the research
R2 Very Good	The faculty member demonstrates a very high level of quality for their rank and position expectations as evidenced by at least two of the following: a. Research awards and nominations b. High quality publications with moderate to considerable impact c. Evidence of research grants or other support for research	The faculty member demonstrates very good research quantity that exceeds expectations for their rank, position expectations and sub-discipline with some or all of the following criteria: a. # of publications/chapters/ reports/conference papers b. Contribution to the research
R3 Good	The faculty member demonstrates a high level of quality for their rank and position expectations as evidenced by: a. Some evidence of high quality publications with moderate to considerable impact	The faculty member demonstrates good research quantity that exceeds expectations for their rank, position expectations and sub-discipline with some or all of the following criteria: a. # of publications/chapters/ reports/conference papers b. Contribution to the research
R4 Meets expectations/ Satisfactory	The faculty member demonstrates acceptable levels of quality for their rank and position expectations as evidenced by: a. Mainly moderate to lower quality publications	The faculty member demonstrates research quantity that meets expectations for their rank, position expectations and sub-discipline with some or all of the following criteria: a. # of publications/chapters/ reports/conference papers b. Contribution to the research
R5 Unsatisfactory	The faculty member demonstrates unacceptable levels of quality as evidenced by little or no research activity.	

Teaching and Mentorship

The department places significant weight on teaching and mentorship at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In order to assess the level of merit in Teaching and Mentorship, members of PRC should consider both indicators of the effort and quantity of teaching as well as indicators of teaching quality. Both undergraduate and graduate teaching and mentorship will be considered. PRC should also consider the rank of the faculty member in assessing what constitutes a high quantity or high quality of teaching. Faculty are required to make a case for their Teaching and Mentorship ratings by including the following information about their Teaching and Mentorship activities. In the absence of full information, the committee will be unable to substantiate a ranking higher than a T3. The information to be provided includes:

1. Evidence of teaching awards or nominations
2. USRI ratings for all courses (must be evaluated in the context of class size and level, response rate and other limitations of teaching ratings)
3. Number of undergraduate courses taught, including independent studies course
4. Number of students taught in those undergraduate courses
5. Number of graduate courses taught
6. Number of students in those graduate courses
7. Number of pages graded in all courses (e.g., if you have 40 students in a course and they have six written pages each for essay questions on the final, and a 10 page assignment, then total pages graded for that course is 640). Do not include pages graded by a TA.
8. Number of new courses prepared
9. Details on significant changes to an existing course, or implementation of pedagogical advances
10. Number of graduate students supervised
11. Number of Honours students supervised
12. Number of second readers on Honours theses
13. Number of supervisory committees
14. Number of candidacy examinations
15. Evidence of quality of mentorship (e.g., supervision awards or nominations; co-authorship on publications and conference presentations)
16. Evidence of graduate student achievement (e.g., scholarship awards, employment in the academy or as independent researcher following graduation)
17. Professional development activities related to teaching and mentorship (e.g., workshops, seminars, webinars, conferences, courses, reading, taking part in a community of practice)
18. The mentoring of others in the teaching and mentorship process (e.g., peer supervision, creating teaching and learning resources for others)

Category	Quantity of Teaching and Mentoring activity	Quality of Teaching and mentoring activity
T1 Excellent	The faculty member shows excellent quantity of activity for their rank and position expectations indicated by the criteria outlined above.	The faculty member demonstrates teaching and mentorship quality that is excellent for their rank. The indicators of this quality can include: - USRIs that are consistent with excellent teaching and significantly exceed departmental norms. - Teaching or mentorship awards. - Evidence of high quantity and quality of graduate supervision or other forms of mentorship. - Evidence of innovative teaching methods. - Evidence of extensive preparation of new courses or revisions to existing courses. - Advanced professional development activities in the areas of teaching and mentorship.
T2 Very Good	The faculty member exceeds expectations for their rank and position expectations on the quantity of teaching and mentoring as evidenced by the criteria outlined above.	The faculty member demonstrates teaching and mentorship quality that exceeds expectations for their rank. The indicators of this quality can include: - USRIs that are consistent with very good teaching and exceed departmental norms for most courses taught. - Some evidence of innovative teaching. - Some evidence of new courses prepared or revisions to existing courses. - Nominations for teaching or mentorship awards. - Some evidence of high quantity and quality of graduate supervision or other forms of mentorship. - Professional development activities in the areas of teaching and mentorship.
T3 Satisfactory	The faculty member shows evidence that teaching and mentoring on balance is meeting expectations as evidenced by the criteria outlined above.	USRIs are consistent with satisfactory teaching with assessments being within an acceptable range for their rank. Mentorship activities are satisfactory for rank. Evidence of professional development activities in the areas of teaching and mentorship.
T4 Unsatisfactory	The faculty member failed to meet the teaching and mentorship expectations of the department in quality and/or quantity as per the FPC regulations. See manual D 2.2	

Service

The department places considerable value on the service that faculty members provide to the various communities to which they belong. In keeping with the APT manual, the expectations for service contributions increase as faculty members progress through the ranks such that Full Professors are expected to make greater contributions to be considered 'outstanding' than an Assistant Professor. Faculty members are required to report the following evidence:

1. Service to the Department- Including departmental committees, administrative appointments, hiring committees, writing reference letters for students etc.
2. Service to the Faculty of Arts, or other campus Faculties or Institutes- Including faculty level committees such as Dean's Advisory Committee (DAC), Faculty Council and so forth.
3. Service to the University or on University level committees, such as GFC, GPC, and so forth.
4. Service to the Discipline- Carrying out service activities for the benefit of our discipline including: editing academic journals, providing scholarly reviews for journals, reviewing scholarship and grant applications, program reviews for conferences and so forth.
5. Service to the community- Including serving on local community committees, meeting with the press, responding to inquiries from local organizations, policy development, knowledge mobilization activities, and so forth.

Category	Criteria
S1 Excellent	The faculty member demonstrated excellent quantity and high visibility of service over the past reporting period for their rank. The faculty member demonstrated excellent service normally in three or more of the five service categories. Evidence of excellent service may include service awards, letters of recognition, and playing lead roles in national and international settings that reflect highly on the department and the University of Calgary. Service should highlight substantial efforts rather than simply holing a title or position.
S2 Very Good	The faculty member demonstrated high quantity and high visibility of service over the past reporting period for their rank. There is normally evidence of significant contributions to three or more of the five categories of service. Some evidence of efforts is needed rather than simply holding a title or position.
S3 Satisfactory	The faculty member demonstrated a satisfactory quantity and visibility of service for their rank over the past reporting period, normally in two or more of the service categories.
S4 Unsatisfactory	The faculty member demonstrated lack of service over the past reporting period, in either the quantity or quality of service provided for their rank.

Guidelines for Administrative Procedures

Prior to the PRC meeting, members of PRC will evaluate each faculty member independently on each of the three criteria using the guidelines for a reference and information provided by the faculty member on their annual report. In order to help PRC members to use the guidelines consistently, at the discretion of the Department Head, an initial PRC meeting may be convened in which the annual report of one faculty member is rated as a calibration case. At the second PRC meeting, each faculty member should be rated, discussed individually, and a committee consensus reached for each of the three criteria. If all raters agree on the member's rating for a given criterion, no discussion is required. If committee members cannot reach consensus on a rating, the matter will be resolved by the Department Head.

Once all of the faculty members are evaluated, the PRC must calculate the recommended merit to be awarded to each faculty member. The first step is to re-code the rating data as follows:

Research		Teaching/ Mentorship		Service	
Original	Recoded	Original	Recoded	Original	Recoded
1	3	1	3	1	3
2	2.5	2	2	2	2
3	2	3	1	3	1
4	1	4	0	4	0
5	0	-	-	-	-

The next step is to apply the criterion weightings to each of the recoded ratings. The criterion weightings were arrived at by examining the results from a departmental survey and to ensure compliance with University and Faculty guidelines. These state that research is to be given the strongest weighting followed by teaching and service, with beginning weighting of .5, .3 and .2 for the areas of research, teaching, and service, respectively.

In recognition of the fact that some faculty may prefer to weight some criteria more strongly than others for their evaluations, some flexibility exists in the system, such that .1 of a unit of weighting will be shifted for each faculty member from their weakest criterion (as judged by PRC) to their strongest criterion. For example, if a faculty member was judged to be strongest in teaching and weakest on service, PRC would allocate .1 from service to teaching such that, the weightings would be Research .5; Teaching .4; and Service .1. Further, for faculty members with different workload expectations (e.g. instructor rank faculty, faculty members with protected research time), weights will be assigned to their research, teaching and service roles according to the Faculty of Arts guidelines, or in accordance with memoranda between the faculty member and the Head of Psychology, as appropriate.

For each individual, a total score is calculated by applying their optimal weightings to their recoded ratings. For example, if a member receives an R1, T3, S2, then you would first recode their scores to 3, 1, and 2. Subsequently, you apply the weightings for that individual (in this case, they were assigned the standard weightings). This gives you 3(.5) + 1 (.3) + 2 (.2) = 1.84.

The total score is then calculated for each of the faculty members in the current evaluation pool. The next step is to sum the total scores across all members in the evaluation pool. Once that is done, the total available merit pool is divided by the total summed score of all applicants, which provides the number to multiply by each member's total score to arrive at a recommended merit increment. Scores are then rounded off to the nearest .2 as per the university guidelines, ensuring that the final number is equal to the total merit pool.