

Faculty Evaluation/ Annual Performance Review Policies

Department of Comparative Cultural Studies (CCS)

University of Houston

All regular faculty members of the Department (full-time, tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure-track with full-time renewable contracts), whose teaching and service duties are at least 50% dedicated to the Department's curricular programs, undergo an Annual Performance Review (APR). The review is conducted each Spring. All regular faculty provide information on their research, teaching and service accomplishments for the previous calendar year, to be reviewed by the department Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC). The evaluation is concerned with predominantly quantitative measures of performance and productivity, but the FEC may also take qualitative considerations into account. Additionally, in special cases, faculty may present evidence of their performance over more than one preceding year (see note below), so that more long-term projects may be considered as evidence of ongoing productivity.

In CCS, the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) consists of the three tenured faculty members, with meetings facilitated by the department Chairperson. The FEC makes recommendations to the Chair with regard to prospective merit-based salary increases. The Chair convenes a meeting of the FEC where each department faculty member's progress is reviewed. (When the FEC discusses the performance of a member of the committee, that individual is recused from the evaluation process and leaves the room).

Tenured faculty members are assessed primarily on their research output and resulting publications (50%), secondarily on their teaching (25%) and service (25%) throughout the year. Untenured tenure-track faculty members are also assessed primarily on their research output and resulting publications (50%), secondarily on their teaching (35%), and to a lesser degree on service (15%) throughout the year. For non-tenure track instructional faculty members, teaching duties are paramount (50%) and outweigh research output and resulting publications (35%), while service again counts less than either (15%). However, when faculty performance is impacted by exceptional administrative duties, such as directing or coordinating a program, the FEC or the Chair may adjust these proportions to more appropriately account for extraordinary service contributions as part of a faculty member's overall performance evaluation.

Each member of the FEC scores the faculty under discussion on a five-point scale in each area of consideration: research, teaching, and service. A score of 5 signifies Exceptional or Outstanding accomplishment; a score of 4 signals that the faculty member exceeds expectations; a score of 3 indicates that the faculty member meets expectations; scores below 3 are indicative of performance below expectations. Cumulative scores below 3 are not considered eligible for annual Merit raises (when available).

For tenured and untenured tenure-track faculty, these scores primarily reflect an assessment of the individual's research output. Publications are evaluated in terms of quantity as well as the prestige of the journal (articles) or the status of the publisher (books, book chapters), as well as level of contribution (authored works or edited volumes). Publishing (with substantial author contribution) in highly ranked, peer-reviewed journals in the field, or with a top-tier peer-reviewed academic presses, will contribute towards a higher overall evaluation. Because CCS is a multi-disciplinary department, there is no conclusive list of journals or publishers ranked as the most prestigious. Generally, members of the FEC will have a professional knowledge of the top journals and publishers in their fields, or can investigate these for assessing impact factor, rigorous peer review, composition of editorial board, among other considerations. .

For each faculty member under discussion, the Chair records each committee member's score and accompanying comments, and then calculates the average of the FEC members' scores to arrive at the faculty member's overall (cumulative) score for the annual review and Merit eligibility. The Chair may exercise discretion and adjust an individual faculty member's APR score in order to align it more judiciously with the score of another faculty member with similar accomplishments and performance. The outcome and any comments from the review are then conveyed by the Chair to the faculty in writing. The FEC may also discuss junior faculty members' progress towards tenure and make recommendations that may be conveyed in the Chair's letter.

Once the Chair's letters are distributed, faculty members have a minimum of five working days to appeal the decision of the committee. Merit pay increases, when available, are then distributed on a share basis. Scores of all faculty members who are rated 3.0 or above are added together and the merit pool is then divided by the total of the faculty scores. The resulting amount is considered one share, and each faculty member receives merit equaling one share multiplied by his/her merit score.

NOTE: The APR would normally be comprised of an evaluation of performance and productivity for the previous calendar year; however, the FEC reserves the right to identify cases of performance over as many as four previous years that may not have been adequately rewarded. One example might be a long-term project of sustained effort over a period of years, e.g. the completion and publication of a book, with exceptional outcome only in the final year. Another example might involve a faculty member whose best performance took place in one or more previous years when merit raises were not awarded, for whom retroactive recognition is due (in contrast to others whose best performance may have coincided with review years when merit raises were highest).