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MEMORANDUM

To: Deans, Chairs and Directors

From: David W. Blackwell, Ph.D.
Provost

Subject: 2020-2021 Faculty Performance Review: First Year of Biennium

Date: October 23, 2020

Please forward this memorandum to all full-time faculty employees in your unit.

The evaluation of faculty performance is one of the most important activities that educational unit administrators, working in close collaboration with deans and others, are asked to undertake. The purpose of the Faculty Performance Review is to provide guidance for continuing and meaningful faculty development and advancement. When done properly, the evaluation process is an effective means of communicating expectations, enhancing faculty productivity and acknowledging and rewarding accomplishments, as well as identifying and dealing with performance-related issues in the spirit of continuous improvement. In addition, faculty performance reviews are an important source of information for promotion and tenure reviews. *Administrative Regulation 3:10* ("[Policies for Faculty Performance Review](#)") enumerates the policies and procedures for conducting performance evaluation of faculty at the University of Kentucky. This memo provides a brief summary of those policies and procedures.

Which faculty cohort is being reviewed this year?

This being the first year of the current biennium, all full-time faculty employees across all title series shall undergo faculty performance evaluation, including all new full-time faculty (all title series and academic ranks) who are in their first year of service.

If agreed to by mutual consent of the dean and a faculty employee on a terminal contract in one of the tenure-ineligible title series, a faculty performance review may be conducted, but it is not mandatory.

Exceptions to these performance review policies will apply in cases of (1) tenured faculty employees who will retire before or at the end of the current fiscal year, and (2) non-tenured faculty employees whose appointments will not be renewed. Faculty employees on out-of-state assignments in international or other programs shall be evaluated for purposes of performance review based on their performance and accomplishments in assigned areas of activity in accordance with [AR 3:4](#).

All educational unit administrators who have faculty on Phased Retirement shall take steps to ensure that those individuals are meeting or exceeding their unit's performance expectations in their areas of assignment; however, formal faculty performance evaluation for faculty on Phased Retirement is not mandatory.

How are faculty who have joint appointments evaluated?

For a faculty employee with a joint appointment, where the secondary assignment comprises no more than twenty percent (20%) of the individual's total Distribution of Effort (DOE), the unit administrator of the department, school, graduate center or college in which the faculty employee has a primary appointment will evaluate the performance of the faculty employee, with input from the unit administrator of the secondary unit. If a faculty employee's secondary assignment comprises more than twenty percent (20%) of the individual's total DOE, the unit administrators of each unit will evaluate the faculty employee's performance.

How are faculty associated with multidisciplinary research centers and institutes evaluated?

Faculty employees whose assigned DOE in a multidisciplinary research center or institute is greater than twenty percent (20%) shall have the activity performed in the center or institute evaluated by the educational unit administrator of that unit. The unit administrator of the center or institute shall report the merit score(s) to the unit administrator of the individual's primary unit. In cases where a faculty employee performs assigned DOE duties in a multidisciplinary research center or institute totaling twenty percent (20%) or less DOE, the individual's primary unit administrator will evaluate the activity performed in the center or institute with input from the educational unit administrator of the secondary unit.

What policies and procedures inform the faculty review process?

Deans and educational unit administrators can help ensure the integrity of the performance review process by clearly communicating to faculty specific University and college policies that inform the faculty performance review process. Below is an overview of the salient University policies on faculty performance review.

Faculty performance shall be evaluated across all areas of assigned activity as recorded in the DOE agreement applicable to the review period. Faculty activity is broadly defined and includes: [1] instruction (i.e., teaching and advising); [2] research and/or other appropriate forms of creative activity; [3] service (includes service to the public, service to the profession, service to the institution, patient care unrelated to instruction, and other appropriate outreach activities); [4] administration; and [5] professional development.

Each faculty employee under review is responsible for preparing a summary of professional accomplishments in each area of assigned activity; where teaching has been assigned, the faculty employee will also prepare a teaching portfolio. This may be a traditional teaching portfolio as described in Appendix I of [AR 3:10](#), or may be a more truncated version that includes student appraisals for courses taught, peer faculty appraisals, and a brief narrative summarizing instructional efforts for the review period. Results of the evaluation will be communicated in writing to the faculty employee by the chair or director, and to the dean.

Reviews are to be based on the composite DOE across the review period performed by the faculty employee in each area of assigned activity. Quantitative and qualitative information will be used and explained in making judgments about performance.

The evaluation instrument or forms that are used in each college are to be developed by the dean of the college and must involve consultation with an appropriate faculty governance body. Letter, numerical, or descriptive designations may be used in the evaluation instrument, but the rankings must clearly recognize at least three performance designations: outstanding, good or satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. Evaluators are expected to be both fair and constructive. Evaluations must contain sufficient written commentary to explain the assigned ratings, especially in areas of activity in which a faculty employee has received a rating below good or satisfactory.

It is also expected that the unit administrator will consider input from students, colleagues and administrators in determining merit ratings, consistent with [AR 3:10](#), while holistically considering the added contributions to diversity the faculty member's lived experience may bring. For best practices in this regard, contact the Office for Faculty Advancement.

The unit administrator will recommend a merit rating for each faculty employee consistent with the rating scale adopted by the college for each area of assigned activity. A composite merit score shall be calculated by the unit administrator and recorded on the merit report for each faculty person reviewed in the unit. An individual's composite merit score is calculated by multiplying the merit rating assigned to an area of activity by the DOE percentage apportioned for that area of activity. The product of a merit rating for an area of activity multiplied by its DOE percentage is the *merit score* for that area. The *composite merit score* is the sum of those discrete merit scores. A dean may implement a college-wide practice of rounding all composite merit scores to the nearest integer.

How is disruption from the pandemic considered in the Performance Review process?

While we continue to serve our myriad stakeholders during the ongoing pandemic, it is vitally important that we strive for continuous performance improvement. A valuable approach to enhance the growth and development of our faculty is to conduct meaningful, fair, and thorough reviews, following established policies. Although we are mandated by our University regulations (AR 3:10, AR 2:1-1, among others) and therefore regional accreditation standards to conduct these reviews, it is obvious that the COVID disruption has altered each faculty member's goals for the past performance period and therefore our practices will need to reflect the reality of what the global pandemic has caused. With this disruption in mind, I am authorizing a six-week delay in conducting this year's faculty merit reviews. Normally, we ask for reviews (and college appeals of them) to be concluded by about March 12; however this fiscal year, the deadline will be extended to April 30, 2021.

By listening to our faculty, our faculty leaders (both within the University Senate and faculty administrators), my CAO peers, and national higher education forums, I am urging deans, associate and assistant deans, and chairs and directors responsible for faculty merit reviews to consider adopting all or most of the following recommendations:

- Consider inclusion of a personalized "COVID Impact Statement" into all faculty member's performance evaluation documentation. This will assist faculty members' explanations of how their work had to be shifted and adjusted to respond to the work demands pre-COVID.
- Carefully consider the required performance review inputs from students, colleagues, and administrators, as required in AR 3:10.

- When possible, assist faculty members in constructing their performance review materials by providing unit records through database management tools and resources, minimizing faculty members' documentation efforts.
- Enhance the use of other measures/evidence of teaching excellence into faculty members' teaching portfolio (e.g., peer evaluation, innovations in teaching, samples of graded student work, efforts to serve students during the pandemic, metrics on achievement of student learning outcomes, later student success).
- Pay special attention to the fair, consistent, and compassionate evaluation of non-tenure track and non-tenured faculty, as it is of utmost important that these faculty members, above all others, have no gap in their performance evaluation record.
- In the evaluation itself, focus on flexibility, creativity, fairness, equity, and compassion exercised under the pandemic conditions.
- Maintain a point-of-view of post-pandemic work so as to set up the faculty member for long-term professional success.

The Appeal Process

All faculty employees are provided the opportunity to file a formal appeal with the college dean. The appeal may be based on a claim of procedural error and/or contested merit score(s) in the faculty employee's faculty performance review. Procedures for college-level faculty appeals should be developed and clearly communicated to all faculty employees within the college. If a faculty employee appeals at the college level and is dissatisfied with the decision of the dean, an appeal may be made to the Provost. A faculty appeal committee will be appointed based on advice about the committee composition from the Senate Council. This appeal committee will make its recommendation to the Provost, whose decision will be final. The procedural steps for Provost-level appeals have been posted to the Faculty Advancement [website](#).

2nd and 4th Year Progress Reviews of Probationary Faculty

[AR 3:10.B.4](#) requires mandatory progress reviews of untenured (tenure-eligible) faculty employees in their second and fourth years of probationary service. The policy requires that the unit administrator:

- Consult with the tenured faculty of the review candidate's unit about the individual's progress toward consideration for tenure in terms of the unit's expectations;
- Prepare a written review of the candidate's progress; and,
- Discuss the written review with the individual under review.

The discussions and the written progress review that documents those discussions, along with the reappointment process that runs in tandem with those progress reviews, shall be concluded *no later than* the last day of the individual's appointment contract in the second and fourth years of probationary service. Progress reviews may occur more frequently. The written review shall be sent to the dean of the college and a copy shall be given to the individual under review and placed in the individual's Standard Personnel File.

*2020-21 Calendar for Reviews**

The schedule for the review and evaluation process is as follows:

Fall 2020	Faculty employees undergoing review prepare their materials and submit them to the appropriate educational unit administrator(s).
March 12, 2021	Review completed by college and faculty employees informed of results.
April 2, 2021	Deadline for a faculty employee to appeal at the college level.
April 30, 2021	Appeals at the college level completed.
May 14, 2021	Deadline for faculty employees to appeal to the Provost.

Finally, if there are any aspects of the review process on which you wish additional guidance, please to contact the Office for Faculty Advancement.

*Please note that a small number of colleges employ a fiscal year performance review cycle for faculty. In those instances, please adjust internal deadlines accordingly. In any case, the most recently completed performance evaluation will serve as the performance record when making recommendation for any merit increase.