Merit Review Policy - UMD Psychology

May 13, 2022

1 Document History

- Dates
  - October 17, 2011: Original policy approved in secret ballot (23 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions)
  - April 2020: Revision made.
  - January 24, 2022, Reviewed, discussed, and edited in faculty meeting.
  - Feb 22rd, 2022 Revision approved by secret ballot (TTK: 25-yes, 0-no, 1-abstain; PTK: 13-yes, 0-no, 2-abstain).
- Purpose of revisions.
  - Update to include Professional Track Faculty in merit evaluation process. This change is mandated by University policy.
  - update policy on how merit is calculated to bring method of computing raises in line with campus policy ("funds are to 'generally' be distributed according to equal merit = equal dollar raise" and not based on percentage of salary)
  - Update to address transparency of review criteria and align criteria with recommendations from National Academies and other consensus documents; and make merit more closely aligned with APT policy

2 Scope and Approval of this Document

This document describes the merit review process for tenured, tenure-track faculty, and professional-track faculty with titles within the rank of Clinical Faculty, Instructional faculty, and Research faculty, as defined by payroll titles. This policy applies to all PTK faculty with appointments at or above 50%FTE. Any PTK faculty member whose total FTE across all appointments is 50% or greater will be eligible for merit as long as the faculty member has appointment in the department. The faculty member will be given an annual review. The amount of the merit award can be prorated based on the FTE percentage within the department.

Professional Track Faculty in the Instructor Track, Clinical Professor track, and Research Professor at the rank equivalent to PTK Assistant professor or greater are included in the committee-based merit review process. However, due to the diversity of activities and unique roles played by PTK faculty, faculty at the rank equivalent to Assistant Professor (or greater) and whose direct supervisor is someone other than the chair *may elect* to be evaluated by their supervisor(s) instead of the committee. This may be particularly relevant to faculty whose primary duties are highly technical. Faculty whose primary source of funding is based on grants or contracts are evaluated by

their direct supervisor(s). Faculty choosing to be reviewed by their supervisor instead of committee must inform the chair via email prior to the start of announced review dates.

Professional track faculty at ranks lower than the title equivalent to Assistant Professor shall be reviewed by their immediate supervisor. Faculty at the level equivalent to Assistant Professor or greater whose primary sources of funding derive from soft-funding mechanisms (grants or contracts) and who are under the direct supervision of a Tenure-track faculty member may opt to have their supervisor(s) conduct the review. Merit pay for PTK faculty reviewed in this way shall be allocated based on percentage of their salary, up to the maximum amount as determined by State merit allocation for the university for that period.

The procedures will be in effect upon approval by the faculty body.

3 Composition and Operation of Merit Review Committee

The department constitution specifies how the Merit Review Committee (MRC) is constituted, but not how it should operate.

3.1 Composition

(From the Constitution) The function of the MRC is to review the performance of all regular faculty members and make recommendations to the chair regarding eligibility for merit salary increases. Each training area will elect one tenure-track or tenured faculty member to serve on the MRC. A separate election will be held amongst the professional track faculty, who will elect two members amongst the PTK faculty to represent the PTK faculty on the MRC. All members of the MRC shall hold equivalent status in conducting merit reviews, and all faculty shall participate equally in evaluating all faculty eligible for merit review. Faculty elected to the MRC serve one-year terms and cannot serve two consecutive terms. The chair and the executive committee will evaluate the composition of the committee with regard to diversity in terms of research domain, rank, gender, and age (and in the case of PTK faculty, will ensure broad representation across PTK titles). If necessary, the chair will ask one or more areas to replace their nominee with someone else in order to achieve the required diversity. The replaced individual then will be that area's representative on the following year's committee. The provisional committee thus constituted will be submitted to all eligible faculty inclusive of professional-track, tenure-track and tenured faculty for approval by a secret ballot.

3.2 Operation

The MRC has two tasks. One is to evaluate each faculty member on the three dimensions of Research/Scholarship; Teaching; and Service for purposes of feedback and determination of merit raises. The other task is to identify individuals among the faculty who stand out because of either their overall meritorious or sub-par performance.

With regard to the first task, the committee shall follow a standardized rating system. The rating system shall consist of three broad categories of evaluation: Research/Scholarship; Teaching; and Service. In keeping with the Universityś values of shared governance and the principle of transparency, and with the goal of incentivizing and rewarding high-quality science, teaching and service, the MRC will rate each faculty member along a set of specific evaluative criteria for each of the three major dimensions. The identification of these criteria shall be informed by professional standards for research,

teaching, and service, as provided in consensus statements, National Academies recommendations, and (where possible) reflect valid evidence-based criteria[1]. The criteria shall promote and incentivize adherence to high standards for research integrity[2, 3, 4], reproducibility[5], and equity and inclusion[6]. Example criteria based on the National Academies recommendations and consensus reports are provided in Appendix B for each category. The criteria will be reviewed and updated periodically as appropriate, and in accordance with professional standards for best practices. In general, these criteria should reflect responsible indicators for assessing science (RAIS)[7], reflect the diverse emphasis of research across faculty, and recognize the inherent trade-offs that faculty make in their research (e.g., researchers or approaches that place more emphasis on one component may place less emphasis elsewhere). Thus, faculty are not expected to excel at everything; rather, the criteria are intended to capture variation in how different researchers allocate resources and effort.

To aid them in their work, the each faculty member will be responsible for providing the following:

- Current CV or Faculty Activity Report covering only work completed in the prior *three* calendar years (**save as LastnameFirstname-CV.pdf**)
- A one-page bulleted list *or* one-page narrative summary of activities describing the faculty members contributions to research, teaching, and service that *addresses the criteria covered in appendix B*. The one-page document should be broken up into three sections (research, teaching, and service). PTK faculty can indicate any area of work (research, teaching, or service) that are not part of their contractual duties. The bulleted or narrative summary for those sections can be omitted (**save as LastnameFirstname-SummaryofActivities.pdf**)
- Annotation of 3- 6 research papers covering the prior three years. Annotation should be formatted as described in Appendix C. (save as LastnameFirstnameAnnotation.pdf**)**
- Information on teaching performance as follows (please combine the following into one document and save as **LastNameFirstname-Teaching.pdf**).
  - Course evaluation data in the standard university format (e.g., `https://faculty.umd.edu/student-evaluation-data`).
  - *Optional* brief explanation (not to exceed 500 words) of the student evaluations to provide additional information necessary for contextualizing the interpretation of the evaluations (e.g., first time teaching a course, significant revision to course, significant events that impacted the instructors ability to teach, etc).
  - One page (max) summary providing a small sample of student comments selected by the faculty member, and a brief (1-paragraph) statement describing how you have (or plan to) improve your course(s), either in response to student concerns or due to some other need for innovation.
- *Optional* 1-page bulleted list of teaching related work products (e.g., teaching tools, Open Education Resources, and examples of pedagogical innovation). (**save as LastNameFirstname-OptionalWorkProducts.pdf**)

In cases where PTK faculty conduct work under the supervision of a tenure-track faculty member in addition to their departmental duties (e.g., some PTK have primary responsibilities for teaching, but also conduct work with or under the direction of a TTK faculty member), the TTK faculty member may provide a separate performance evaluation

1	2	3	4	5	6
Poor	Less than Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Exceptional

Figure 1: Rating Scale to be used by Merit Committee.

to include in the review material. The supervisor should include a recommended salary increase as part of their review. Merit review should be based on the activities and accomplishments of the prior three calendar years. When merit pay is not available, achievements and accomplishments for that time period will be taken into consideration during the next review for which merit pay can be awarded.

Prior to the conduct of the merit reviews, faculty will be provided with the evaluative dimensions and asked to rate their importance. The importance ratings will be averaged across faculty and used to weight each evaluative criteria within each category[8]. These are the evaluative weights. Each member of the MRC will independently use a six-point rating scale to evaluate each faculty member on each of the evaluative criteria within the three aforementioned performance domains. The MRC will be blind to the importance ratings provided by faculty. Figure 1 shows how the rating scale will be anchored.

Following the independent ratings, the members of the MRC will meet to disclose their ratings to each other and discuss any dramatic discrepancies. After discussion, members of the MRC can change their individual ratings, if they so desire. Shortly after the conclusion of the meeting, the MRC chair will send the department chair a confidential spreadsheet file containing each committee member's ratings of each faculty member on each performance domain.

With regard to the second task, the MRC should identify outliers among the faculty who may be eligible for recognition for outstanding meritorious performance or who may need assistance in returning to effectiveness in one or more performance domains. This includes identifying faculty to nominate for campus or college-level awards. In addition, if the MRC has specific feedback for a particular faculty member, the MRC chair will forward them with the quantitative scores to the department chair.

4 Relationship between Workload and Merit Review

The annual merit review process includes peer-evaluation of research, teaching, and service. The workload weights accorded to the three components for each faculty member will depend on the effort distribution in effect for the given year, based on the faculty workload policy. Workload weights for PTK faculty shall be based on the workload distribution as specified in PTK faculty contracts. In an attempt to assure that the quality ratings on the three performance domains, discussed in Section II, are independent of faculty workload weight distributions, the members of the MRC should not be told the relative workload weights for anyone.

5 Communicating Rated Merit and Apportioning the Merit Raise Dollar Pool

1. To communicate rated merit:

(a) For each reviewer, convert research, teaching, and service ratings to standard scores. Take simple averages of the reviewers' standardized ratings within dimensions to get overall research, teaching, and service ratings.

(b) Weight these mean standardized scores per dimension according to the agreed weighting for each faculty member to yield an overall merit rating.

(c) Give each faculty member a report that includes her or his mean standardized and raw scores on each dimension as well as the weighted mean standardized score.

2. To appropriation of merit

(a) The chair reserves the amount necessary to address inequities that may have developed. Generally this amount will be in the range of 5% to 25% of the available merit pool. The rest of the pool is distributed to the faculty as merit increases according to the algorithm described below and in Appendix B. If necessary, the chair will discuss salary inequities and concerns with the dean in a targeted attempt to increase the salary budget.

(b) For the purpose of allocating merit raises, eliminate, or trim, the lowest and highest raw rating for each dimension and then average the remaining three ratings. Take the average according to each faculty member's workload weighting of the three dimensions. Only those faculty members with weighted trimmed average raw scores of 3 or better on the Figure 1 scale will be eligible for a merit raise. In what follows, these faculty members will be termed "qualified faculty." The trimmed weighted average raw score is denoted r in the equations in Appendix A.

(c) Convert to dollar values for qualified faculty according to equal mean raw ratings = equal dollars (Method 1) and according to equal proportional raw ratings = equal proportional raises (Method 2). Take a weighted average of the two results for the merit raise. Formulae for these conversions and averaging are in Appendix A. **According to UMD policy, merit shall "generally" be distributed based on method 1. Thus, weights for method 1 > method 2. To maximize equitable distribution of merit funds, the default will be to appropriate 100% based on method 1 and 0% based on method 2. Splits other than this will be considered based on campus guidance.**

6 Communicating the Results

Upon receiving the dean's approval of the proposed salary increases, the chair will write to each faculty member with the following information:

1. The faculty member's merit ratings on the three criteria of research, teaching, and service and overall merit rating, ~~as described in Section IV.A;~~ as well as any qualitative comments from the MRC.

2. The weights that were used in calculating overall merit.

3. The total amount of money available for merit increases.

4. The individual's salary increments for COLA, merit, and if applicable, other salary adjustments.

5. The individual's new total base salary. In addition, the chair will inform the merit review committee of the merit raise accorded each faculty member.

7 Appeals Process

If a faculty member is unsatisfied with the outcome of the merit review and salary increment process, she or he can write to the chair within 30 days of receiving the chair's letter explaining the nature of the dissatisfaction. The chair must schedule a meeting with this person within two weeks of receiving the complaint. Within one week of the meeting, the chair must send the complainant a written response that explains either why he or she disagrees with the complaint and will make no adjustment or what aspects he or she does agree with and the planned method of rectifying the problem. If the faculty member is dissatisfied with the chair's response, then she or he can send the appeal to the dean by sending the original complaint letter, the chair's response and a new letter describing the nature of the continued dissatisfaction. In cases of appeal, the dean will be given all the material that the chair had in making a decision and can consult with the merit review committee if he or she wants to. The dean's decision will be final.

References

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[5] National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine. *Reproducibility and Replicability in Science*. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2019.

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[7] David Moher, Florian Naudet, Ioana A. Cristea, Frank Miedema, John P. A. Ioannidis, and Steven N. Goodman. Assessing scientists for hiring, promotion, and tenure. *PLOS Biology*, 16(3):1–20, 03 2018.

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[11] National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine. *Enhancing Scientific Reproducibility in Biomedical Research Through Transparent Reporting: Proceedings of a Workshop*. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2020.

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8 Appendix A

CALCULATING DOLLAR VALUES OF MERIT RATINGS FOR QUALIFIED FACULTY

Let,
r = trimmed weighted
average raw score
d = dollar raise
p = proportional merit score
s = current salary
n = total number of people in pool
T = total raise pool
b = constant to be solved for
AQF=All Qualified Faculty

8.1 Method 1: Equal Merit=Equal Dollar Raise

In this case, each individual's merit raise, m_d, is linearly proportional to the individual's weighted mean merit rating, r. Thus,

$$m_d = b_d r \tag{1}$$

The sum of the dollar merit raises equals the total merit raise pool, T. Expressed as an equation:

$$\sum_{AQF} m_d = T$$

Combining these two equations and solving, we get:

$$\sum_{AQF} b_d r = T$$

$$b_d = \frac{T}{\sum\limits_{AQF} r} \tag{2}$$

The value of b_d is substituted into equation 1 to transform each person's merit rating based on equal dollars for equal merit.

8.2 Method 2: Equal Merit=Equal Proportion Raise

An individual's proportion rating is their own rating divided by the sum of all the ratings.

$$p = \frac{r}{\sum\limits_{AQF} r} \tag{3}$$

To determine one's merit raise based on proportional considerations, m_p, we multiply the person's salary by their proportional merit and scale the results according to a constant, b_p. Thus,

$$m_p = b_p p s$$

As before,

$$\sum_{AQF} m_p = T$$

. Thus,

$$\sum_{AQF} \left[\frac{b_p r s}{\sum\limits_{AQF} r} \right] = T$$

Solving the equation for b_p yields:

$$b_p = T \frac{\sum\limits_{AQF} r}{\sum\limits_{AQF} rs}$$

The constant b_p is substituted into Equation 2 to transform each person's merit rating based on equal proportional dollars for equal proportional merit.

8.3 Combining the two

The actual merit increase will be a weighted average of the amounts calculated under the two methods. Thus:

$$m = w_d \times m_d + w_p \times m_p$$

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with the two weights, w_d and w_p, summing to 1.0.

As per policy, w_d must be greater than w_p. The default weighting will be w_d=1.0 and w_p=0.

9 Appendix B

Examples of specific evaluative criteria to be used in merit review, based on professional standards for evaluating faculty performance. Examples drawn from the Declaration on Research assessment [1], the Leiden Manifesto [9], scholarly articles [10, 7, 8], numerous reports by the National Academies[11, 2, 6, 5], and recommendations from the National Academies Roundtable on Aligning Incentives.

Example criteria for evaluating research output.

Research Criteria	**Brief Description**
Significance for society	Degree to which research informs public or health policy or professional practice[7, 10]
Contribution to science	Degree to which research provides a solid contribution to the literature (i.e.,is based on methodological rigor and reflects best practices), advances theory, and/or pursues high risk ideas[7].
Openness and transparency	Degree to which research, data, procedures, code, and research products are made openly available where appropriate; the use of registered reports or pre-registration. Committee should recognize that researchers may not be able to share some types of data, such as when data are proprietary or subject to ethical concerns over confidentiality[7, 1, 6, 2, 5] These limitations should be documented by faculty
Creation of non-publication research products	To what degree has the research led to the production of openly available research products that can be used by others. Examples include psychometric scales, software or computer code, openly shared behavioral tasks, open-source analytic methods[1, 7, 9, 6]
Production of peer reviewed publications	To what degree is research made publicly available via peer reviewed publication. Assessment should include scope of contributions to publications and assessment of the scope of the paper in terms of objective measurable criteria (e.g., number of experiments, sample-size or statistical power of studies, contribution to theory, appropriate use of statistics), not just number of publications and publication outlet[8, 5, 11]
Non-peer reviewed papers, book chapters, and other scholarship	To what degree is research published in non-peer reviewed outlets or made publicly available through other means, such as pre-print archives, blog posts, popular media, etc
Adherence to principles of diversity and inclusion	Degree to which research or lab culture supports department's mission of enhancing diversity and inclusion (use of diverse and inclusive research samples, engagement in training of diverse students, etc)[12]
Grant submissions	Degree of activity in seeking external funds relative to disciplinary norms.
Grant funding success	Degree of success in obtaining external funds relative to disciplinary norms.

Cont ... Example Criteria for Teaching and Service.

Teaching Criteria	**Brief Description**
Evidence of teaching effectiveness	Faculty member demonstrates effective teaching through evaluation methods.
Demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion	Degree to which faculty member contributes too supporting diversity and inclusion through teaching.
Development and impact of new teaching resources and materials	New teaching materials are developed and degree to which materials are made broadly available (e.g., open education).
Participation in teaching seminars	Faculty member engages in TLTC or departmental training seminars or workshops.
Teaching innovation	Development of new courses or substantial revisions of existing courses (e.g., online, flipped, blended, or other innovation).
Student mentoring activities	Participation in mentoring, advising, and supervising graduate and undergraduate research activities.
Number of students served and number of courses taught	Degree to which faculty member contributes to the department meeting its teaching mission.
Other contributions to the teaching mission of the department	Provides training to graduate students and/or faculty to improve teaching effectiveness, etc.
Service Criteria	**Brief Description**
Contribution to departmental committees as appropriate for faculty rank and position under the 3-2-1 service policy	Participates in departmental committees, degree of contribution to committee work, takes on leadership role.
Contribution to college or University service	Service to Senate, Graduate Counsel, BSOS APT, Campus APT, IRB, IACUC, other committees
Journal reviewing	Reviewing articles for peer reviewed publications.
Journal editing	Editor, associate editor, consulting editor, or guest editing.
Service to academic societies or professional organizations	Participation in leadership roles within society or volunteer work for learned societies.
Community outreach	Engagement with broader community to promote psychological science (e.g., K-12, community engagement, speaker series, etc)

10 Appendix C

Example categories for annotated references.

Table 2. Example Details for Annotation of Individual Research Papers

Article type: Review/theoretical/empirical/quantitative/commentary
Data: Original/previously published/archival/not available
Number of experiments and sample size of each: Experiment 1 (*N*), Experiment 2 (*N*)
Data type: Behavioral/neuro/longitudinal/Internet/laboratory/clinical/simulation/unique sample characteristics
Reproducibility: No comment/includes replication/open data/open method/conducted robustness or sensitivity analysis/cross-validation (provide open-science link if possible)
Authorship role: Conceptualized problem/wrote original draft/edited draft/collected data/analyzed results/supervised student thesis or dissertation/scope of collaboration
Contribution: What is the unique contribution of the article to science? What features of the article are you most proud of? How does this relate to your research philosophy? Were there any unique challenges involved in this work? Were novel methods created?

Note: For a more in-depth justification for each of these criteria, see https://osf.io/gp5qt.

Figure 2: Annotated CV format. See [8]. Further details and justification for categories is provided on https://osf.io/gp5qt.

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