

Department of Political Science

PAC Procedures

Approved: 2013

JMU Department of Political Science
ANNUAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES & STANDARDS

The Merit Personnel Advisory Committee (MPAC)

(Adopted 10/11/98; last modified 2/15/13)

Composition

- ❑ The Merit Personnel Advisory Committee will consist of six members selected randomly.
- ❑ Each randomly selected member serves a two-year term with three such members rotating off the committee each year.
- ❑ Members will be selected in such a way as to insure that everyone on a continuing contract (whether tenured, tenure-track or renewable multi-year contract) rotates onto the MPAC in the shortest time frame possible. As each member rotates off the MPAC he or she is ineligible to serve again until everyone has been called upon to serve. However the three composition rules noted below must be maintained and will take precedence:
 - ❑ At all times there will be two persons chosen as assistant professors and four members who were chosen as associate or full professors.
 - ❑ There must be at least one female and at least one male member serving on each MPAC.
 - ❑ There must be at least one member of the PPA/MPA faculty serving on each MPAC.
- ❑ Service on the MPAC is considered a duty of all continuing faculty, but the department chair may excuse any individual from serving in a particular year if doing so constitutes an undue hardship due to an approved medical or educational leave or due to some *force majeure* scheduling obstacle.
- ❑ Faculty who are in the first year of a multi-year contract are invited to sit in as observers in their first year.*

**Any current faculty members who have not yet served on the MPAC are invited to sit in this year as observers. If a new faculty member cannot for some reason observe the MPAC in the first year, then he or she may do so as soon as possible. New faculty are encouraged however to observe the MPAC during the first year.*

Procedures

- ❑ The MPAC invites the Academic Unit Head (AUH) to participate in all of its deliberations and evaluative decisions.
- ❑ The MPAC evaluates all full-time instructional faculty members for the purposes of the annual review. The MPAC is also tasked with creating the evaluations and recommendations upon which merit raises are based.
- ❑ Each MPAC member will carefully review the materials of every continuing faculty member. Each MPAC member is responsible for looking at all supporting material, as well. In addition, each MPAC member will be assigned some faculty members regarding whom he or she is to be particularly knowledgeable. As a liaison to those faculty members, he or she will be responsible for clearing up any ambiguities in that person's Faculty Performance Survey

and making sure that all supporting material is received and reviewed. The liaison will be prepared to make sure that the MPAC overlooks nothing of importance and that it does not misinterpret material in its discussion. Each person in the department will have the opportunity to answer questions from their liaison concerning his or her performance before the MPAC meets.

- ❑ The MPAC will evaluate each continuing member of the department who is not a member of the MPAC before rating any MPAC member. There will be a second-chance meeting at which time the MPAC will review its ratings and make sure that nothing was overlooked and that there are no inconsistencies. At this time, ratings can be adjusted. Only after the MPAC feels confident that it has fairly reviewed all other faculty members will it reach evaluative decisions regarding its own members. Each person will leave the room while he or she is being evaluated. If the family member of an MPAC member is being evaluated, the MPAC member will similarly be excused from those deliberations and evaluative decisions. Family members are defined per the definition provided by JMU Policy 1301.
- ❑ All members of the AUPAC and any invited observers must respect and maintain strict confidentiality of deliberations on all matters under their consideration.
- ❑ The AUPAC may by majority of the committee as a whole remove a member of the committee for violation of AUPAC rules. Any such action is subject to review by the AUH and the dean.

Annual Performance Benchmarks

(Last revised September 24, 2010)

The standard relative Faculty Anticipated Activity Plan (FAAP) weights for all faculty members at the beginning of each year are: teaching 50%, scholarship 25%, and service 25%. Those weights can be renegotiated for each faculty member within the following ranges:

Teaching 50-65% of time
Scholarship 10-40% of time
Service 10-40% of time

Over time and in each year, faculty members are expected to show activity in all three areas. First-year faculty members may have up to 80% of their time allocated towards teaching in their first year.

The department chair will renegotiate each faculty member's FAAP weights whenever the relative weight of effort and opportunity in different categories varies in ways unanticipated by the FAAP established at the start of the year.

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY

In making its annual evaluation of faculty performance, the PAC is to weigh two factors: effort and accomplishment. The balance between these two varies in each scoring category with accomplishment becoming the more important consideration as the score increases.

Faculty members are expected to provide justification in their self evaluation and annual faculty performance survey to support the awarding of a satisfactory or higher ranking. This is especially the case where a faculty member believes that they deserve a high rating.

A score in the 1 range (1-1,1+) indicates that a faculty member a) has not put in an effort consistent with the department's minimum expectations in that category and/or b) has not performed at a level consistent with the department's minimum expectations.

A score in the 2 range (2-,2,2+) indicates that a faculty member a) has at least met minimum department performance expectations and/or b) has met the minimum departmental expectations with regard to effort. The higher the score in this category the more pronounced are the individual's accomplishments. Effort alone cannot place a faculty member in the upper range of this score.

A score in the 3 range (3-,3,3+) indicates that a faculty member has exceeded departmental expectations regarding performance in a category during the year. Level of effort may be a consideration in placing a faculty member within the 3 range but it is not a sufficient consideration to merit a ranking in this range. In their self evaluation the faculty member must justify why that score is merited.

The scores referred to here are for one year periods. Tenure requirements are not identical to merely summing up or averaging yearly evaluations. For example, consistent 2- scores in research might be achieved largely on the basis of having research in progress. Obtaining a satisfactory rating in research for tenure would require published works.

After evaluating the annual performance for all departmental faculty, the PAC will assign percentages (within the ranges permissible in each category) that maximize each faculty member's overall merit score. First-year faculty will assign 80 percent of their effort to teaching.

The benchmarks used here are for faculty having a normal teaching load. Any adjustment in that load or devotion of extra time to an activity (such as is periodically allowed for teaching) will result in the PAC using higher standards in their evaluation.

Faculty on leave will be evaluated on a qualitative scale developed by the PAC to take into account the specifics of their situation. They will not divide their time into the three categories as full time faculty do nor will the same benchmarks be used. Faculty should consult with the department head and PAC chair prior to beginning their leave so as to arrive at an agreed upon standard for evaluation. The faculty member, department head, and PAC chair may agree to amend this agreement once the leave is underway if the situation warrants.

Nothing in this document precludes the addition of new items nor is meant to exclude credit for items not listed. Until such time as the department can formally amend the listing of items, it will be left to the PAC's discretion how to handle cases of omission.

TEACHING

Minimum Requirements for a 2 Range Score:

All of the following:

- a. satisfactory or better student evaluations with due consideration given to grade distributions and the nature of the course
- b. course syllabi which clearly state the goals and objectives of the course, standards for grading, and course requirements
- c. course assignments appropriate to the level and subject matter of the course
- d. meeting classes as scheduled
- e. meeting at least 5 office hours per week
- f. effective student advising
- g. routine updating of substantive course material and/or teaching methodologies (There is no expectation that this would occur in every course. There is an expectation that faculty are continually revising and adjusting their courses as new material and teaching technologies become available.)

Any of the following as appropriate:

- a. writing letters of recommendation
- b. participation in honors and other special studies projects when the opportunity to do so exists

1 Range Score

Performance that does not warrant a satisfactory (2+, 2, 2-) ranking on the basis of the items listed above.

3 Range Score

The following make a faculty member eligible for consideration for a 3 range score but do not guarantee such a score. In his or her self evaluation the faculty member must justify why that score is merited. The PAC may conclude that the quality of the performance does not warrant such a score and assign a 2 or 2+ score

- a. teaching evaluations which are at least above average with due consideration given to grade distribution and the nature of the course.
- b. development of new courses or programs
- c. substantial revision in course content and/or teaching methodology
- d. structuring of courses in such a way that goals and objectives are met in an innovative fashion or one that requires a great deal of out-of-class contact with students or prep time. (The key here should be the benefit to the student and not simply the time involved. Course syllabi and assignments would be possible supporting evidence.)
- e. heavy teaching load or rotation
- f. engaging in student advising activities that go beyond those associated with helping one's own advisees
- g. engaging in student advising/mentoring that is central to special achievements by students
- h. writing an especially large number of letters of recommendation

SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum Requirements For a 2 Range Score:

Two of the following achievements are required if one is a convention paper or the equivalent (equivalents are marked with an asterisk). More than two are required if there is no convention paper or equivalent. Only one achievement is required if it is a refereed/juried convention paper that appears in proceedings.

- a) Deliver a completed convention paper
- b) Prepare and exhibit a poster presentation at a conference (*)

- c) Make a research presentation to the department's research roundtable (*) [note: supporting documentation of the work presented—paper, quantitative data, etc.—must be submitted along with your FPS]
- d) Write and submit a journal-length paper to a non-juried Working Paper Series (*)
- e) Serve as a discussant on a panel or participate (as discussant) on a conference roundtable
- f) Conduct ongoing research that is moving toward an identifiable product (this could involve extensive data collection, the writing of a new paper, or a substantial revision of previous work).
- g) Prepare a quality grant proposal that reflects new effort and ideas
- h) Publish a book review essay, research note, or other piece of research of similar length.
- i) Publish a non-refereed or invited article in something other than a “prestige” source.
- j) Publish a commissioned piece of research or carry out normal consulting activity that results in a product that can be evaluated as research.
- k) Write a study guide or produce a test question data base.
- l) Review submissions for journals or books for publishers.
- m) Receive an “in-house” grant.
- n) Organize and chair a panel at a conference.
- o) Deliver an invited paper or make an invited oral presentation at an academic or professional meeting other than a conference
- p) Professional development centering on the learning/updating of statistical and software skills

Faculty will not receive credit for new or ongoing research for a working paper after its first year in the series unless significant revisions are made to the work in a succeeding year. Likewise, faculty who present the same paper at conferences in two (or more) years will not receive credit for new or ongoing research unless they demonstrate that substantial revisions were made to the paper between presentations.

While some weight will be given to the presentation of more than one convention paper, presenting multiple convention papers alone can not result in a 3 range score. The purpose of convention papers is twofold. First, allowing/encouraging faculty to stay abreast of developments in their field. Second, provide an avenue for development of new ideas that might ultimately result in a published piece. With regard to the first point (and given limited travel funds), one convention paper would seem to be a reasonable expectation. Giving significant added rewards for additional presentations comes very close to “buying” merit money. As to the second purpose, what ought to be rewarded in terms of accomplishment is the movement from a convention paper to an article (for which there would be no discount applied to multiple publications). There is also a danger that excessive attendance at conferences ultimately hurts students by canceling classes or the overuse of films, etc.

1 Range Score

Performance that does not warrant a satisfactory (2+, 2, 2-) ranking on the basis of the items listed above.

3 Range Score

The following make a faculty member eligible for consideration for a 3 range score but do not guarantee such a score. The PAC may conclude that the quality of the performance does not warrant such a score and assign a 2 or 2+ score.

- a. sign a contract for a book
- b. have an article of original research accepted through a refereed process
- c. publish an invited article of original research or commentary in a prestigious national level publication
- d. receive a major external grant

The PAC will award credit for a book (1) in the academic year that the contract is signed and (2) in the academic year in which galley proofs are produced and submitted. As a general rule the PAC will treat the contract signing as equivalent to a refereed journal article, and the completed book will be given greater weight than a refereed journal article. The PAC may adjust this weighting if it desires but must provide a justification for doing so. Each volume in a multi-volume series shall be counted separately with the exact weight awarded to be decided by the PAC.

Should material be published electronically, the same standards will apply that are used to judge printed material, e.g., the selectivity of the source, prestige, of the source, nature of the audience, quality of the product

Realizing that exceptions are always possible, the unifying feature to 1) signing a book contract, 2) receiving an major external grant, and 3) signing a major external consulting contract is that they would all seem to require at least a year of intensive effort on the part of the faculty member and bring national recognition to the university. Work on commissioned articles and lesser consulting (which are equated in the 2 range score) are similar in that less than one year seems to be a reasonable time frame for their completion; the resulting product will not be as lengthy or involved as that in a 3 range product; and they were not selected/awarded on the basis of something approaching a national competition.

In comparing coauthored and single authored efforts, the PAC may, at its discretion, decide to elevate the ranking of an individual who has accomplished a particularly noteworthy individually-authored research product in a year when coauthored pieces were the norm.

SERVICE

Faculty participation in essential departmental, college and university business is central to effective departmental governance and to the instruction of our students. To that end, the department expects its faculty to perform the following activities to avoid an unsatisfactory (1 range) evaluation in service:

- a. regularly attend faculty meetings – unless one faces conflicting job responsibilities (academic leave, conference attendance, etc.) or unusual personal circumstances excused by the department chair – as required under the Faculty Handbook (III.H.9).
- b. attend at least one of the following annual events, as required under the Faculty Handbook (III.H.9):
 1. December commencement and recognition of graduates
 2. May commencement and recognition of graduates
 3. Madison Day
 4. Washington semester reception (not required under the handbook, but an acceptable substitute under these benchmarks)
- c. regularly participate in routine department discussions regarding curriculum and instruction, hiring, departmental policy changes, etc.
- d. respond to formal requests for faculty input on matters of departmental governance, and the timely submission of any requested documents or information.
- e. agree to serve on the following departmental committees in accord with department procedures: the Merit PAC, the Tenure PAC, the Promotion PAC, and search committees in one's area of expertise. Refusal to serve on said committees – unless one faces conflicting job responsibilities (academic leave, conference attendance, etc.) or unusual personal circumstances excused by the department chair – is an example of unsatisfactory service. Conversely, effective performance on such committees can be used as potential evidence of satisfactory or excellent service in accord with the benchmarks detailed subsequently in this document.
- f. attempt to allocate annual library funds. Such an attempt requires at a minimum that a faculty member provide student assistants with a list of books for potential purchase.
- g. attend job talks or meet with job candidates in one-on-one office meetings or at meals. The PAC recognizes that job talks often conflict with faculty teaching schedules and that, as a result, faculty may not be able to attend. However, the department expects faculty to try to attend talks and at the very least to meet personally with candidates in their field of expertise. Members of the faculty are strongly encouraged to attend talks or to meet with candidates whose expertise differs from theirs. This requirement does not apply in years in which no job candidates are brought to campus or in years in which searches occur during the summer. The PAC retains the right to recognize faculty who show a consistently strong commitment to meeting with job candidates and attending their job talks.

Faculty members who fail to meet these baseline responsibilities to the department in a given academic year are not eligible for a 2 range score.

2 Range Score

Minimum Requirements For A 2 Range Score:

For a 2 range score, faculty—in addition to meeting the expectations raised above—must serve effectively on departmental, college, and university committees; departmental, college, and university positions; or, engage in professional service positions external to the University (e.g. service on an external professional organization, on a government organization, or as a consultant who uses professional skills in a manner that does not produce a publishable piece of scholarship).

Faculty must demonstrate participation in two distinct positions or committees. Those distinct positions can be in the same domain (that is, departmental, college, university, or external) or in different domains. Other service activities, such as speaking to lay audiences, or other departmental, college or University assignments, will be considered in assigning an individual's score in the 2 range. The claim for credit for a service activity will be strengthened by a description of the demands of the service activity.

3 Range Score

Minimum Requirements For A 3 Range Score:

For a 3 range score, faculty must engage in exceptional service in one or more of the roles required for a 2 range score. A faculty member seeking a 3 range score must document what makes his or her service exceptional. The PAC will determine whether one's service merits an exceptional score based on various factors, including (but not limited to) the complexity of the tasks performed by the faculty member, the number of roles filled, the substance of the work completed, the time commitment involved in the service, etc.

MERIT PAC APPEALS PROCESS

Faculty members are entitled to an appeal of their PAC score. In order for faculty to appeal their score, they must notify the Department Head in writing that they are requesting an appeal no later than one week after receiving their PAC score.

The appeal will be heard by the appeals committee, which will consist of the three PAC members who have most recently rotated off of the PAC (that is, the three faculty members who were replaced by three new members who helped assign the score under appeal).

The Department Head will notify the PAC chair no later than two working days after receiving the official appeals request. The appeals committee will meet no later than one week after receiving notification from the head, and will render a decision on the appeal at that meeting.

The finding of the appeals committee is advisory. It can recommend, but cannot mandate, a change in the PAC score under scrutiny. For the appeals committee to advise a change in the score, the appealing faculty member must show clear, substantial and convincing evidence to justify the score adjustment.

When taking up the appeal, the committee will limit itself to determining whether the PAC might reasonably have assigned the score(s) in question. The committee will not conduct a de novo review of the appellant's FPS.

The committee will make its decision by vote, the vote of two committee members being necessary and sufficient to render a decision.