

The Annual Performance and Planning Review

Guide for the Assignment of Ratings

1. Overview

This document is a product of a workshop for department heads facilitated by Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success Linda Martin during spring semester 2019. No policy is changed or created by this document, which has been endorsed by the chief academic officer and reviewed by the Council of Deans.

2. Purpose

In the interest of achieving greater fairness and transparency among departments and colleges, this document provides guidance to department heads, directors, and deans for understanding and assigning annual performance and planning review (APPR) ratings. Specifically, the document describes the meaning of *meeting expectations for faculty rank* in the context of UTK's mission and the Board of Trustees' *Policies Governing Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure* (BT0006).

3. Definition of Meets Expectations

Every faculty member is expected, at a minimum, to meet expectations for rank each year. Expectations should be based on disciplinary standards, as described in the unit's bylaws and adapted to the individual faculty member's allocation of effort. The following assumptions should govern performance expectations, as recorded in the unit's bylaws:

- Tenure-line faculty are hired only after a highly competitive national search and demonstrating promise to be leaders in their disciplinary fields;
- Probationary faculty are tenured only upon "a reasonable presumption of . . . professional excellence";
- Faculty are expected to maintain excellence over the course of their careers.

Therefore, bylaws should establish the expectation that faculty who meet expectations have achieved and maintained professional excellence.

In **meeting expectations for rank**, faculty members satisfy the following conditions:

- performed at a *level of excellence* as stated in BT0006;¹
- performed at a level that *satisfies standards of disciplinary excellence*, as described in the department's bylaws;
- achieved goals that were established during the previous year's APPR and are tied to the *standards of disciplinary excellence* as described in the department's bylaws;
- performed all duties in a professional manner.

¹ From BT0006: "Tenure is granted after a thorough review which culminates in the University acknowledging a reasonable presumption of the faculty member's professional excellence, and the likelihood that excellence will contribute substantially over a considerable period of time to the mission and anticipated needs of the academic unit in which tenure is granted."

Faculty who exceed the goals that were established in the previous year's APPR are eligible for a rating of *exceeds expectations for rank*. Those who have had extraordinary accomplishments over the three-year period (e.g., local, institutional, national, or disciplinary awards, to name just one category) may be rated as *far exceeds expectations for rank*. When annual goals are not met, a rating of *falls short of expectations for rank* is appropriate. Those faculty who fail to meet the majority of their goals or who consistently miss their goals may be rated as *falling far short of expectations for rank*.

4. Arriving at an Overall Rating

In addition to assigning ratings in each area of faculty effort, the evaluator also assigns an *overall* rating. The overall rating determines whether the faculty member is eligible for merit increases, required to formulate an APPR Improvement Plan, or required to undergo Enhanced Post-Tenure Performance Review (EPPR). Department bylaws may establish how the *overall* rating is assigned. A faculty member who falls short of expectations in one area may or may not fall short of expectations *overall*.

The following observations are offered as guidance for faculty and administrators:

- The *overall* rating is not necessarily an average of the ratings for each area of effort. In instances where a faculty member's effort is not distributed equally among all areas of effort, the administrator should prorate each of the areas of effort in order to arrive at an *overall* rating;
- In cases where a faculty member *falls short of expectations for rank* in one area, the administrator may, with discretion, assign an overall rating of *meets expectations for rank* if the *falls short* rating is attributable to specific circumstances that can be addressed in a plan aimed at improving performance in the area;
- In cases when a faculty member *falls far short of expectations for rank* in one area, the administrator may assign an overall rating that reflects the relative importance of the area of effort in relation to the faculty member's overall performance;
- In cases where a faculty member does not meet expectations in one area of effort, the faculty member and department head should agree on a course of action to improve in the deficient area. If the faculty member does not improve performance in this area, then the overall rating in the second year should be no greater than *falls short of meeting expectations for rank*. In that case, a formal APPR improvement plan will be required.

Any faculty member who *falls short of meeting expectations for rank* or *falls far short of meeting expectations for rank* in any area of effort should not receive an overall rating higher than *meets expectations for rank*.

5. Confidentiality

Performance reviews are confidential documents protected by state statutes. Distribution is limited to supervisors and those with a legal basis for viewing.