

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Annual Performance Review Policies and Practices**

The following document outlines: I. the process and guidelines for the Annual Performance Review (APR) of all tenured and tenure-track faculty for the purpose of determining merit awards; and II. the review practices used by the Personnel Committee. Following the policies and practices for review of tenured and tenure-track faculty are III: the process and guidelines for performance reviews of instructors of record.

I. Annual Performance Review Policies and Practices

1. **The Annual Performance Review** is conducted by the Department's elected Personnel Committee in accordance with College and University guidelines and policies, using information submitted by faculty on their SEDONA Faculty Activity Report Forms (FARFs). The SEDONA FARFs are used by the Personnel Committee for purposes of determining a merit ranking (see # 3 below).
2. **Timeline:** The review takes place in the Spring semester according to a timeline determined by the College. When the timeline for APR merit reviews is announced, faculty are asked to prepare their SEDONA FARF forms, reporting on their teaching activities, research and creative work, and service contributions for the previous calendar year (1 January to 31 December), by entering the information for each relevant activity listed on the SEDONA tabs. SEDONA can be accessed at: <http://sedonaweb.com>. Typically, faculty will be informed of their merit ranking within three weeks of the announced deadline for completed SEDONA FARF forms.
3. **The review process:** The APR review is based on the material reported in the SEDONA FARF forms. The Personnel Committee members review SEDONA FARF forms electronically, on the website, for each tenured or tenure-track faculty member, and they meet as a committee to discuss each faculty member's report and arrive at a merit ranking taking into consideration each of the three areas of activity. Faculty performance is ranked according to College guidelines, from 5 to 1, with 5 being "highest merit"; 4, "special merit"; 3, "merit"; 2, "adequate"; and 1, "unsatisfactory." Faculty are then informed of their merit ranking. They may request reconsideration of their ranking by writing to the Department Chair outlining the basis for the appeal. The request for reconsideration must be submitted in writing within five days of receiving notification of their ranking. The Personnel Committee will meet to reconsider the contested ranking within one week of receiving the appeal and notify the faculty member of its decision in writing.
4. **Guidelines for Reporting Faculty Activity**
 - Rankings are made holistically, with consideration given to all three areas of faculty workload: research, teaching, and service.
 - When filling in their information, faculty should include any details about their research and creative work, teaching, and service that they think will help the

Personnel Committee to evaluate their work; the Committee relies on the information that is contained in the SEDONA report.

- Typically, major books count toward a 5 ranking for three consecutive years; if you published a book last year or in the 2 previous years indicate when it was published. For other publications, please include full bibliographical information (title of work, name of the publication, dates, pages).
- When reporting on research and creative work in progress, in the Description field, include your progress on the work during the past year. Include in the appropriate tabs other aspects of your research or creative activity, such as conference presentations, readings, awards and recognitions. Try to be as inclusive as possible.
- When reporting on teaching, if relevant, include curricular and course design and development; graduate supervision and dissertation committees; any other evidence of effective contributions to student success, such as honors theses and undergraduate mentoring. Typically, major teaching awards (such as the University Teaching Excellence Award) earn a 5 ranking for the year of the award.
- When reporting on service, be sure to include service contributions at the Department, College, and University levels, including work on committees; if a committee has been particularly productive or busy, you can elaborate a bit in the free text Description fields in SEDONA. Also, report on contributions to the profession, such as active participation in professional organizations, membership on advisory or editorial boards. Service contributions to the community might include community groups; service organizations. If involvement in the community involves aspects of your scholarly or creative research or fieldwork, consider whether it should be included in your research activities.

II. Personnel Committee Merit Ranking Process

This document describes principles used by the Personnel Committee to assess faculty merit on an annual basis. It is meant to describe usual practices and criteria for ranking, not to mandate absolute rules. The goal is to maintain reasonable consistency over time while maintaining flexibility as membership of the Personnel Committee shifts and the department changes.

- 1) Evaluation is made based on the contributions recorded on the annual merit form. Evaluations are not made based on verbal reports of colleagues' contributions offered by members of the Personnel Committee.
- 2) Rankings are made holistically, with consideration given to all three areas of faculty workload: research, teaching, and service. Rankings are made for calendar years.
- 3) Faculty members may request reconsideration of annual rankings by submitting an appeal letter to the Department Chair, accompanied by additional documentation where warranted.
- 4) The publication of a major book—whether creative or scholarly—generally warrants

the ranking of high merit (5), assuming that appropriate service and teaching are also evident. The Personnel Committee may elect to award a ranking lower than 5 if appropriate service and teaching are not also indicated.

5) The ranking of high merit (5) for a major book is generally sustained over a three-year period (including the year of initial publication plus the two subsequent years) in recognition of the time required to complete such projects and of their significant disciplinary contributions.

6) Major teaching awards—for example, the University Teaching Excellence Award, the Ross M. Lence Teaching Award, the Teaching Excellence Career Award, the Undergraduate Mentoring Award—generally warrant the ranking of high merit (5) for the year of award, assuming that appropriate research and service are also evident. The Personnel Committee may elect to award a ranking lower than 5 if appropriate service and research are not also indicated.

7) Major research and creative awards—for example, a Fulbright grant, an NEH Senior Fellowship, a Guggenheim, an ACLS fellowship, an NEA grant—generally warrant the ranking of high merit (5) for the year of award, assuming that appropriate service and teaching are also evident. The Personnel Committee may elect to award a ranking lower than 5 if appropriate service and teaching are not also indicated.

8) The ranking of high merit (5) is often awarded for edited volumes and similar projects. The high merit ranking for such projects, however, is not usually sustained over a three-year period, as it is for a major book. The Personnel Committee may elect to award a ranking lower than 5 if appropriate service and teaching are not also indicated.

9) Very significant service—serving as the Chair of the Department, for example, or as the Director of Creative Writing—is often awarded the ranking of high merit (5) during the year(s) of service.

10) Books and edited volumes are expected to be published by a recognized academic, scholarly, or creative press. While emerging and small, independent presses are considered to be acceptable, vanity and disreputable presses are not acceptable. An example of the latter is Mellen Press, which has taken legal action against its critics and is not generally accepted as a rigorous press by the academic community.

Approved by the Personnel Committee
May 2014

III. Annual Performance Review: Instructors of Record

Instructors of record include lecturers and Teaching Fellows, and are reviewed in accordance with SACS requirements. Lecturers are hired each semester on a *per-course* basis. At the end of each semester, lecturers' teaching evaluations are reviewed by the Department Chair. Teaching Fellows who meet SACS requirements are instructors of record, and their review and supervision comply with SACS and Coordinating Board requirements. Teaching Fellows meet with and are observed by faculty supervisors, who

review their syllabi and teaching. Guidelines for Teaching Fellows teaching in the Core Curriculum and for their supervisors can be found at:

http://www.uh.edu/class/english/programs/undergraduate-studies/lower/TA-resources/Guidelines_for_TAs.pdf.