INTRODUCTION

CAP is an advisory body representing the Academic Senate in the faculty personnel review process. Rather than repeating criteria and processes explained elsewhere, these FAQs address issues CAP repeatedly encounters or that appear to be sources of confusion. They will be updated annually.

More comprehensive Academic Personnel procedures and practices are available at:

- APM: University of California Academic Personnel Manual (systemwide policies)
  https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/academic-personnel-policy/
- APP: Academic Personnel Procedures (UCI’s application of systemwide policies)
  https://ap.uci.edu/policies-procedures/app/
- Academic Personnel Guidance for Faculty on Preparing Files
  https://ap.uci.edu/faculty/guidance/

REVIEW STANDARDS

What are the standards for a Satisfactory Fifth Year Review?

Professor Step 5 and above are indefinite steps – faculty can remain in good standing without proceeding further through the step system. However, APM 200 requires that “every faculty member shall be reviewed at least every five years.” In lieu of recommending a merit, at the five-year point, this review can result in a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory recommendation.

To be deemed Satisfactory at an indefinite step, CAP expects to see evidence of contributions in both teaching and research (with effort commensurate to the faculty’s primary area of emphasis), as well as evidence of meaningful service to the university. Faculty who are doing little to no significant work in one or more categories of review (research, teaching, service) are likely to be judged Unsatisfactory. Faculty who are negatively contributing to the university through substandard teaching or service might also be judged Unsatisfactory, even if they are producing meritorious research.

What are the criteria for acceleration?

The criteria for a full step acceleration are far-above-typical accomplishments in both the primary and one secondary area of review, and acceptable work otherwise. For the Professor series, this means unusually vigorous and accomplished research or creative activity beyond the specific disciplinary norm in the period of review, coupled with noteworthy excellence in teaching and/or service, and no substandard work in any area. A doubled number of publications, for instance, with simply adequate teaching and service would not constitute a strong case for acceleration. For the Professor of Teaching series, this would mean exceptional teaching above assigned standards, as well as particularly outstanding scholarly productivity or
service. Accelerations of a full step or more have been denied more often than granted. Acceleration in advancement files (to Above Scale and to/over Step VI) have particularly high expectations.

**What are the standards for receiving an Above Scale merit?**

As the highest merit in the review process, Above Scale (Distinguished Professor) merits have a higher standard than a typical merit, but do not require the same exceptional work as Advancement to Above Scale career reviews. Generally, CAP requires evidence of continued significant research output and impact, very good teaching, and ongoing professional and campus service. An Above Scale Merit before the normal four year review period requires a particularly exceptional file and is very rare. See APM 220-18 (b. (4)) and APP 3-40 (Note 4).

**Research**

UCI has many truly exceptional researchers. Why shouldn’t they be rewarded for their research accomplishments, rather than being expected to also do significant teaching and service? Isn’t this a poor use of their time?

Research is the primary area of review in the Professor and corresponding series. Professors of Teaching have a primary area of review in teaching, and secondary research criterion. However, UCI is a research university, not a research institute. As such, faculty have responsibilities beyond their research, and the university depends on their contributions to teaching and service as well as research. Consistent with APM 210 and 285 policy, CAP’s view generally is that we review faculty on three required areas: research, teaching, and service.

**What is Completed Parts of Larger Works? When can work in progress be submitted?**

The category of Completed Parts of Larger Works (AP-10, Section III.C.) is primarily aimed at faculty in book disciplines as a way to recognize that completing a book manuscript often takes far longer than a single review period. Accordingly, faculty can submit completed chapter(s) from a monograph for a merit review, with the understanding that these chapters, when the book is published, cannot count in a second merit review. In a rank review (for promotion or advancement), all previous materials, including completed parts of larger works submitted for merits at that rank, will be considered.

**How does CAP view grants and outside funding? Can it replace publications as a form of research?**

The awarding of a grant is not itself sufficient for advancement; rather, CAP primarily considers a grant to be a promise of future productivity and an indicator of stature, especially if the grant is highly competitive. Peer-reviewed national grants such as NIH, NSF, NEH, Guggenheim, ACLS, etc., are considered particularly strong recognition of research excellence. In some scientific fields, grant funding or renewal of funding greatly enhances a tenure case or advancement at higher levels. A lack of funding in a discipline that typically requires grant
support for doing research may raise questions about the research effort and quality, as well as the stature of the individual in their field of study.

Do Professors of Teaching have to do research in pedagogy?

No. While many professors of teaching choose to work on pedagogical topics in their field, this is not a requirement. Like all faculty, professors of teaching may choose to do basic, applied, pedagogical, or any other generally accepted form of research in their field. APM 285 9d.

**TEACHING**

How does CAP use teaching evaluations when extensive research shows their biases?

CAP takes a holistic viewpoint of teaching evaluations (aka Student Evaluations of Teaching [SET] or Student Feedback on Teaching [SFT]) alongside a reflective teaching statement or other materials. We discuss research on biases and best practices, and are generally skeptical of self-selected positive or negative student comments.

Individual CAP members may have varied viewpoints on the value of teaching evaluations, but in general, CAP pays more attention to students’ comments, especially those that are repeated over time (e.g., disorganized, lack of feedback, misses multiple classes; best class, exceptionally clear lectures, inspired me), rather than numerical evaluation scores.

In addition, CAP considers response rates and values faculty efforts to encourage most students to fill out evaluations.

How worried should I be about a negative set of teaching evaluations?

CAP members understand that classes sometimes do not go as planned, whether because of individual circumstances or failed attempts at new pedagogies. It can be helpful if faculty address such issues in their Reflective Teaching Statement. Generally, blaming students’ lack of preparation or behavior is not seen as an effective strategy. Explaining how you might change your pedagogy to teach the students you have is more persuasive. Most persuasive is demonstrating improvement in teaching practices over time.

Can a lack of graduate teaching and mentoring be seen as unsatisfactory teaching?

CAP members understand that graduate student teaching and mentoring expectations vary across campus. Generally, CAP looks for teaching across the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. In some disciplines, graduate mentoring is an integral part of research productivity, while in others, graduate students do not work jointly with faculty on research projects. CAP also knows that some departments do not have graduate programs, or have small graduate programs in which only some faculty will have the opportunity to work with graduate students. Candidates and departments are encouraged to explain their local situation to help CAP properly evaluate the candidate’s contributions within that context.
SERVICE

Is Academic Senate service required?

For higher levels of the professoriate, especially, university service outside the department and to the wider campus is expected. Many CAP members understand our communal obligations to contribute to faculty governance, but Academic Senate service specifically is not required at any level. We recognize that faculty can contribute to their schools and to the campus through many means, of which Senate service is just one.

How much service is required for each step?

The higher in the professorial ranks, the more service CAP expects, both in quantity and expansiveness (beyond the department). This is not an absolute rule – being a department chair is seen as significant service, even though it is department-based. The most effective files illustrate how engaged the candidate has been at service assignments: do they accept an assignment and never show up; do they show up but rarely contribute; or do they take leadership roles?

It is also helpful for the department to include whether there was compensation (e.g. teaching release, summer funding – but do not include detailed pay information) for various service roles. Compensation does not negate service (for example, CAP members are compensated with teaching release, but also consider that work as significant, meaningful service) but it does help CAP understand the extent of the extra effort involved.

GENERAL REVIEW PROCESS

Should I ask a CAP member...

- how my case is going or if my case has been reviewed yet? **No.**
- for advice on a colleague’s case? **No.**
- why they negatively voted on my or a colleague’s case? **No.**

If you have review-related questions when your file is in preparation or under review, you can consult with your Chief Personnel Officer, School Equity Advisor, or Chair. If they cannot answer your questions they should be able to direct you to the appropriate person to consult. CAP members may not talk with individuals about specific personnel cases, including specific cases cloaked as “hypotheticals.” All personnel files and CAP deliberations are confidential.

My department knows me and my work much better than CAP. Why might CAP’s decision on my case be different from my department’s decision?

CAP’s role is to provide a campuswide faculty perspective. CAP reviews about 400 cases annually at all levels of the professoriate. This broader experience works to promote equity across the campus.
What does an ideal department letter look like?

An ideal department letter does not repeat what the candidate has already presented; instead, it offers an analytic evaluation of the faculty member. CAP does not need to see lists of accomplishments or specific details that are already listed on the AP-10. It is more effective to explain in the aggregate, for example: Faculty Y’s research is good, judging by the two articles that make significant contributions to understanding ABC. Faculty Z’s teaching is exceptional, as evidenced by their serving as a pedagogical expert to multiple programs; revamping the introductory series in ways that increased student learning; and regularly teaching an overload of independent studies to graduate students. Faculty X’s campus service is very good as evidenced by chairing a department search committee and serving on a Senate committee for three years. Faculty X’s professional stature is outstanding, as evidenced by three article awards, five keynotes, and service as president of a national organization. External letters for Faculty X are positive, with several calling the work some of the best in the field, and four of five explicitly stating that this promotion is overdue.

For merits and accelerations, two pages of text is generally plenty for a department evaluation. For career reviews, it is rarely necessary for departments to present more than four pages of text, and less is often more effective.

CAP members do not need to see excerpts of student evaluations, external letters, or other materials that are already included in the personnel file. These are generally ineffective and come across as cherry picking rather than as a thoughtful analysis of the case.