Department of History

Procedures and Criteria for
Annual Merit Performance Evaluation and Review

Adhering to the requirements of University Rule 12.01.99.M2, section 1, and the College of Liberal Arts “Guidelines for Workload Allocation and Evaluation for Tenured Faculty Members,” the Department of History presents its procedures and criteria for the annual merit evaluation and review process. Our purpose is to provide a mechanism to evaluate faculty members’ accomplishments in their three principal areas of responsibility—research, teaching, and service—in a manner emphasizing openness, fair assessment, and collegiality. This evaluation system reinforces the department’s four core commitments—to strengthen our faculty’s national profile, enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience, build our graduate program, and increase our commitment to diversity. As such, we, the faculty, view this process as a means to encourage one another to fulfill professional standards and expectations commensurate with the aims of a major research university.

Note: The annual merit evaluation and review process conducted by the Executive Committee, as described below, also fulfills the “peer evaluation” required by the University rule on Post-Tenure Review (University Rule 12.06.99.M1).

A. Procedures. On or about December 1, the department head will distribute blank "Faculty Member's Annual Report" forms (copy enclosed) along with copies of this document. Each member of the faculty will be required to submit the completed report by January 20 of the succeeding year. The "Faculty Member's Annual Report" will detail the academic activities of a calendar year (January 1 through December 31) and will serve as the primary basis for evaluating a faculty member's professional progress. It is incumbent upon each faculty member to make the best case for his/her accomplishments on the form and to state, with clarity and purpose, his/her short and long term goals for professional development (teaching, research, and service) in the section at the end of the form.

Approximately six weeks after the beginning of the succeeding calendar year, the department's executive committee will evaluate the faculty with the objective of locating each member in the appropriate category of performance using a five-point scale: 4 = Superior; 3 = Excellent; 2 = Commendable; 1 = Satisfactory; 0 = Unsatisfactory. Typically, areas of responsibility will be weighted as follows: Research 60%, Teaching 20%, Service 20%. Thus, for example, a faculty member evaluated by the executive committee as Excellent in research, Satisfactory in teaching, and Commendable in service would receive a weighted composite score of 3 x 0.6 (Research) plus 1 x 0.2 (Teaching) plus 2 x 0.2 (Service) or 2.4. The executive committee will evaluate
teaching and service accomplishments in a manner appropriate to rank. (For a full description of the executive committee—its role and purpose, the process to select members, and the length of term and rotation schedule—see the department’s bylaws, section E.1.)

Upon the completion of the evaluations, the department head will notify each member of the faculty in writing of the executive committee's assessment of his/her performance, including individual scores and rankings in research, teaching, and service and overall ranking and weighted composite score. This memorandum constitutes the faculty member’s annual review. The department head will also include an assessment of each faculty member’s progress in research, teaching, and service, which will vary from rank to rank. For assistant professors, the assessment will focus on progress toward tenure and promotion; for associate professors, on promotion to professor; and for full professors, on further advancement of the department’s four core commitments. (For assistant professors, progress toward tenure and promotion is also assessed by the department’s tenure and promotion committee.)

Faculty members, upon indicating receipt by signing a copy of the document, will be given the opportunity to question their rankings in writing to the department head, who will consult the executive committee when reconsidering the evaluation. In such a case, the department head will issue to the faculty member a final written notification explaining the decision. Additional meetings between the department head and the faculty member may be held at either’s request to discuss expectations and/or professional progress. If the annual review fails to follow these published guidelines, complaints should be directed in writing to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and copied to the Dean of Faculties.

The annual review serves as the primary documentation not only for evaluation of job performance but also for merit increases. On the basis of the completed evaluations and after consulting with the executive committee, the department head will recommend specific salaries to the dean when the university budget becomes known. When the recommendations have been approved by the Board of Regents, the department head will notify each faculty member of their respective salaries.

This process for annual review also acknowledges that research, teaching, and service loads may vary from faculty member to faculty member as their careers evolve. The default position is that all faculty members will teach a 2-2 teaching load, maintain a productive research agenda, and participate in department, college, university, and/or professional affairs. This document explains the circumstances that would bring about differential teaching or service responsibilities for tenured faculty (in order to maintain approximately comparable workloads across the department) or allow them to negotiate individualized loads. Faculty members who take on greater teaching or service responsibilities will be evaluated for merit in accordance with their altered workloads. Guidelines concerning differential workloads (and unsatisfactory rankings) are applicable only to tenured faculty, as performance expectations for tenure-track faculty members are discussed in other university, college, and departmental documents.

Tenured faculty members receiving two consecutive unsatisfactory rankings will face the
prospect of altered performance responsibilities. In the case of unsatisfactory research productivity, the faculty member will be subject to an increased teaching or service load for a period of three years—a 3-3 teaching load being the most likely outcome. In most instances, a faculty member with a 3-3 teaching load will be evaluated as 20% Research, 60% Teaching, and 20% Service. In most instances, an increased service load will be evaluated at 20% Research, 20% Teaching, and 60% Service. In the case of unsatisfactory teaching or service, the faculty member will be subject to remedial actions and professional development as appropriate. In all cases, the department head, in consultation with the faculty member, will identify in advance, and in a written document signed by both parties, the conditions under which such adjustments or recommended actions will be continued, reversed, or modified (including appropriate expectations for those with lowered research weights). A faculty member who chooses to forgo the adjustment or recommended action may be subject to the procedures specified under university policy for post-tenure review should he/she receive a third consecutive unsatisfactory ranking (see University Rule 12.06.99.M1).

Differential teaching responsibilities may also be seen as an opportunity for those whose greatest contributions to the department take place in the classroom. Tenured faculty members may work with the department head to initiate altering their performance expectations and the respective weights assigned to research, teaching, and service. Those who volunteer for a 3-3 teaching load in this manner will be evaluated as 20% Research, 60% Teaching, and 20% Service. Similarly, those who volunteer for an increased service load (comparable, in terms of commitment, to a third class) will be evaluated at 20% Research, 20% Teaching, 60% Service. Both teaching and service options require the approval of the executive committee. In voluntary as with mandatory cases, the department head, in consultation with the faculty member, will identify in advance, and in a written document signed by both parties, the conditions under which adjustments in teaching or service will be continued, reversed, or modified.

The executive committee will determine unsatisfactory/satisfactory rankings (one is the inverse of the other) annually and within a three to five year window (the current year under consideration and the two to four preceding calendar years), as defined by the criteria below. An unsatisfactory ranking results from a faculty member’s failure to meet departmental standards in one or more of the three areas of responsibility (research, teaching, or service) as defined by the criteria below, pending a review by the department head, in consultation with the executive committee, of the person’s professional development and of his/her individual circumstances (e.g., a serious health condition or acute family care situation—see Appendix B). A satisfactory ranking reflects a faculty member having met departmental standards in all three areas of responsibility.

The three other categories of performance above and beyond “satisfactory” (and therefore simply gradations of “satisfactory”) pertain to a faculty member’s accomplishments in the given calendar year: commendable for exceeding departmental standards; excellent for excelling in the given area; and superior for extraordinary performance.

B. Criteria. For descriptions of peer-reviewed book presses, classroom books, peer-reviewed
journals, and major grants and fellowships, see Appendix A.

**RESEARCH**

Unsatisfactory: The absence of a significant and productive research agenda—one demonstrating progress, trajectory, and sustainability (as defined, below, under “satisfactory”).

Satisfactory: The presence of a significant and productive research agenda—one demonstrating progress, trajectory, and sustainability. Evidence of such an agenda involves meeting two sets of criteria: (1) at a minimum *over a three year period*, editing a volume of scholarly essays; or publishing an article in a second tier disciplinary journal or a second-tier area-specific journal, a scholarly essay in an edited volume, or a significant article-length translation; or winning small (as opposed to “major”) external grants or fellowships totaling approximately $3,000; or receiving other research honors, such as a significant article or book award; or having a major (A- or B-category) research monograph in its third year of publication; and (2) other indicators of continued activity in at least two of the three years, such as papers presented at professional meetings, invited lectures, grant proposals, additional publications submitted, Glasscock Center working-group papers, department colloquium presentations, and other comparable research products.

In exceptional circumstances, such as the publication of a major (A- or B-category) research monograph, it may be appropriate to take into account a longer window (of up to five years), but past achievements cannot substitute for tangible evidence of an ongoing research program.

Commendable: Demonstrable evidence of research productivity in the given calendar year, such as editing a volume of scholarly essays; or publishing an article in a second tier disciplinary journal or a second-tier area-specific journal, a scholarly essay in an edited volume, or a significant article-length translation; or winning small (as opposed to “major”) external grants or fellowships totaling approximately $3,000; or receiving other research honors, such as a significant article or book award; or having a major (A- or B-category) research monograph in its third year of publication.

Excellent: Demonstrable evidence of a highly productive research agenda in the given calendar year, such as the publication of a major article in a first tier disciplinary journal or a first tier area-specific journal, two scholarly articles in second-tier disciplinary or area-specific journals (or any two “commendable” research accomplishments, e.g., a scholarly essay in an edited volume and a book award), a significant book-length translation, or a classroom book; or winning a major (national or international) external grant or fellowship, awarded for the year in which the grant or fellowship begins; or having a major (A- or B-category) research monograph in its second year of publication.

Superior: Publication of a major research monograph in the given calendar year.

**TEACHING**
Unsatisfactory: The absence of demonstrated competence in the classroom over a three year period as evidenced by a faculty member’s failure to meet basic expectations (as defined below under “satisfactory”).

Satisfactory: Demonstrated competence in the classroom over a three year period as evidenced by a faculty member meeting basic expectations, including consistently employing pedagogically sound techniques to instruct students, meeting classes during regularly scheduled times, holding regularly scheduled office hours, meeting minimum syllabus requirements, posting syllabi and C.V. on the HOWDY website, submitting midterm and final grades on time, conducting student evaluations, complying with W-course standards, and mitigating concerns raised in student evaluations.

Commendable: Extra engagement in the classroom in the given calendar year beyond meeting basic expectations, such as teaching independent studies (485s, 497s, and 685s) or first-year critical thinking seminars, supervising honors theses, honors contracts, and/or embedded sections, winning curriculum development grants, participating in workshops or programs designed to improve teaching, participating in study abroad, adding a new course to the inventory of classes, publishing pedagogical articles in scholarly journals, delivering pedagogical papers at professional conferences, hosting a speaker in one’s class who addresses concerns of diversity and/or internationalization/globalization with respect to the course topic(s), contributing significantly to internationalization/globalization and/or diversity by, for example, participating in a teaching workshop or institute sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence or the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity; or contributing markedly to graduate education, as evidenced by chairing one or two committees or serving on at least four others, or significant recruiting efforts.

Excellent: In the given calendar year, contributing substantially to the graduate program, as evidenced by chairing two or more committees and serving on more than four others, chairing a completed Ph.D., placement of a Ph.D. in a tenure-track position at a B.A./M.A.-granting institution or a significant non-academic position, scholarly publications by one’s current graduate students, or significant recruiting efforts to enhance diversity and/or internationalization/globalization; contributing substantially to the undergraduate program, as evidenced by three or more “commendable” teaching accomplishments, receipt of a College-level teaching award (or equivalent), or publication of a pedagogical book.

Superior: Extraordinary teaching in the given calendar year as evidenced by, for example, receipt of a University-level teaching award (or equivalent); recent placement of a Ph.D. in a tenure-track position at a Ph.D.-granting institution.

SERVICE

Unsatisfactory: Failure to provide service in a manner appropriate to rank over a three year period (as defined below under “satisfactory”).
Satisfactory: Participation over a three year period, as judged in a manner appropriate to rank, in departmental processes (e.g., attending faculty and tenure and promotion meetings, providing the head with a valid explanation for an absence from a tenure and promotion meeting, serving, when asked, on standing committees, T&P subcommittees and search committees); and in professional activities (e.g., reviewing books and manuscripts, chairing and/or commenting on conference panels).

Commendable: In the given calendar year, exercising a leadership role in departmental processes (e.g., chairing a department standing committee, T&P subcommittee, or search committee; writing a research report for a T&P subcommittee; serving on the executive committee; or providing significant faculty mentoring); in university activities (e.g., sponsoring a student organization; giving a scholarly presentation on campus; serving as a member of the Faculty Senate; taking the training as an Aggie Ally; or conducting Center for Teaching Excellence workshop on diversity and/or internationalization/globalization); or in professional activities (e.g., reviewing at least four books and/or manuscripts; serving on editorial boards, program or prize committees, or as officers for associations; or significant public service to the local community).

Excellent: In the given calendar year, exceptional participation in university affairs (e.g., serving as a department officer, or on important college and university committees such as the Dean’s Advisory Committee, or a college or university-level search committee, or as an officer in the Faculty Senate) or in professional affairs (e.g., serving as an evaluator for a major/national grant or fellowship organization, an academic program external review committee, on an external tenure and promotion committee, as an organizer of a major conference, or as an editor of a second-tier disciplinary or area-specific journal).

Superior: Extraordinary participation in the given calendar year in university or professional affairs such as chairing a highly significant university committee, serving as president of a major historical association, or editing a first-tier disciplinary or area-specific journal.

Note: According to University Rule 12.01.99.M2, section 1.5.5.8, noncompliance with either minimum safety standards or state/university mandated trainings automatically leads to an unsatisfactory ranking.

Appendix A

Peer-Reviewed Book Presses

A Such a press enjoys the reputation of being a major national/international publisher producing books of the highest quality that are well publicized, widely distributed, and reviewed in major
journals. A book published by an A-category press typically is in the best position to make a significant impact in the discipline.

B The B-category press has a distinguished publishing record and a national/international reputation in the subject areas of the books that are distributed under its name. A book published by a B-category press is well positioned to make an impact in its field of study.

C The C-category press peer-reviews the manuscripts it publishes, but does not have a national/international reputation in the area of study of the books it distributes. Such a book is not best positioned to make an impact in its field.

**Classroom Books**

Those intended primarily for use in undergraduate courses—i.e., in series published by presses such as Bedford/St. Martin’s, Longman, Wiley, etc., as well as authored or co-authored textbooks published by appropriate presses.

**Peer-Reviewed Journals**

First tier disciplinary journals publish high-quality articles of significance across the discipline. Such journals enjoy high reputations, are likely to be widely read and cited by scholars, and their impact on the discipline is great. Examples may include but are not limited to: *American Historical Review, Past and Present, Journal of the Historical Society, Daedalus*

First tier area-specific journals publish high-quality articles of significance within a specific sub-field or area and generally are the leading journals in the particular subfield or area. Such journals enjoy high reputations throughout their sub-field and often beyond and are likely to be read and cited by scholars in their relevant sub-field and beyond. Examples may include but are not limited to: *Journal of American History, William and Mary Quarterly, Journal of Southern History, Business History Review, French Historical Studies, Journal of Modern History, Pacific Historical Review, Journal of Military History, Journal of Asian Studies, Technology and Culture*

Second tier disciplinary journals are respected in their fields and publish articles of interest across the discipline. Examples include but are not limited to: *The Historian, History Today*

Second tier area-specific journals publish peer-reviewed articles of interest within a specific sub-field or area. Publications in these journals frequently are selectively read and cited by scholars active in the relevant sub-field or area. Examples may include but are not limited to: *The Southern Quarterly, Journal of the West, Southern California Quarterly, The Annals of Iowa, Contemporary European History, European History Quarterly, German Studies Review, Modern & Contemporary France, Journal of Baltic Studies*

**Major Grants and Fellowships**
Highly competitive, national, semester or year-long research fellowships, such as those awarded by the American Council of Learned Societies, American Philosophical Society, Fulbright Scholar Program, Huntington Library, Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Humanities Center, Woodrow Wilson Center, and others approved by the College of Liberal Arts in its “Policy on Development Leaves, External Fellowships, and Course Buyouts,” Appendix 1.

Appendix B

Individual Circumstances

In their efforts to maintain a significant and productive research agenda, faculty members should not be penalized in annual reviews for individual circumstances such as a serious health condition or acute family care situation that cause them to miss significant time (three months or so). A faculty member cannot earn a satisfactory ranking in research solely on the basis of illness or acute family care situations, but may request, in writing and with proper documentation, an extension of the three to five year window owing to the issues raised by such circumstances. In order to ensure fairness, equal access to assistance, and consistency in how such situations are handled across the department, the department head, in consultation with the executive committee, will normally consider such requests after the faculty member has been granted leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/leave/fmla) or a temporary workload adjustment under College of Liberal Arts policy (http://liberalartscommunity.tamu.edu/docs/Bjobling/FacultyWorkloadAdjustmentPolicy.pdf).

Upon approving the request, the department head will extend the three to five year window forward, so as to allow the faculty member to recoup the research time lost in the given calendar year, and backward so as to, in essence, remove the given calendar year from the evaluation period. To illustrate, assume, for example, that the significant period of lost research time occurred in calendar year 2013. The faculty member’s evaluation for calendar year 2014 will extend to what amounts to a four-year window (2011-2014) and the evaluation for 2015 will cover the period 2012-2015. The 2016 evaluation, at which time calendar year 2013 will fall out of the three year window, will return to normal. Both these four year windows extend to six years where appropriate (i.e., with the publication of a major research monograph, as stated on p. 4 of these guidelines). Similarly, the 2013 evaluation period will extend back four years to include 2010 for publications, grants, and awards and to 2008 for a major research monograph.

As with all annual reviews, the executive committee will determine the faculty member’s ranking in research on the basis of the criteria listed on p. 4 of these guidelines, as opposed to publications submitted or projects in progress.

The executive committee and department head will revisit this document at least every five years, starting no later than September 2018.