

(Last reviewed in January of 2011)
Instructions for Executive Committee Merit Review

The Charge. The Sociology Department bylaws establish the basis for forming the Executive Committee. The Bylaws also charge the EC with the responsibility of conducting the merit evaluations of faculty each year.

General Procedures. A document entitled “Sociology Department Guidelines for the Evaluation of Tenure Track Faculty” summarizes general issues relating to the merit reviews. It is a compilation of items taken from minutes of past department meetings. I have a copy labeled “Revised May 1999”. This revision incorporated the mandated steps for triggering post tenure review. To my knowledge, there have been no revisions since.

Merit Review Procedures. The specific procedures listed below are not required by department bylaws. They are a continuation of practices adopted by past Executive Committees going back more than a decade. As Chair of the Executive Committee, I suggest we use them again this year. But, we could revise or replace the specific procedures based on a majority vote by the members of the Executive Committee.

Note that the evaluations are for the calendar year, 2010 in this case, *not* the academic year. This can be consequential for how publications are evaluated. Articles count in only one year and that is the calendar year of publication. Research monographs count in two calendar years; edited books count for one calendar year. Barring unusual circumstances, publication dates follow the journal year and the book year for the journal or book as appropriate. Exceptions can be considered if it can be documented that the book or article was physically in print in the calendar year for the review but lists a later calendar year in the journal or book.

Non-Tenure Track faculty are evaluation on teaching (90%) and service (10%) only.

Summary of the Steps in the Evaluation and Merit Score Process

1. Executive Committee members each independently review the evaluation materials for all sociology faculty members. The evaluation materials consist of the following:
 - a. faculty evaluation form including: copies of course syllabi and copies of articles and books and other relevant materials.
 - b. student teaching evaluations (assembled by the department)
 - c. teaching summary data sheet (assembled by the department)

All EC members should come to the review meeting with notes on the records of each faculty member.

To help establish the independence of scoring, Executive Committee members should assign *preliminary* scores on research, teaching, and service. These scores are not final. They may be revised based on information and perspective that emerges from the merit review discussion.

2. The Department Head randomly assigns EC members to serve as primary and secondary reviewers for individual cases. These assignments are distributed to Executive Committee members along with the announcement of the date for conducting the reviews.
3. On the review date(s), the Executive Committee meets and reviews the cases for individual faculty members in a random order as determined by the Department Head.
 - a. The primary reviewer leads the discussion of the case in question with assistance from the secondary reviewer.
 - b. Other EC members join in until the discussion has concluded.
4. EC members recommend scores on research, teaching, and service, taken in that order. Scoring draws on the following heuristic for performance ranges.

<u>Performance</u>	<u>Relevant Scores</u>
Above Average	8, 9, 10
Average	5, 6, 7
Below Average	2, 3, 4
Unsatisfactory/Inactive	1

- a. EC members assign a first round of scores; individuals may change their initial scores based on discussion.
- b. After first round scores are cast, the median of the scores is used to set the middle value of a three point range of scores that can be assigned in a second round.

For example, if the EC members assign scores of 2, 4, 4, 5, and 8, the median score would be 4. Note that the median might not be an integer – the median would be 4.5 for the scores 2, 4, 5, 8.)

- c. EC members cast a second round of votes. The votes must fall within a range of plus or minus one point from the median score from the first round of votes. (For example, a median of 4 from round 1 would allow votes of 3, 4, and 5 in the second round of scores.)
5. All assigned scores are recorded. At least two EC members should record scores.
6. The Department Head compiles the assigned scores to obtain the faculty members average scores on research, teaching, and service.
7. The resulting average scores are used to prepare an “Overall Merit Score”. This is a weighted average of the separate research, teaching, and service averages. The weights used depend on the nature of the faculty member’s appointment (e.g., senior lecturers, untenured faculty, tenured faculty, tenured faculty in administrative positions, etc.) and rank.
8. The Department Head distributes the results to the members of the EC. The results are reviewed to inspect for anomalies or inconsistencies in scoring. Scores may be reviewed and revised by agreement of EC members.
9. EC members prepare draft letters for the faculty members for which they served as primary reviewers. The letters report the merit scores assigned and the substantive basis for the outcome.
10. The Department Head finalizes the letters and circulates them for comment. When all EC members are satisfied, final copies are circulated for signatures.
11. The Department Head prepares a summary of procedure and a summary data sheet to accompany the letters. The purpose is to provide an overview of the evaluation process and a context for interpreting evaluation scores.
12. The final letters and the accompanying summary materials are distributed to the faculty members.
13. Appeals are handled according to department bylaws.
14. The Department Head records the Overall Merit Scores in a data base of ongoing merit review scores.