

# TEXAS A&M ESSENTIALS

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## Faculty Performance Evaluations

Texas A&M rules mandate that all faculty, regardless of rank and title, be evaluated annually for their performance according to job descriptions with expectations that are set a priori. The rules specify that the annual evaluations must be provided in writing and that they encourage faculty and their department heads to discuss past achievements and shortcomings, as well as expectations for future performance. The purpose of the evaluation is multifaceted. Evaluations are the main source of information to determine merit-based salary raises. When faculty perform below expectations, annual evaluations serve as the basis for making personnel decisions, such as selecting whose appointments will or will not be renewed (in the case of non-tenured faculty), who may be recommended for promotion, or who may be subjected to a post-tenure remediation plan. Faculty evaluations are also used to assign faculty loads to various duties. For example, individual faculty workloads may be adjusted by assigning extra duties in an area of performance where they excel and fewer duties in areas where they demonstrate less than stellar performance. Another important function of the annual evaluation is to help faculty reflect on and define their short- and long-term professional goals in a manner that is both personally fulfilling and advantageous and congruent with the mission, goals and priorities of the department, college, and university. Each department, unless they defer to college level guidelines, is required to publish and make available annual evaluation guidelines to their faculty. The guidelines define the process and procedures to follow, the purpose and scope of the evaluation, and the concrete expectations associated with various degrees of merit and achievement (e.g., unsatisfactory, satisfactory, outstanding, extraordinary).

The expectations for each faculty member are set according to the role and scope of job duties, which must be made explicit in an annual appointment letter. Broadly speaking, the possible duties of a faculty member can be grouped into one or more of the following categories: teaching, research, and service. All faculty members must engage in teaching, which can include not only classroom activities, but also supervision of students, mentoring programs, or distance instruction. The extent to which a faculty member engages also in research and service defines title and rank. The assessment of faculty performance aims to evaluate the extent to which the faculty member excels. Excellence is defined and measured by addressing quantity, quality and impact of the outputs. Each of these dimensions is measured by different indicators.

**TEACHING** Teaching evaluations involve different judges or evaluators (students, faculty colleagues, department heads, self-assessment), as well as different sources of information (e.g., standardized questionnaires, interviews, direct observation, review of teaching-related materials, mentoring, teaching innovations). In addition, each source of data can reveal various types of valuable information that speak to attitudes and aptitudes that go into creating an outstanding teaching experience (e.g., course content, mastery of the material, communication ability, motivational aptitude, clarity, organization). According to a university rule in place since the late 1980s, all evaluations of teaching performance must include opinions and feedback from the students.

**RESEARCH AND OTHER CREATIVE ENDEAVORS** Tenured, tenure-track, and research faculty are expected to contribute substantially to the discovery, creation, and dissemination of knowledge through rigorous peer-reviewed outlets. In most fields, this involves anonymous reviews by experts who assess the validity of the outcome, as well as the novelty, creativity, importance, and impact of the product. The quality and impact of the outcome is generally inferred by the quality of the publication outlet, as well as by the attention and following it receives. This following can be measured by the number of times the original work is cited within and across fields, for example. In fields where research is costly, an investigator's ability to compete for federal, state, or corporate funding is used as an indicator of the investigators' quality. Other measures of success may include peer recognitions such as competitive national and international awards or fellowships, patents and licensure, and invited talks or consultations.

**SERVICE** All faculty members are expected to contribute to some extent to service to the university and their profession. Internal service refers to activities that assist in the processes and procedures needed to run the university. External service refers either to service to the profession or service to society. Examples of service to the profession include activities such as serving as a peer reviewer or judge of the value and validity of other investigators' research, editorial roles for major professional journals, or leadership in professional organizations.

**TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE OVERLAP** Although teaching, research, and service are presented as separate categories and are assessed as separate dimensions, in reality there is significant overlap. For example, faculty supervise graduate and post-graduate research, include students in their publications, provide editorial service because of research expertise, and participate in research-related university service or service learning courses.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS  
MAY INCLUDE PEER  
RECOGNITIONS SUCH AS  
COMPETITIVE AWARDS  
OR FELLOWSHIPS,  
PATENTS AND LICENSURE,  
AND INVITED TALKS OR  
CONSULTATIONS.



## RESOURCES

[University Rule 12.01.99.M2](#)—University Statement on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, Tenure and Promotion