

III-8
TYPES OF REVIEW
(Revised 4/26)

The merit review process at UCSB (and across the UC system) is designed to reward meritorious performance with advancement in step and/or rank and the corresponding salary increment. The phrase “merit review” in the UC is used to refer to the review process to move up a step on the scales, which is directly linked to compensation. Criteria and principles for advancement are described below.

The Office of Academic Personnel annually publishes promotion and merit eligibility lists for each department. All merits and promotions will be effective July 1.

On-time merit advancement

A merit action is considered on-time when the departmental recommendation is for a normal advance in step that does not increase or decrease the off-scale salary supplement and does not involve an overlapping step or mandatory review.

For individuals paid at the UCSB minimum rate, on-schedule advancement will be to the next step at the UCSB minimum rate.

For individuals paid above the UCSB minimum rate, off-scale supplements are retained in on-time, normative advancements.

On-time merit advancement at the Assistant and Associate levels occurs after two years at step, and at the Full level after three years at step.

Please see Red Binder III-9 Checklist for Research Reviews.

The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs has approval authority for all advancement actions.

Other reviews

I. Accelerated actions

Departments should not hesitate to propose accelerated advancement in cases where there is clear evidence of superior performance. When warranted, acceleration will typically occur during an on-time review, though in special cases it may occur through early advancement to the next step or rank. At the time of normative review, an increase in the off-scale supplement may also be recommended if an additional full-step acceleration does not appropriately reward the record. The addition of, or an increase in, off-scale supplement will also be considered an acceleration. Departments should review candidates performing at a superior level in advance of their normal eligibility for merit increase or promotion. The level of acceleration depends on the extent to which the record exceeds expectations. **In no case for accelerated advancement may deficiencies be evident in any area of review.**

II. Decelerated actions

A case will be considered decelerated if the candidate has been at the current step for longer than the normal years at step. At the time of normative review, an increase in off-scale salary only will also be considered a decelerated action. The departmental letter should give an explanation for the deceleration.

If the outcome of a merit review is no change in rank, step, or off-scale, the candidate will continue to be eligible for advancement in rank or step each year until the advancement in rank or step occurs.

An academic researcher may receive no more than two within-step increases in the off-scale supplement.

III. Promotion to the Associate level

Professional Research Series:

The principal criterion for promotion to Associate Researcher is superior intellectual attainment in research or other creative achievement. The most useful critical assessment of "superior intellectual attainment" must come primarily from those who are established figures in the field, primarily from colleagues in the department as well as faculty in comparable departments and programs nationally and internationally. (In this connection, departments may wish to provide an operational interpretation of the phrase "superior intellectual attainment" which they consider appropriate to the particular discipline or subject-area). Candid, thorough, documented and concise assessment on this level is clearly essential if reviewing agencies are to perform their proper analytical and evaluative task. Furthermore, it is essential that a candidate's performance be measured by the highest standards of excellence that are currently recognized by a given intellectual discipline or subject-area. The level of research independence expected for promotion to Associate Researcher is equivalent to the expectation of research independence for a ladder faculty member being promoted to Associate Professor. Promotion to Associate Researcher will normally take place at the beginning of the seventh year of service and must occur no later than the end of the eighth year of service.

Project Scientist and Specialist Series:

Advancement from Assistant Project Scientist to Associate Project Scientist requires competency and an expanding level of independence. Advancement from Assistant Specialist to Associate Specialist requires the candidate to provide independent input into the planning and execution of the research and have a record of academic accomplishments.

IV. **Promotion to Full**

Professional Research Series:

Promotion to Researcher requires an accomplished record of research that is judged to be excellent within the larger discipline or field. Superior intellectual attainment, as evidenced in research or other creative achievement, is an indispensable qualification for advancement to Researcher.

Project Scientist and Specialist Series:

Advancement to Project Scientist requires competency and an expanding level of independence. Advancement to Specialist requires the candidate to provide considerable independent input into the planning and execution of the research and have a significant record of academic accomplishments.

V. **Merit to an overlapping step.**

Assistant Researcher V, Associate Researcher IV, Assistant Project Scientist V and Associate Project Scientist IV are overlapping steps, in the sense that these steps may be utilized for advancement when a candidate is eligible for promotion or career review, but whose established record of accomplishment has not yet attained sufficient strength to warrant the promotion or career review advancement. Placement on the overlapping steps may occur only when the expectations for a normative, one-step advancement have been met. Service at an overlapping step is in lieu of service at the first step of the next rank. Once advanced to an overlapping step, the normal progression is for promotion to the next rank. Further advancement within the overlapping step will happen only in very rare and unusual circumstances. Upon advancement to an overlapping step, the candidate is eligible for promotion the following year. If promoted earlier than the normal years at step for Step I of the higher rank, promotion should be lateral and eligibility for future merit will be determined based on the combination of years at the overlapping step and years at Step I at the higher rank.

VI. **Merit to or within Above Scale**

Advancement to Above Scale is reserved for scholars of the highest distinction whose work has received international recognition. Advancement to Above Scale will normally occur after at least four years of service at the highest step within the full level rank of the series with the individual's complete academic career being reviewed. The guidelines for Senate Faculty increase to and above Scale (Red Binder I-43) apply to Researcher above scale actions. Criteria for Above Scale advancements for Project Scientists and Specialists shall be consistent with the criteria established for each series.

VII. **Mandatory reviews**

Appointees at all levels must undergo a performance review at least once every five years. This review may not be deferred. Non-submission of materials by the candidate will not constitute automatic deferral in the case of a mandatory review. If the appointee does not turn in materials by the departmental due date, the department will conduct the review based on the materials available in the department as of the due date.

VIII. **No Change**

As with any on-time advancement, the individual's next eligibility date for academic review will be based on the effective date of the advancement, if an acceleration in step or off-scale occurs. If the outcome of a merit review is no change in step or off-scale, the academic appointee remains eligible for review each year until advancement in rank, step, or off-scale occurs.

Professional Research Series only:

IX. **Terminal Appointments**

If, during a review of an Assistant Researcher, a preliminary decision is made for a terminal appointment, the procedures outlined in Red Binder I-39 must be followed. Appropriate notification and opportunity for response must be provided.

X. **Merit to Researcher VI**

Advancement to Researcher VI is based on evidence of highly distinguished scholarship. In addition, great distinction, recognized nationally or internationally in scholarly or creative achievement is required for merit to Researcher VI. This is a career review and therefore is based on a review of the individual's entire academic career.