Step V of the Assistant Professorship and Step IV of the Associate Professorship are "special" steps in the ladder series -- "special" in the sense that these steps may be utilized for advancement when a member of the ladder faculty shows evidence of work that is likely to lead to promotion in the near future when completed, but whose established record of accomplishment has not yet attained sufficient strength to warrant promotion. In addition, the use of the special step of Assistant Professor V is appropriate for individuals who have accumulated a significant research record, but have not yet established an equivalent teaching record that would merit consideration for tenure. Service at the special steps is in lieu of service at the first step of the next rank.

Once advanced to a special step, the normal progression is for promotion to the next rank. Upon advancement to a special step, the faculty member is eligible for review for promotion each year until promoted. If promoted earlier than the normative time at step (two years at Assistant V and three years at Associate IV), promotion should be lateral and eligibility for future merit will be determined based on the combination of years at the special step and years at Step I at the higher rank. If promoted at the normative time at step, the “on-time” advancement will be to Step II of the higher rank. The appropriate level of advancement in the case of promotion after more than the normative time at step will be dependent on the strength of the case and should not be determined simply based on time served at the special step.

Further advancement within the special step will not occur at less than the normative time at step (two years at Assistant V and three years at Associate IV) and will require evidence that promotion is likely to occur with the next review.