Merit Review Process

Comprehensive Overview for Department Chairs
Department Notifications and Deadlines
(Red Binder I-2)

• Notification of Eligibility for Merit & Promotion (RB I-4)
  • Early April

• Dean’s Authority Cases: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Monday in November
  • This year: November 14, 2022
    • One-step advances at Assistant/LPSOE & Associate/LSOE level with up to \(\frac{1}{2}\) step in additional off-scale
    • One-step advances at Professor/SLSOE

• Expanded Review Cases: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Monday in December
  • This year: December 12, 2022
    • Basically, everything else:
      • Formal appraisal, promotions, advancement to P-VI & Above Scale, advancement to special steps, accelerations (except as noted in RB I-30), reductions in off-scale, terminal appt
1. appointment year is included as a year of service for new hires
2. attend to external letters
## The UC Step System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistant Professor (8 year limit, non-tenured)</th>
<th>Associate Professor (6 years standard, tenured)</th>
<th>Professor (indefinite, tenured)</th>
<th>Above Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Step</td>
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<td>V</td>
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<td>3 (not used at UCSB)</td>
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Normal period of service: 4
The Many Roles of a Department Chair

• Serve as the liaison between faculty members and the dean (and other reviewing agencies)

• Provide mentoring for faculty, especially junior faculty
  • Consult with faculty who are eligible for review; think proactively about the trajectory of case (e.g., will this be an acceleration that will require letters that otherwise would not be needed)

• Ensure personnel processes is fair, consistent, and efficient

• Ensure that department and university policies are followed
  • Work with faculty to confirm that all materials, including biobib, are accurate and updated
    • Biobib templates for Professor Series and LSOE Series on the AP website under “Forms”

• Enforce deadlines
• Understand and adhere to the steps in the personnel review process
  • See Red Binder I-22: Departmental Checklists for Academic Advancement

• Understand the format & content of the Biobib
  • See Red Binder I-27: Instructions for Completion of the Biobib
    • remind faculty it is each member’s responsibility to appropriately & accurately maintain their biobib

• Understand appropriate justifications for accelerations
  • See Red Binder I-36: Accelerations

• Understand the advancement and review process
  • See Red Binder I-75: Appointment and Advancement

• Follow guidelines for external reviewers and associated materials, when relevant
  • See Red Binder I-46, I-48, I-49, I-50, and I-51
    • Although external letters not required for advancement to Professor VI, notify faculty that they are strongly encouraged to submit CVs with cases to P-VI
Chair Responsibilities
(Red Binder I-22)

Stay informed of your Department’s bylaws, current RB policy, UC policy

- Notify candidate
- Explain criteria for advancement
  - departmental, campus, and system-wide
- Explain campus review process and UC policy on personnel records
  - Explain materials used by the department, campus, & UC in the review process (e.g., biobib, outside letters, etc.)
- Provide Safeguard statement (RB I-26) and Advancement Checklist (RB I-22)
- Notify candidate of due-date for all materials
  - Inform them of consequences for late submission of materials or submission of inaccurate/incomplete materials
- Address any issues relevant to their particular case
  - Answer questions they may have
Types of Cases to Consider

- Normative advancement
- Deferrals (Asst Prof/LPSOE requires memo and deferral case)
- Mandatory reviews
  - Faculty must undergo review a minimum of every 5 years
  - Specific actions, e.g. appraisal at Year 4, tenure review no later than Year 7
- Accelerations
  - If warranted, must be explicitly and separately justified
- Within-Step increases
  - Only if normative time has been served
- Career reviews
  - Promotion to Associate or Full; Advancement to P-VI, Above Scale
Areas of Review

**Professor Series**
- Research & Creative Activities
- Teaching & Mentoring
- Professional Activity
- Service

**LSOE Series**
- Teaching & Mentoring
- Professional &/or Scholarly Achievement and Activity
- research credited here (*not* required)
- Service

- *Contributions to Diversity*
Accelerations (RB I-36)

- Must meet the requirement for normative advancement
  - i.e., no deficiencies in any areas
- Should occur at normative time at rank/step
- Can be apportioned in off-scale or in rank/step
- Must be justified by “compelling evidence”
  - Justification narrative provided in department letter, preferably in separate section
- Only under rare circumstances will accelerations deviate from the following:
  - Particularly noteworthy achievement and/or impact in research/creative activities
  - Extraordinary achievements in two or more areas of review
  - Prestigious new awards or other such evidence of peer recognition
  - Extraordinary achievements and activities in DEI, exceeding normative expectations
Crediting Accomplishments

• Recommendations and justifications in each area of review

• Contributions to DEI
  • Winter 2022 AP Newsletter contains details on basic expectations for all faculty vs. accomplishments that exceed these normative expectations for DEI

• Above Scale reminders (RB I-43):
  • Accelerations in time are no longer permitted (minimum 4 yrs btw advancements)
  • 1 increment = 10% of the on-scale Step IX rate
  • 1.5 increments: *extraordinary* achievements in 2+ areas of review
  • 2 increments: *extraordinary* achievements in ALL areas of review
    • 0.5 increment can be used only in rare and specific circumstances
Review during 4th year of service at the rank of Assistant Professor/LPSOE to assess “the prospects of candidates for eventual promotion to tenure”

• May not occur if appointed at the higher steps of the Assistant rank
  • i.e. promoted to tenure by year 4 or earlier

• Recommendations include:
  • Continued Candidacy
  • Continued Candidacy with Reservations
  • Termination
Special Steps (Red Binder I-37)

What are the special steps?
• Assistant V and Associate IV, which are lateral to Associate I and Professor I

When and why are they used?
• “…work that is likely to lead to promotion in the near future when completed, but … not yet attained sufficient strength to warrant promotion.” For example…
• Advancement at the normative time is to Step II at the next rank, maintaining career progress
• To be used only when faculty have evidence of work that is near completion and once published will be ready for promotion to the next rank
• COVID Impact and Use of Special Step (AVC/CAP memo 3-24-21)
  • temporary delay in research progress due to Covid-19
    • progress of otherwise successful research trajectory slowed or changed due to implications of Covid-19
  • COVID impact alone does NOT justify use of special step; must still be justified based on trajectory and in line with RB I-37
Chair Responsibilities, continued

• For career reviews, explain process for external letters to your faculty
  • Compile list of outside reviewers
    • Carefully adhere to Red Binder I-46: Guidelines for Letters of Evaluation
    • 6 letters minimum including 2 UC Familiar (current, former, emeriti UC Faculty)
    • Balance between department and candidate letters
      • Candidate and department derive list of names independently
    • Tenured faculty at distinguished institutions, preferably full professors, independent of the candidate
      • No close collaborators or previous letter writers
  
• Solicit letters using appropriate RB template (RB I-49; RB I-50)
  • Include solicitation letter with case materials

• Redact appropriately & provide candidate opportunity to request/review letters from external reviewers – if candidate requested letters
More on External Letters
(Red Binder I-46, I-48, I-49, I-50, and I-51)

• Do not solicit letters from:
  • Close collaborators
  • Faculty who have written for previous case

• Submit an accurate and complete Coded List of External Reviewers (RB I-48)
  • This is carefully scrutinized by reviewing agencies and can lead to requests for additional reviewers, or even failure to promote, if not properly documented
    • Description and other relevant info about reviewers belongs on the Coded List
    • Justifications for deviations from external reviewer standards also must be provided on the Coded List

• Do not provide potentially-identifying information about letter writers in the department letter
  • This can result in these letters being excluded from the case and the need to solicit additional letters. Instead, use the Coded List.
Which Cases are Career Reviews?

- Promotion to tenure/ SOE (Associate Professor/ LSOE)
- Promotion to Full (Full Professor/ Senior LSOE)
- Advancement to P-VI/ SLSOE VI
- Advancement to Above Scale
  - Career reviews require additional time and consideration; anticipate the potential for accelerations to push case into a career review
- All but Step VI advancement require external letters
  - **Please Note:** Faculty member’s CV covering full career accomplishments should be submitted in all Step VI cases
Chair Responsibilities, continued

• Running Department meetings:
  • follow Department bylaws, UCSB policy, and UC policy
    • verify and adhere to voting procedures
    • report any anomalies
  • ensure eligible faculty have access to all pertinent information/materials
    • e.g., publications, teaching evaluations, self-assessments, external letters (if relevant)
  • thoughtfully consider self-assessments, DEI statements, COVID impact statements, when provided
  • help the department come to a realistic recommendation
  • plan ahead to ensure cases submitted on time
The Department Letter

- Disciplinary expertise is the strength of the department’s recommendation
  - make the department’s recommendation count

- An informed, balanced, and analytical department letter lends weight to the department’s assessment (See Red Binder I-35: How to Write a Departmental Letter)
  - Should contain evidence, analysis, context, and justification (see also RB I-75)
    - thoughtful and thorough contextualization of accomplishments, in all areas of review
      - address influence, impact, prestige, importance, role, workload, etc. (as appropriate)
      - analytical, not simply a duplication of self-assessments
        - ensure all information is contained in the biobib
    - avoid jargon & technical terms

- Only address accomplishments from the review period (unless career review, then only in career assessment)
  - do not address previously in-press or already credited items

- Accurately reflect the overall recommendation of the department
  - should not be used to over-advocate for the candidate; particularly in first reviews where there is less teaching, fewer service opportunities, etc.
  - Include the vote and present supporting and opposing views if ‘no’ votes are present
Common Mistakes in Department Letters/Cases

- Letter simply rehashes details already available in other case materials, rather than providing original, contextual assessment and analysis

- Mismatch between bio-bib and other case materials
  - e.g. self-assessment or department letter references items not present on bio-bib

- If Department letter includes accomplishments in an incorrect area, it can lead to disappointment and confusion from the candidate. Although accomplishments will be rewarded in the appropriate area, it is disconcerting to faculty
  - e.g., textbooks are credited as teaching, so including as a research accomplishment can lead to inflated evaluations in that area of review

- Not enough context provided for activities/achievements, e.g.:
  - role/workload associated with service or professional activities
  - significance of awards/prizes, publication venues, etc.
Common Mistakes in Department Letters/Cases, cont.

• Lack of clarity on teaching load and how the candidate met this load during the review period

• “No” votes not explained (especially problematic if vote is split)

• Accelerations or special steps not adequately justified

• Over-disclosure in letter about external reviewers, potentially revealing identity

• External Reviewers do not meet RB criteria and/or deviations from policy not justified in coded list
The Bio-bib

• Updated templates available on “Forms” page of AP website for the professor series and the LSOE series

• Serves as the official document of record for accomplishments during the review period
  • materials must be consistent; items mentioned in the department letter or self assessment must also be listed in bio-bib

• Teaching Section should specify Department Teaching Load
  • clarify normative department load and explain how candidate met this load

• Remember: faculty are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date content
  • including responding to staff requests for corrections/updates
Optional Self-Assessments

• Research Statements
  • Provide context on contributions, impact, and implications of research

• Teaching Statements
  • Discuss teaching efforts, innovative approaches, addressing criticism in student evaluations

• Service and/or Professional Activities
  • Provide context on roles and scope of responsibilities for these activities

• DEI Statements (see Winter 2022 AP Newsletter)
  • Can be folded into various other self-statements, or stand alone

• COVID Impact Statements (see COVID Information & Resources on AP Website)
  • Encouraged but not required to document disruptive effects in any review area; personal/private information not necessary
    • Used to ensure accomplishments are evaluated in light of impacted opportunities
Chair Responsibilities, continued

- Make department letter available to eligible department members, for inspection
  - ‘minority opinion’ letter may be submitted at this time (these are not anonymous)
    - Unresolved issues must be addressed in a Chair’s confidential letter (see: RB I-35)

- Inform candidate of department recommendation, vote, and substance of evaluations in all areas (verbally or in writing)
  - Provide candidate opportunity to review all non-confidential documents
  - Inform candidate of right to provide a written response within 5 days to Dept or Dean, to be included in the file
    - Give sufficient time so that response can be considered in dept. letter
    - Unresolved issues should be addressed in a Chair’s confidential letter (RB I-35)

- Encourage faculty to request and read Reviewing Agency Reports upon case conclusion
Chair Responsibilities, continued

• Forwarding the completed case:
  • Ensure the candidate completes safeguard statement in AP Folio
  • Ensure the letter contains all necessary material, is complete, and properly formatted
    • See Red Binder I-31 for Dean’s Authority Cases
    • See Red Binder I-34 for Expanded Reviews
  • Confirm that faculty have reported outside professional activities (OATS)
  • Forward case to your Dean’s office

• After the case has been completed, pay attention to Reviewer Concerns; these call attention to specific deficits in the content or presentation of cases
  • Addressed to either department or candidate (or both)
  • Chairs receive copies of all Reviewer Concerns
  • Pay attention to these and implement corrections for next cycle