

Guidelines for faculty evaluation

Eric R. Weeks – May 6, 2016 – discussed at May 10, 2016 faculty retreat, deemed reasonable.

General: faculty are evaluated relative to the expectations for their rank. We are a thriving department at an R1 university and as such we have high expectations for ourselves. “Meets Expectations” is a good ranking, “Commendable” and “Exceptional” are indicating accomplishments above and beyond the expectations. For example, often in humanities departments at Emory, research is deemed “Exceptional” only in a year when a faculty member publishes a book, which typically occurs once every 5-6 years. The descriptions below include examples of typical activities that contribute to research, teaching, advising, and service, but are not an exhaustive list.

Research

Assistant professors: meeting expectations is making reasonable progress toward tenure. Especially in the early years, simply recruiting students to your group and submitting grants are the expectations. “Commendable” and “Exceptional” depend on getting grants, getting invited to give seminars at other schools, giving invited talks at conferences, and publishing papers that are based on Emory work.

Associate professors and full professors: “Meets expectations” is maintaining the level of productivity one has at the stage of being promoted. Typically this is publishing at least one or two peer-reviewed papers a year, having external funding, and applying for grants.

“Commendable” is having one or two of the following factors:

- having more than one external grant
- publishing papers in journals such as PRL, EPL, PNAS, Science, Nature X, etc.
- publishing > 4 papers in a year
- giving several invited talks at other schools and/or domestic conferences/workshops

“Exceptional” is having three or more of the above factors, and/or:

- giving invited talks at international venues
- winning a major research-related prize such as becoming an APS fellow

It is clear that a thriving research group has fluctuations in publication rates and talk invitations, so research productivity is viewed holistically: a year with low publications but high grant funding and/or good numbers of invited talks is evidence of strong research productivity. That being said, “Exceptional” indicates an unusually good year and/or a faculty member who is exceptionally productive compared to the expectations for their rank.

Lecturers: Research is not expected. Nonetheless, conducting research at the level of publishing peer-reviewed papers or giving invited talks is viewed extremely positively for lecturers. Publications and external presentations raise the visibility of the lecturer and of our department overall. This includes publications in educational journals such as *Am. J. Phys.* These activities will factor positively into the overall rating for a lecturer.

Teaching

Teaching is evaluated on several factors:

- What one does in the classroom (creative teaching methods are good; multiple student complaints about disorganization or missing office hours is bad)
- Student satisfaction (“bubble sheet” scores and student comments)
- Innovative teaching: new methods, new course development, etc.
- Other student mentoring, such as directed study

“Meets expectations”: A faculty member meeting expectations is teaching their courses; student comments are mixed but not unusually positive or negative. Bubble sheet scores ≥ 6.0 .

“Commendable”: One of the following factors:

- Mostly positive student comments (at the level of “bubble sheet” scores in the high 7’s, or in the 7’s for large introductory courses)
- Developing a successful new course, even if student evaluations are mixed
- Introducing new teaching methods, even if student evaluations are mixed. Needs to be something nontrivial (taking some development time, or implemented systematically throughout the semester)
- Significant extra-curricular teaching activities

If student evaluations of new courses/methods are mixed, a “commendable” teacher shows some level of responsiveness to student concerns.

“Exceptional”:

- More than one of the “commendable” factors
- Or, strongly positive student comments (bubble sheet scores in the 8’s, or high 7’s for large introductory courses)
- Winning a college, university, or national teaching award

Students are not always happy when one teaches a new course, or an old course in a new format; it is recognized that student evaluations will be mixed in these circumstances, and this will not be penalized in your teaching evaluation. That being said, someone who develops a new course and who gets rave reviews from students would be “Exceptional” in teaching for the year.

Advising

“Meets expectations”: For tenure-track faculty, the expectation is that you are mentoring graduate students in your group, these students attend and present at conferences, the students publish papers, and eventually they graduate. Some students will leave the program for their own reasons, and that this doesn’t typically reflect poorly on their advisor. All faculty are expected to be PACE advisors.

“Commendable”: One of the following factors:

- Being the advisor for an honors thesis
- Having formal undergraduate advising duties within our department
- Advising outside our department (for example, Pre-Health Mentoring Office)

- Mentoring a student who wins an award at a conference (for some especially prestigious student awards this might also count as a research accomplishment, e.g., Padden Award, Apker Award)
- Having an unusually large and thriving research group (≥ 6 people, exclusive of rotation students; counting undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows)

“Exceptional”:

- Having more than one of the above factors.
- Being DGS/DUS

Service

“Meets expectations”: Expectations differ strongly based on faculty rank. Assistant professors and lecturers are expected to have some involvement with the functioning of the department. Senior lecturers and tenured faculty are expected to be deeply involved with the functioning of our department, and to serve on committees for ECAS, LGS, and the university. Promotion to full professor or professor of pedagogy often is connected with visible external service such as serving on editorial boards, committees for professional societies, or with significant Emory service beyond the department level. Refereeing for journals and grants is an expectation.

“Commendable”: One or two of these factors:

- Serving on a time-intensive departmental committee (for example, a faculty search committee, committee doing major curriculum reform, etc.)
- Serving on an ECAS/LGS/EU committee or two in addition to departmental service.
- Some nontrivial outreach activities (involving preparation, not just showing up to something organized by someone else)
- Editorial board membership

Junior faculty may be commendable if they do one of these activities, senior faculty (tenured and senior lecturers) likely need to do more than one to be commendable.

“Exceptional”: Multiple factors above, and/or one or more of these factors

- Serving on ECAS T & P committee
- Serving as DUS or DGS
- Chairing a major ECAS/LGS/Emory committee
- Serving on multiple ECAS/LGS/EU committees
- For assistant professors, doing major committee work inside or outside the department
- Major / multiple / ongoing outreach activities
- Major service activities for a professional society

While all of this is relative to rank, assistant professors and lecturers who are exceptional in service too often are probably doing too much service work. Generally I am considering both quantity (of time spent on service) and quality (more than just showing up to meetings). The word “major” appears several times above and can be understood to mean “time-intensive.”