

Regis College Rank & Tenure Information on Supervisor Review and Evaluation

General.

The supervisor or special academic evaluator is meant to consider faculty-member performance from the perspective of the immediate professional supervisor (or equivalent). From the perspective of the Committee on Rank and Tenure, the best supervisor evaluations seek to help faculty members with their professional goals, consider the faculty member's effect on our students, cite specific evidence, and provide departmental and disciplinary perspective.

Avoiding and Considering Bias in Written Evaluation.

Be alert to bias. It can occur from students, staff, and faculty members and we'd like to minimize its effects.

Use **evidence and be specific about your evidence**. What did you observe? What in the self-evaluation, other submitted materials, student evaluations, conversations with students in the classes, colleague observations, or any other evidence led you to your conclusions?

When relevant, **provide context for evidence and how you're interpreting it**. Did particular circumstances make something anomalous or especially challenging for the faculty member? You can and should both consider and explain the anomaly or the challenge. You definitely can consider performance in its context. (e.g., Wonderful research and professional activity in the context of a regular year may be associated with more scholarly products and activities than wonderful performance when dealing with a global pandemic. Wonderful teaching performance in a typical class may be associated with better student comments than wonderful performance when dealing with a class that includes biased comments in its course evaluations.)

Do not use "fit" as a consideration in evaluation. Use of this nebulous concept very easily can lead to intrinsically disadvantaging difference. Difference in perspective, method of approaching tasks, or way of interacting, often can be an advantage in serving our students and our university. Focus on performance specifics. If a faculty member has repeated conflicts with colleagues or an inability to complete needed tasks in the department, detail those specifically.

In general, **avoid "bare" statements about the innate qualities of a person** (e.g., Dr. ... is talented. Dr. ... is smart.) that are not preceded or succeeded by specific evidence or a summary of specific achievements (e.g., ... & ... demonstrate that Dr. ... is hardworking and talented). Note that in performance evaluations generally, women are more likely to be recognized for their "nurturing" or relationship-focused qualities and men for their "competence" or task-focused qualities. Be alert to this pattern and be sure to center your evaluation on the specific evidence or achievements.

Read student evaluations but consider them in the context of what they can tell you. Remember that they are rough indicators and not precision instruments. Be aware that the Committee on Rank and Tenure uses and will continue to use student evaluation responses as rough and broad indicators, not fine-scale measurements. The Committee typically is looking for broad patterns or persistent difficulties repeatedly raised by students that the faculty member may not be addressing (remembering that addressing need not be doing what the student suggests). Some other things to keep in mind about student evaluations are:

- Do not allow written comments by numerically few individuals with very different perspectives from the majority to compose an outsized part of your view of the overall teaching in that course (unless they are from a student reporting specific serious misconduct). Avoid being too influenced by the outlier effect.
- The literature on student evaluations indicates that bias against women and faculty members of color frequently occurs and that this is more pronounced when evaluations focus on the individuals rather

than the course and when student attention is not brought to this tendency. (The revised student evaluation used starting Fall 2022 is responding to this.)

- The literature strongly recommends complementing student evaluations with other evidence of teaching beyond student evaluations (e.g., syllabi, assignments, observations of class, observations of out of class work with students in office hours).
- Written student comments with significant indicators of bias (e.g., comments on appearance, comments evoking stereotypes) should not be considered much beyond suggesting that the faculty member had to deal with a far more challenging class. A sympathetic supervisor conversation with the faculty member also might be in order.

For tenure and/or promotion in rank you are required to **consult with the tenured members of the Dept.** We recommend that this consultation happen in an open discussion well before the time of the evaluation rather than in individual private conversations. Good professional development requires that concerns raised by department members be communicated to the faculty member who is being evaluated. A meeting immediately before evaluation of the application is all that is required, but having discussions about professional development of faculty members before this time and conveying concerns or accolades while time remains is good practice. Some things to keep in mind for these consultations are:

- Remember that you do not want to give outsize importance to a single individual's perspective (unless it is warranted by reporting of serious misconduct).
- Be alert to biases. You are probably aware that informal academic culture can suffer from some of the same issues of bias in evaluation as student evaluations.
- If you have received a letter or specific feedback from a faculty member in the department, be aware that your role as the elected leader of your unit is to consider and evaluate the evidence and then provide your own best evaluation. In your evaluation of the faculty member you can refer to an individual statement of opinion from another faculty member, echo its contents in your letter, include it as an attachment, or, after consideration, ignore it.

Be cognizant of if you are using **honorifics** (Dr. Surname) or a first name. Be consistent across *ALL* of your evaluations. In performance evaluations generally, women are more likely to be referred to via a first name and men are more likely to be referred to using an honorific. The Committee on Rank and Tenure consistently uses honorifics in its letters, Dr. for those with doctoral degrees and Prof. for those with non-doctoral degrees.

Pay attention to the faculty member being evaluated, whether it is what the faculty member states in the self-evaluation/application or in other communications. The self-evaluation often is the first time someone has to comprehensively think "how did this go?" Often, important context is obvious in the self-evaluation, and it can help you both with evaluation and with helping the faculty member with professional development. As supervisor, you can also **review past self-evaluations and evaluation letters from the faculty member's Academic Record File.** Doing this is essential when you are a new chair to be aware of what has and has not previously been conveyed to the faculty member, as well as generally ensuring consistency through transitions between chairs.

How Supervisor Evaluations Fit In.

Faculty member self-evaluation provides the first evaluation. Yearly for ranked faculty members before tenure and/or promotion (or in the first five years for ranked, non-tenure track faculty members). Every five years for other ranked faculty members. Also happens in other years whenever requested by the faculty member, supervisor, or the Dean.

Supervisor evaluation (or Special Academic Evaluator) considers the self-evaluation, the required course observation(s), and any other evidence, and produces an independent evaluation and recommendation. Supervisors review all submitted self-evaluations or applications.

Committee on Rank and Tenure evaluation considers the self-evaluation, the supervisor evaluation, and any other evidence, and produces an independent evaluation and recommendation. After the first year, after the third year, for promotion/tenure applications, and for post-tenure reviews (every 5 years). Also happens in other years whenever requested by the faculty member, supervisor, or the Dean.

The Dean considers the self-evaluation, the supervisor evaluation, the Committee on Rank and Tenure Evaluation, and any other evidence, and provides an independent evaluation and recommendation after the faculty member's first year and for promotion and/or tenure applications. The Dean also receives the Committee on Rank and Tenure evaluation in other years whenever one is provided.

The Provost considers the self-evaluation, the supervisor evaluation, the Committee on Rank and Tenure Evaluation, the Dean Evaluation, and any other evidence, and provides a recommendation to the **President** for promotion and/or tenure applications. The Provost also receives the Committee on Rank and Tenure and Dean evaluation after faculty members' first years.

No one can serve in two roles in the process.

The Review Rankings.

From low to high the rankings used in evaluating faculty-member performance are:

Unacceptable

Competent

Noteworthy

Accomplished

Outstanding

The words are meant to provide some guidance about the quality of performance. To help evaluators understand how the Committee and Rank and Tenure interprets these terms, our working understanding of the meaning of these words, which guides our evaluations, is below:

Unacceptable: This means a course correction is required, something needs to be changed or improved in order to meet the requirements of your rank, or to earn tenure if on tenure track.

Competent: This demonstrates a lot of potential in a category, but that it has not yet been proven. A faculty member may have indicated things to work on and is making progress towards those clear goals. This is acceptable and satisfactory work, especially at the rank of an assistant professor who is newer to teaching or research.

Noteworthy: This is good solid work to be proud of. Given the limitations of a place like Regis, this is someone who is putting in a lot of effort and has started to see the fruits of their labor. This is someone who can point to clear achievements in any of the categories, though maybe not as high of quantity or as substantial to their field.

Accomplished: This is someone who over a period of time has demonstrated great work. Their teaching record points to clear effectiveness and continual attention to improving pedagogy. They have demonstrated sustained research output in either quantity or quality of work. They have demonstrated not only a willingness to serve on committees, but have added quality contributions to their service roles in their department, college, university or for the student body. Typically, faculty at this level have demonstrated a breadth of service areas.

Outstanding: This level of performance is reserved for those who are doing exceptional work. Their accomplishments in teaching, research/creative work, or service are truly extraordinary.

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS are expected to maintain

competence in teaching;

presumptive **capacity in research, creative work, and professional activity;** and

presumptive **competence in service.**

These ranks are necessary for another Assistant Professor contract.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS are expected to maintain *(and have as minimum performance for promotion)*

accomplished teaching;

noteworthy research, creative work, and professional activity; and

noteworthy service.

These ranks are necessary for promotion to Associate Professor and award of tenure. Ranks expected of faculty members with Associate Professor rank.

PROFESSORS are expected to achieve before promotion and then maintain **accomplished performance in two areas and outstanding performance in the third area.**

Ranks necessary for promotion to Professor. Ranks expected of faculty members with Professor rank.

Note that the minimum expectations for promotion to a new rank become the new minimum expectations for performance in that rank afterwards.

Important Things to Note about Rankings

Supervisor rankings should give a faculty member a clear sense of the supervisor's assessment of where the faculty member's performance is with respect to the requirements for promotion, tenure, or continuing in the current position.

For example, ranking an Assistant Professor as Accomplished or higher in teaching and Noteworthy or higher in service and research, creative work, and professional activity should indicate that continued performance at that level by the faculty member should be sufficient performance to be recommended for promotion to Associate Professor (and tenure if applicable) by the supervisor.

Supervisors should consider the selected ranking to reflect the level of performance, and not necessarily with respect to the year of review.

For example, a ranking of "outstanding" in all categories after the first year would suggest that the faculty member's performance in the first year would *over qualify* the faculty member for promotion to full Professor the following year (if there weren't time-of-service requirements). This may be warranted if that is what the supervisor thinks the actual performance was after the first year, but should not be used to mean "outstanding for the first year" when in fact there is significant room for growth.

In some cases, a broader consideration of a first year that went really well might suggest a lower ranking but then the written explanation in the letter could be used to describe how impressive the faculty member's performance was in the context of a first year. Use the explanation to clarify. Whatever the supervisor does, *a clear explanation in the text of the letter* of how the supervisor made the decision citing the evidence used is important. The Committee on Rank and Tenure focuses primarily on the evidence that is explained rather than on the ranking itself.

There is no expectation that a faculty member must improve in rankings from early to later before applying for tenure and/or promotion.

An increase in ranking level after the first year does occur frequently based on normal adjustment to Regis as a different professional environment. However, it is not an expectation for this to occur to allow tenure and/or promotion.

For example, an Assistant Professor going from an Accomplished ranking one year to a Noteworthy ranking the next year would not be seen by the Committee as a problem for tenure and/or promotion, *UNLESS* the supervisor explanation suggests that this is a pattern that will continue and could result in the faculty member falling below the standards for tenure and promotion in that category. Most commonly this small change would be interpreted by the Committee as part of the usual variation over a faculty member's career (e.g., the big publication comes out then the faculty member is working on the next project or recuperating a bit; the faculty member taught all the same courses for a second time and then had to teach multiple courses for the first time in the same year).

The supervisor should consider STEPP elections in evaluating level of performance.

A faculty member who has elected a Scholarship STEPP every year before application for tenure and/or promotion should be expected to be conducting more scholarship than a faculty member with Teaching and/or Dean -approved extraordinary Service STEPP elections to be rated as Noteworthy. As a result, STEPP election is an important component of a faculty member's professional development. Supervisors should work with their faculty members to establish expectations for balancing teaching, research, and service workload, and to ensure that the appropriate STEPP election is made to document these choices. In particular, supervisors should discuss possibilities for Extraordinary Service STEPP elections when appropriate. (These also require written Dean approval placed in the academic record file.)

Teaching.

The faculty member's self-evaluation and student evaluations of teaching (not required from the 2019-2020 academic year) can be valuable evidence, but it is especially **useful when the supervisor considers and explains the quality of any other sources of teaching evidence** [e.g., direct observation of teaching (in person and/or course shells as appropriate to the course), review of syllabi, review of assignments, information from any co-instructors, information directly from students]. Supervisor observation also can be conducted in a more formative format, and meeting with the faculty member both before and after the visit, possibly even looking at the syllabus at the same time could be quite helpful. The meetings around the visit can provide opportunities for the faculty member to explain the context of the class, as well as anything from their own personal situation that might influence the evaluation. If the Dept. has a more extensive teaching observation and workshopping system in place, it certainly could be a part of that.

Review of other evidence is not expected to be exhaustive, and only evidence from the handbook-required supervisor observation of teaching must be mentioned. However, whenever other evidence is reviewed by the supervisor this ensures a more considered and equitable supervisor evaluation.

After a faculty member experiences difficult circumstances (e.g., a global pandemic, personal-life challenges, multiple new course preparations) a supervisor's evaluation of the three professional areas absolutely can consider this. The Committee recognizes reflection on challenging experiences to adjust teaching to better fit new circumstances and teaching resilience as qualities that are associated with high performance in teaching. Supervisors also are encouraged to consider this as well.

Research, Creative Work, and Professional Activity.

The supervisor provides an important perspective on the faculty member's research, creative work, and professional activity because of the greater proximity of the supervisor to the faculty member's professional area. If appropriate, supervisor consideration of the professional and/or disciplinary context of the faculty member's work is valued by the Committee.

Disciplinary peer review of research and creative work outside Regis (e.g., publications, conference presentations, artistic shows/musical performances) characterizes the scholarship that is most highly valued by the Committee but is *not* all the work considered by the Committee in this area. The broader area of professional activity also is valued and important for consideration. For ranked, non-tenure track faculty members professional activity is often the primary area of emphasis. For all ranked faculty members engagement with the discipline outside of Regis is important for keeping current and maintaining professional competence.

The scholarships of discovery, teaching, integration, and application all are valued. Different disciplines or sub-disciplines have varying opportunities for publication, and supervisors should take these differences into account, along with the STEPP elections that would indicate an expectation for more or less scholarly activity. In all cases, scholarship is recognized by its dissemination to professional peers which includes the opportunity for feedback (i.e., review).

Service.

Faculty members of all ranks are expected to contribute to the shared work of the **department and/or program(s) of which they are members**. If a faculty member is not fulfilling the basic and clearly identified expectations within the department and/or program, this is of concern, especially so if workload is shifted to others. ***It is important that the faculty member be made aware of these expectations.***

The Chair is an important source of information about additional faculty member service in the department. Faculty members may not report things like substantial additional informal advising including mentoring and

serving as a resource to students. This is significant service that can and should be considered in faculty-member evaluations.

Supervisors should be aware that faculty members from underrepresented groups in the academy (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, first-generation) are often asked to bear a disproportionate service burden. They can be asked for extra or additional service commitments on events or panels focused on issues for their community, they get invited or “volunteered” for committees wanting to diversify, and they can perform significant service for students or colleagues from their communities (in terms of mentoring and support). We encourage faculty members to watch for these time commitments, and to talk to their supervisors, or their faculty mentor or other supportive colleagues, if they are being challenged in their ability to turn down requests, or to fulfill their other professional commitments or passions. We want faculty to feel supported and sustained by their professional commitments.

Faculty members are expected to generally participate as a faculty member in the required meetings of the **division, school, college, and university**. These are typically things like senate faculty plenaries (officially called Fora in the Faculty Handbook), commencement, Faculty Lecturer award presentations, and similar things. We often assume that everyone is aware of this, but new faculty members may not be aware that these are professional expectations outlined in our contract/handbook. ***It is important that the faculty member be made aware of these expectations.***

In a first, or maybe second, year contributing service only in the above two areas may be sufficient. This typically would be considered to be fully appropriate Competent performance.

Community service and acts of charity are laudatory but not professional service.

We always expect faculty to contribute to the work of the department, starting in their first year. After that, to achieve at least Noteworthy performance before tenure and/or promotion to Associate Professor, a faculty member should be **contributing service more broadly and specifically in Regis College or the university**, outside the department or division. This can include elected committees, *ad hoc* appointed committees, volunteer subcommittees/advisory groups, or a range of other things. One, real service commitment to which the faculty member does contribute time and effort is sufficient. For promotion to the rank of Professor, and after achieving that rank for post-tenure review, a leadership component at some point is expected, such as service as a department or committee chair. ***It is important that the faculty member be made aware of these expectations, both with respect to necessary performance, and to recognize when the amount of service is sufficient.***