

Merit Standards for Teaching Professors

Department of Education Studies

Updated Fall 2025

The Education Studies Department has determined the normal merit advancement criteria for faculty in the Teaching Professor series in order to provide a measurement of a candidate's achievements and to aid in evaluation when acceleration is proposed. Teaching Professors are evaluated on their (1) teaching, (2) professional and/or scholarly achievement and activity, and (3) University and public service.

General Definitions and Descriptions

"Clearly demonstrated evidence of excellent teaching is an essential criterion for appointment, advancement, and promotion" (from APM 210-3); it is also the primary criterion by which Teaching Professors are evaluated (from APM 285-9).

(1) Teaching.

The Teaching Professors in Education Studies have a wide range of interests and approaches to teaching, but commonly acknowledge that teaching excellence is not defined statically, but rather is a process of growth. No single set of standards defines excellent teaching but we have identified several criteria that contribute to excellent teaching. Some possible examples, in no particular order, of such criteria and activities are listed here:

- [Holistic Teaching Evaluations](#)
- Evidence-based course design, development & revision informed by best practices
- Clearly articulated syllabi and aligned course materials
- Course assessments that document learning objectives (e.g., assignments, student work)
- Evidence of equity-oriented teaching practices (as defined by the instructor)
- Adoption of new educational (pedagogical and content) innovations
- Refining teaching based on evidence (e.g. student performance, student feedback, etc.)
- Peer evaluations
- Student evaluations (recognizing their limitations and biases)
- Teaching awards
- Carrying an exceptional teaching load (either in the number of courses or in other ways described as exceptional, including to meet departmental instructional needs)
- Mentoring students, including supervising undergraduates and/or graduate students in teaching, research, directed group study, or independent study; including chairing or serving on thesis (masters and doctoral) committees.

Engagement in these criteria and activities should be discussed in the faculty member's self-statement or in a [Teaching and Mentoring Portfolio](#) which is part of the Holistic Teaching Evaluation approach to be adopted according to the [Holistic Teaching Timeline for Rollout](#).

Teaching Professors may be hired to support the department overall or in support of specific EDS programs. They may serve specific needs based on those programs which bear consideration in evaluation. Overall, emphasis should be placed on whether the Teaching Professor has contributed to the needs of the department's educational mission via excellent teaching. The majority of teaching professors teach six courses per year. Teaching professors, like research professors, may be granted teaching relief for additional substantial needs, including but not limited to directing a degree program, serving as PI on a substantial grant, or leading a campus center.

(2) Professional and/or scholarly achievement and activity.

Teaching faculty are expected to demonstrate evidence of Professional and/or Scholarly achievement and activity, related to either the underlying discipline or to pedagogy. Once again, a broad range of activities can contribute to documenting this expectation. Some possible examples of such criteria and activities, in no particular order, are listed here:

- Developing, and/or coordinating/directing educational programs/centers in the department and/or across campus
- Serving as a consultant to education-related organizations at local, state, national and/or international levels
- Engagement with local, regional, national, or international K-12, community college, and other community-based organizations regarding equity in education
- Development, administration, and/or evaluation of community outreach or community-oriented programs and research-practice partnerships
- Developing learning or teacher standards and/or assessments (e.g. in K-12, for local-level organizations, states, or national/international organizations)
- Creating new instructional materials or curriculum beyond one's own courses, including materials adopted outside UCSD (e.g. at another university or in K-12)
- Being a PI or Co-PI on a research, teaching, training, or other grant that reflects evidence of professional activity
- Research publications including peer-reviewed journals or refereed conference proceedings, books, and book chapters (Bibliography Section A)
- Non-peer-reviewed publications (e.g., articles in practitioner-oriented journals or policy briefs) (Bibliography Section B).
- Presenting talks/workshops/seminars conferences in professional settings (e.g. academic conferences, campus teaching-focused organizations, conferences for K-12 practitioners and policymakers, etc.)

(3) University and public service.

In the field of education, service contributions are often driven by the department's mission statement to build deep partnerships and interdisciplinary, inclusive communities. Service contributions often include collaborations and partnerships with schools in local communities, nationally and/or internationally, to improve educational experiences for all students.

We specifically note that work supporting the K-12 community could come under service and/or professional and/or scholarly activity. It is important for the faculty member being reviewed to articulate how activities contribute to expectations in service and/or professional and/or scholarly activities. If the external activity is directly related to a faculty member's scholarly expertise, this would more likely be categorized as professional and/or scholarly activity. If the external activity is more generally related to the faculty member's role in higher education, this would likely be categorized as service.

A broad range of activities can contribute to documenting the service expectation. Some possible examples of such criteria and activities are listed here:

- Serving in departmental leadership positions, including program directorship and department chair
- Serving on a faculty search committee
- Serving on a Unit 18 excellence review committee
- Mentorship of lecturers and/or junior faculty
- Supporting the development of Instructional Assistants as educators
- Leadership in student organizations
- Contributing to department, school, or campus diversity initiatives
- Serving on or leading department, school, university, or system-wide committees or workgroups.
- Organizing a seminar or departmental-supporting series
- Service to UCSD Colleges and/or the Teaching and Learning Commons
- Engagement in K-12: School boards, school, or school-district committees
- Serving on an advisory board (for external organizations inclusive of school districts)
- Service to professional organizations in the discipline and/or field
- Contributing to the development or implementation of community-based learning and/or research initiatives.

Promotion and Career Advancement

It is important to note that the lists above do not represent all possible activities that would lead to successful promotions. In all cases, documentation of teaching excellence is required, but professional and/or scholarly activities and service contributions can vary considerably.

Criteria for Specific Steps

4th year appraisal

Most teaching Professors teach six courses a year. When first hired, Teaching Professors are almost always teaching these courses for the first time, or developing one or more new courses from scratch. Thus, at the 4th year appraisal, the most important expectation is to have shown a trajectory of growth toward excellence in teaching, as demonstrated by multiple criteria, with only moderate professional and/or scholarly activity and service required. There will be many possible scenarios for a positive 4th year appraisal, but all will reflect excellence in teaching.

As evidence of professional and/or scholarly activity at this level, we expect progress toward developing such activities. For example, this might be presenting a workshop at a professional conference, or growth towards establishment of a research program, or significant work towards a first publication. Other combinations of professional and/or scholarly activities could meet the expected evidence.

Evidence of service at this level is generally department-focused. For example, this might include serving on a committee within the department and active participation in some department operational tasks. Campus-level and outside-campus service is valued but not expected at this stage. Other combinations of service activities could meet the expected evidence.

Appointment to Associate Teaching Professor (or Lecturer with Security of Employment)

“Under no circumstances will security of employment be conferred unless there is clear documentation of consistent and sustained excellence in teaching”.
(APM 210-3)

The most important criterion by which we evaluate our Teaching Professors when considering appointment to Associate Teaching Professor is documented, sustained excellence in teaching as demonstrated by multiple criteria. At this stage, we would expect demonstration of excellence in teaching in most of the classes taught.

For promotion to Associate Teaching Professor, we expect evidence of sustained professional and/or scholarly achievement with a range of activities. An example could be, a Teaching

Professor might have developed significant new instructional materials, have a publication, and/or have disseminated work at professional conferences or to the broader educational community. Other combinations of professional and/or scholarly activities could meet the expected evidence.

Evidence of service at this level could include membership on committees within the department, school, or campus level, service to a UCSD College or the Teaching and Learning Commons, and active participation in the department's operational tasks. Some involvement in service beyond campus (i.e. to professional societies, journals) is also valued. Other combinations of service activities could meet the expected evidence.

Appointment to Full Teaching Professor (or Senior Lecturer with Security of Employment)

"Appointment or promotion to the Senior Lecturer with Security of Employment title requires evidence of sustained excellence in effective teaching and demonstrated distinction in the special competencies appropriate to teaching that particular subject."
(APM 210-3)

For appointment to Full Teaching Professor in the Education Studies Department, we expect a strong record of teaching excellence in the majority of classes, using multiple and varied criteria from the list above. At this stage, it would be common for a Teaching Professor to have significantly redesigned or developed a course or otherwise contributed to the improvement of the departmental educational mission.

Continued professional and/or scholarly contributions to the field of education are necessary for advancement. For example, a Teaching Professor might have authorship on publications and have given presentations at professional meetings. Alternatively, they might have developed educational materials that are disseminated beyond the campus and been involved with the leadership of educational programs on campus or beyond. Contributions both on campus and beyond campus are expected at this stage. Other combinations of professional and/or scholarly activities could meet the expected evidence.

At this level, evidence of service to the department, school, campus, or University of California and beyond, with significant contributions in any of those arenas is expected. For example, this might include consistent and active participation in faculty governance on impactful committees in the department, school, campus, or system level, and sustained engagement in the department's operational tasks, and membership or leadership on Academic Senate Committees. While not required, leadership on one or more committees would be common. Service beyond campus is expected. Other combinations of service activities could meet the expected evidence.

Appointment to Full Teaching Professor Step VI

Advancement to Step VI involves an overall career review and will be granted on evidence of sustained and continuing excellence in each of the following three (3) categories, with teaching excellence receiving primary weighting above the others: (1) extraordinary effectiveness and excellence in teaching and teaching-related tasks; (2) professional and/or scholarly achievement and activity; and (3) University and public service. (APM 285-19)

For appointment to Full Teaching Professor Step VI, in the Education Studies Department, we expect a strong record of sustained teaching excellence in the majority of classes, as documented using multiple criteria.

For advancement to Step VI, we expect evidence of sustained professional and/or scholarly contribution and leadership to the field of education, as judged by multiple criteria. For example, presentations at professional meetings, leadership of educational programs on campus or beyond, authorship on publications, or any other activities that contribute to the discipline. The scholarship should impact the educational programs on campus but should also demonstrate recognition beyond the campus as reflected through a variety of metrics such as peer-reviewed publications and presenting talks or workshops at conferences. Other combinations of professional and/or scholarly activities could meet the expected evidence.

A strong record of service at the school and campus levels is required; outreach and service to the profession are also highly valued. Campus service includes consistent and active participation in faculty

governance, such as serving on senate committees, high-impact committees in the department, school, or campus, and sustained engagement in the department's operational tasks such as faculty searches and mentoring junior faculty. Other combinations of service activities could meet the expected evidence.

Accelerations

Accelerations are considered when expected contributions are met in all areas (teaching excellence, professional and/or scholarly activity, and service) and when contributions are truly exceptional in one or more of the areas. Acceleration proposals should not be made if there is any evident weakness in any area of review. Nonetheless, the case for acceleration may be stronger when exceptional evidence in more than one area of review is made.

Truly exceptional performance and accomplishments may possibly include, but are not limited to: receipt of a campus teaching award, impactful publications on which they are a primary contributor, impactful professional and/or service contributions in the field or discipline, significant recognition in the field or discipline, a significant teaching innovation, or substantial leadership in a service effort that has a major impact on the educational mission of the department, school, campus or beyond (including K-12 or other higher education institutions).

Meeting expectations beyond the current rank is also considered for acceleration. It is not possible to provide a simple metric for "truly exceptional" and teaching excellence, as all aspects of a file must be considered together in assessing the quality and impact of contributions.

Activities that are outstanding but might not meet the level of acceleration may be considered for a Bonus Off-scale salary component.