

UCSD Division of Biological Sciences Normal Merit Standards

REVISED 12/16/20

Careful, holistic and timely assessment of academic personnel performance is a key function of our shared governance that starts with the Section faculty and Section Vice/Chair. The academic review process is founded upon principles of academic integrity as it defines the crucial moment in which a professional judgment is rendered about the significance of our colleagues' work. The Division expects each Section to provide sound, objective, and expert evaluations of all academic review files. Files are expected to be complete and in compliance with UC policy and adhere to the following basic requirements and performance standards.

Each Section has also established their own merit standards that are complemented by these overarching Division-wide standards.

Normal Merit Standards for Ladder Rank Faculty in the Professor Series

Faculty are evaluated on their research, teaching, professional competence and activity, and University and public service. In each domain, the Division considers a broad range of scholarly contributions and activities, including contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion, which should be an integral component of each area.

It should be inherent to each faculty in the Division of Biological Sciences that we adhere to the highest standards of integrity in teaching, scholarship, and treatment of students, colleagues, staff, and other university community members. Correspondingly, collegiality is taken into consideration in the academic review process, as it is an essential component of teaching, research, and service.

Research

All faculty are expected to conduct research that advances the understanding of fundamental or practical problems in the biological sciences. Our foremost expectation is that research produced by Division faculty should be of the highest quality. As well as advancing knowledge, Division research should be rigorous, reproducible, and follow established norms of research integrity. The Division emphasizes the quality and long-term significance of published work and its wider impact on the biological sciences. Productivity is evaluated based on a combination of the number and type of publications and other outputs, their immediate impact and potential long-term significance, and the denominator of resources available.

Prior to promotion to tenure, Assistant Professors are judged largely on their progress in establishing an active, functioning research group and the expectation that their work will be published in appropriate journals. Tenure will be considered when these benchmarks have been achieved, and a sustainable, positive research trajectory established. In progress research manuscripts can play an important role in demonstrating a research trajectory; these should be either available as preprints, submitted, or close to submission so that reviewers can judge the quality, novelty and impact of the research. Evidence of successful mentoring and lab supervision is also important in demonstrating a positive research trajectory.

Following tenure, the expectation for a normal merit increase is approximately 1-2 peer reviewed research publications per year in high quality journals. Individual Sections have their own publication norms and authorship practices as articulated by Section Chairs. In considering 'normal standards', Chairs may refer to the median track record within their Section.

Research quality and impact may be established by citations, venue of publication, ability to garner extramural grant support, ability to stimulate subsequent studies, and broader impact on society via translational, conservation, or policy efforts. Some metrics such as citation rates are meaningful only in the longer term and only rarely over a review cycle. Citation rates are also strongly correlated with the level of current activity in a research area. Section Chairs are responsible for describing the context of the research for each faculty member, and for clearly outlining the significance of the candidate's contributions to their field.

Supporting UCSD's 'culture of collaboration' we value collaborative and interdisciplinary research outputs, especially where a faculty member's research focus is on development of new methods, technologies, or instrumentation. Faculty are expected to clearly document their individual contributions to collaborative publications, especially those involving other senior authors, to assist in the evaluation of their independence.

As faculty progress through the ranks, there is an increasing expectation for national and international recognition. This may be evidenced by invitations to external seminars or conference presentations, election to fellowship of professional societies or academies, and by competitive awards. Professional service as described below will also provide evidence of a faculty member's stature in their profession. Generally, promotion to Full Professor requires some evidence of national recognition, advancement to Step VI requires clear evidence of national recognition, and advancement to Above Scale requires evidence of international recognition.

Teaching

All faculty are expected to demonstrate excellence in teaching at all levels, including classroom lectures, seminars, and independent studies, and to contribute to an inclusive learning environment that fosters the success of diverse students and trainees. Teaching assignments are determined by the Division's Education Committee. Teaching relief may only be granted for substantial service commitments, or via other established processes for accommodations.

In evaluating teaching excellence, the Division focuses on measures of effective teaching and life-long learning, such as high ratings for proficiency in the material; preparedness for class; ability to explain the course material well; ability to inspire students to deeply engage with the course material; and concern for student learning. Grade expectations and grades received are also taken into account when evaluating the quality of instruction. Although the Division takes note of measures such as CAPE instructor approval ratings, these can be affected by bias towards certain demographic groups. Effective teaching can also be indicated by a faculty member's teaching statement, syllabi, student testimonials, and other materials. Excellence in teaching is

also evidenced by efforts to boost student success by innovation in course design or curricular revision.

The Division expects faculty to maintain a positive mentoring environment in their teaching and research. As well as mentorship of their own trainees, faculty are expected to serve on doctoral or Master's thesis committees and to pursue informal mentorship opportunities. Faculty are responsible for the training and mentorship of all members of their research group, including undergraduate researchers, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and technical staff. The Division evaluates the effectiveness of mentorship and training in terms of the outputs attributable to trainees and their career outcomes, as well as by unsolicited and sometimes solicited feedback from mentees.

University, Professional, and Public Service

The Division expects faculty to engage in the life of their academic unit, beginning with participation in faculty meetings, seminars, and recruitments. All faculty are further expected to contribute to the effective running of the Division through committee service. To uphold the University's tradition of shared governance, senior faculty are further expected to participate in service beyond the Division via the Academic Senate or other campus or systemwide activities. These service expectations rise with increasing rank and step; lack of campus service at senior levels will impede consideration of merit advancements or accelerations. Faculty should explain their roles on committees and the frequency and extent of such service commitments. In the course of file preparation, committee chairs may be consulted on the extent of individual committee member contributions.

In addition to service to the University, faculty are evaluated based on service to their profession, such as peer review or editorial service for journals, peer review of grant applications, conference organization or chairing, and service to professional societies, foundations, or for government agencies. Such service can provide further indications of national and international reputation.

Contributions to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

The Division seeks to create and sustain an environment that embraces individuals who represent diverse backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences. Faculty are encouraged to make contributions to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the Division, at UC San Diego, and at larger scales, and to foster the success of diverse students in the classroom and in STEM degree programs and careers. Such contributions will be recognized and can include enhancing EDI through service, teaching, research, or combinations of these areas. Contributions that demonstrate accountability and provide detailed success metrics are encouraged.

Accelerations

Accelerations are exceptional, considered when contributions significantly exceed the normal departmental expectations in one or more of the areas of review: research, teaching, professional

competence and activities, and university and public service. There should be no evidence of weaknesses in other areas.

In the domain of research, accelerations may be proposed when the combination of the number of publications and their significance exceeds normal standards as defined by each Section. The Academic Senate Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) has described the general expectations for accelerated advancements as research/creativity being *twice that expected throughout one review period*. Because the Division of Biological Sciences emphasizes the quality and impact of publications more than their number, a twofold increase in the number of publications would only merit consideration for acceleration if the significance and impact of such publications remained high. In cases where publications are especially transformative or pathbreaking, acceleration may be proposed even if the overall number of publications does not meet the 'twice average' threshold. Exceptional teaching, outstanding service, and the extent of contributions to diversity will be considerations in determining the appropriateness of a recommendation for acceleration. In teaching, a combination of consistently excellent classroom teaching; unusual teaching innovation; revamping major curriculum; leadership positions in undergraduate and graduate programs; and teaching awards may be considered for acceleration. In service, activities with significant, broad, and transformative impact may be considered for acceleration. As with other service, expectations for contributions to EDI will be commensurate with rank, especially if such contributions are to be included in the justification for an acceleration.