

Appendix 1

Proposal for One-time Offset in Academic Reviews in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Effective for merit actions with effective dates of July 1, 2021 through July 1, 2025

As a one-time measure, when there is clear evidence of significant loss of productivity due to COVID-19, such that an individual cannot earn a full-step advance, a half-step offset could be provided so that the individual receives a full-step advance or the equivalent thereof. This action is applicable to faculty members that are being considered for a merit advancement (not promotion), at all academic ranks, including Above-Scale. The one-time offset is a permanent step and salary increase, in contrast with a bonus off-scale salary increment, which is of limited duration. Since the vast majority of faculty receive a merit advance or more, this policy would handle most cases.

Faculty members shall receive a merit advancement if:

1. The review period of their next merit review (including mandatory five year reviews) includes one or both years in the period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021;
2. Have records of teaching and service for that review that are judged to be good or better pre-pandemic, and were able to transition to remote operations during the pandemic;
3. Whose research record at their last academic review earned a step or more advance;
4. Whose research record at the current review is judged not to meet expectations for a full-step advance; *and* who attest in a self-statement that their research was significantly negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;
5. Who, without this offset, would otherwise be considered for a traditional ½ step bonus off-scale in lieu of merit.

This offset cannot be used to justify a greater-than-normal advance (i.e., a merit + BOS or accelerated merit). Hence, even if the teaching or service or both records are deemed outstanding, if the research record, but for the offset, fails to meet normal expectations, then the faculty member in question can receive only one step.

If faculty are up for a promotion (i.e. Assistant to Associate, Associate to Full), the above criteria will still apply, but an equivalent cross over step will be used. If crossover steps are exhausted at a barrier step, such as at Associate Professor V, Professor V, and Professor IX, the one-time offset could be used to justify a bonus off-scale increment.

For newly appointed Assistant Professors, given that the standards for a first merit after appointment for Assistant Professors are already fairly minimal, it is unlikely that any newly hired Assistant Professors will need the offset. For faculty who were hired with tenure, the individuals, their chairs, and/or deans should provide evidence that a research record that fails to meet expectations is the result of COVID-19, and their efforts should be considered by reviewers in the context of achievement relative to opportunity.

In addition, in the rare instances in which a faculty member did not meet the criteria for a merit advancement at a step other than the barrier steps, and instead was recommended for a “no-change”, we ask for extra scrutiny in the review process in the context of achievement relative to opportunity.

This policy would expire after July 1, 2026; that is, it expires after the effective date of the last five-year review that could encompass July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 in the review period.