

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

MERIT POLICY, GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

The UTRGV and the CoHP are committed to recognizing and rewarding excellence. This document provides guidelines to be used in determining which members of the faculty who, after meeting minimum qualifications for eligibility, shall be awarded merit. Merit pay is awarded to faculty members based on their contributions, accomplishments, and ongoing high levels of performance. Merit pay shall be determined apart from and in addition to salary increases related to promotion, equity, salary compression/inversions, and market.

Eligible faculty are defined as:

1. Is a full-time faculty with a 3-year or greater appointment to the college with a start date no later than September 1, prior to the merit year.
2. Has on file a completed annual evaluation dossier for each of the last three years or since the date of hire with a final assessment of meeting or exceeding expectations in each area of evaluation.
3. Has completed on time all mandatory university training.
4. Has completed on time the yearly Outside Activity and Interest Reporting
5. Has posted syllabi in compliance with State Law (HB 2504)
6. Has regularly and timely submitted required textbook adoptions to the university bookstore.
7. Has posted office hours on syllabus.
8. Has timely completed required attendance verification procedures.
9. Has submitted semester/module grades by posted deadlines
10. Has participated in shared governance through attendance at department/school, college, and university meetings/events
11. Has attended at least one graduation ceremony per year as per HOP ADM-06-106.

The dean has the discretion to waive any of these eligibility criteria as long as they apply to all faculty within the College.

Merit:

Faculty performance, upon which merit awards are based, will encompass any year between merit periods of the faculty's choosing.

Merit shall be awarded in two categories: Merit and Exceptional Merit.

Exceptional Merit shall be awarded to no more than 25% of the full-time faculty with a 3-year or greater appointment in each department/school. Merit shall be awarded to no more than 50% of the full-time faculty with a 3-year or greater appointment in each department/school.

The exceptional merit award share value will be three times that of the merit award.

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Merit Criteria:

Schools and Departments within the CoHP have discretion in establishing their award criteria and methodologies as long as those criteria do not conflict with the guidelines outlined in this document and are in accordance with HOP policies and any other written guidance provided by the highest levels of administration of UTRGV. Merit shall not be awarded solely based on annual evaluation scores. Departments/Schools must maintain documentation of the criteria, guidelines, and the process used for determining awards.

Department/School criteria, guidelines, and processes shall be established by the faculty of their respective unit and approved by the faculty according to their Bylaws. Criteria for merit must be based on a sound and valid performance assessment that is fair, equitable, measurable, and objective. Each faculty member being evaluated shall be responsible for providing the evidence to support their evaluation with respect to both quality, quantity, and significance as required by the department/school guidelines and criteria.

Although each unit decides and establishes its own criteria for the merit awards, criteria are recommended to be related to facilitating the achievement of the mission of the University, strategic goals, core priorities, student recruitment, student retention, and shared governance.

It is highly recommended that departmental merit criteria/factors should also consider during the chosen merit year:

- The length or frequency of outstanding performance
- The overall significance or importance of the faculty work products to the institution.
- The regularity with which the outstanding performance or unique contribution is demonstrated (e.g., someone who routinely shows exceptional performance and performs special projects on an ongoing basis, as compared to someone who exceptionally completes a one-time special project)
- Whether the employee has acquired additional competencies (e.g., educational attainment, certifications, etc.), which are both specialized and critical in carrying out the permanent functions of the position

Some suggestions for possible departmental merit criteria can be found in Appendix 2.

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Merit Process & Procedures

The following process shall be adhered to regarding merit awards for eligible full-time faculty members in the College of Health Professions.

1. When merit awards are made available, the timeline shall follow that which the university administration announces.
2. Department chairs/school directors will submit a list of their eligible and non-eligible faculty to the dean by September 1 of each academic year. In consultation with the chair/director, the dean shall notify non-eligible faculty members in writing, including the reason for a determination of ineligibility. Non-eligible faculty shall be provided five working days to remedy any eligibility criteria not met. Within five working days of notification, a faculty member may appeal in writing to include the evidence of compliance with eligibility criteria to the dean. The dean will provide a decision to the faculty member within three working days. The dean's decision may be appealed to the CoHP Executive Council within three working days. The CoHP Executive Council's decision is final.
3. Merit award decisions shall be based on written evidence and submitted to the chair/director according to the timeline established by the CoHP.
4. The chair/director will evaluate and rank the faculty submission according to the department's/school's faculty-approved criteria.
5. The chair/director will provide the dean with a list of eligible faculty recommended for no merit, merit, and exceptional merit, including the basis of the recommendation.
6. Upon receipt, the Dean will review and make a final recommendation in consultation with the chair/director.
7. The dean will forward the final recommendation to the provost office.

The policy shall be reviewed every three years by the College Merit Committee.

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Appendix 1: Example

Department A:

30 faculty members; 5 are tenured/tenure track, 10 are lecturers, and 5 are clinical faculty for a total of 20 full-time faculty on 3 or more years contracts; 3 of the 10 lecturers were employed less than 1 year 8 are part-time, and 2 are FT-OYAs.

Merit Pool available: \$25,000

Eligibility criteria: Part-time and FT-OYA are not eligible, 3 lecturers do not qualify due to length of employment, 1 tenured faculty is not eligible because they received a not meeting expectations in teaching although received an overall rating meets expectations due to exceed expectations in research and meets expectations in service. One clinical faculty received an overall not meets expectations and is thus ineligible.

Total number of eligible faculty =15

Recommendations: Department A may nominate up to 25% of FT faculty with a 3-year or greater appointment for exceptional merit and 50% for merit.

$25\% * 20 = 5$

$50\% * 20 = 10$

Thus, the department may nominate all eligible faculty for merit awards.

Merit Pay:

Scenario A: The department recommended five faculty for exceptional merit for three merit shares each and recommended 15 faculty for merit for one merit share each.

Total merit shares = $(5 * 3) + (10 * 1) = 25$

One Share Value = Merit Pool / Total Merit Shares = $\$25,000 / 25 = \$1,000$

Thus, each faculty awarded merit will receive \$1,000, and faculty awarded exceptional merit will receive \$3,000

Scenario B. The department recommended two faculty for exceptional merit for three merit shares each and recommended 8 faculty for merit for one merit share each.

Total merit shares = $(2 * 3) + (8 * 1) = 14$

One Share Value = Merit Pool / Total Merit Shares = $\$25,000 / 14 = \$1,786$

Thus, each faculty awarded merit will receive \$1,786, and faculty awarded exceptional merit will receive \$5,358.

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Appendix 2: College Strategic Priorities

The College of Health Professions also has identified six high-level strategic priorities that may be considered for inclusion in departmental merit criteria. The categories are as follows:

Research: Faculty members who have documented success in research in the form of funded external research grants, research recognition awards from national associations, or published high-impact peer-reviewed journal articles or books.

Teaching: Faculty members who have documented success in teaching in the form of state, regional, or national teaching awards (such as Regents Outstanding Teacher), published a recognized textbook, is a nationally recognized expert in a pedagogical approach or developed teaching object used nationwide.

Service: Faculty members who have documented success in service on the state, national, or international level and chairing at least one college or university committee of significance.

Community Engagement: Faculty members who have documented success in community engagement in the form of recognition by local, state, regional, or national organizations for providing, with or without students, community services that transform the Rio Grande Valley.

Student Success: Faculty members who have documented success in Student Success in the form of recognition by peers and/or university administrators for outstanding achievements related to student recruiting, advising, retention, assessment, accreditation, or graduation.

Program Development: Faculty members who have documented success in Program Development in the form of serving as lead author of new program proposals approved by one or more of the following, the University, UT System, or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; serving as the lead author in program revisions to meet national accreditation standards and best practices; or serving as lead author in program revisions to ensure student success.