

# **FACULTY Merit Guidelines** **Fiscal Year 2020**

## **PURPOSE**

Merit adjustments, along with other initiatives such as training programs and educational benefits, support UTRGV's talent management strategy that seeks to retain the best, most productive and most highly motivated individuals.

## **TIMELINE**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| November 8, 2019  | Merit pool listings and templates made available to each division |
| November 20, 2019 | Completed merit materials due to EVPAA or EVPHA                   |
| November 27, 2019 | Completed merit materials due to Human Resources for review       |
| December 4, 2019  | Merit materials returned to the division offices by HR            |
| December 1, 2019  | Effective Date for Merit  |
| January 2, 2020   | Merit pay increase included in paycheck                           |

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA** <sup>i ii iii iv v</sup>

Merit shall be awarded in accordance with merit policies of respective colleges; ***across the board merit increases will not be approved.*** To be considered for merit, faculty members must:

- Have been hired into a permanent tenured, tenure-track, or a 3-year non-tenure track position with an appointment date prior to September 1, 2018
- Have been hired into a one-year Clinical Faculty appointment, assistant professor or higher, prior to September 1, 2018
- Are current on all compliance trainings required through UTRGV
- Have an annual faculty evaluation with an overall rating of Meets or Exceeds Expectation for the 2017-2018 academic year
- Have no formal disciplinary action in their faculty file since September 1, 2017
  
- Non-eligible faculty:
  - One Year Appointment Lecturers on 9 or 12 month contracts

Note: Eligibility for merit does not guarantee an award

## **MERIT POOLS / METHODOLOGY**

The Planning & Analysis and HR Offices will compute the merit pools for each division based on 2% of the total of all salaries from positions filled by eligible faculty as of November 1, 2019.

## **MERIT DISTRIBUTION**

For faculty meeting the established eligibility criteria the combined increase should be a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$6,000. Each division has discretion in establishing their award criteria and methodologies as long as those criteria do not conflict with the guidelines outlined in this document. The merit methodology for faculty shall take into consideration performance, as well as existing salary compression/inversion issues. The division heads will review and approve the criteria established at each department/unit to ensure a merit distribution that is fair, equitable and free of disparate impact.

Merit pool contributions and award payments for employees in transition (i.e., transferring departments) will be handled on a case by case basis. Department heads will need to ensure that staff meeting the established eligibility criteria, even if they have been subject to recent salary increases, transfers or reclassifications will be included in the merit considerations.

## **APPROVAL**

Merit awards for faculty must be recommended by each employee's supervisor and processed through the chain of command for consideration of approval by the respective divisional head.

## **PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS REQUIRED** <sup>vi</sup>

Faculty must adhere to guidelines and timelines for the annual review process and evaluation scores must be provided to the Office of the EVPAA or EVPHA. If an evaluation is not completed during the established timelines, faculty will not be eligible for merit consideration. Only faculty meeting the established performance evaluation criteria will be eligible for a merit. For information on the faculty annual review process, refer to the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) [ADM 06-502](#).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Supervisors must exercise caution in handling and disclosing merit award recommendations; until final approval by the President, recommendations are subject to change or even retraction.

## **MINIMUM ADJUSTMENT**

Each eligible faculty member deemed meritorious should be awarded a minimum merit increase of \$500 per year. Increases higher than \$500 need to meet the guidance set for maximum adjustments.

## **MAXIMUM ADJUSTMENT**

Each individual award is limited to a maximum of 4% of a faculty member's base salary in effect as of November 1, 2019, but cannot exceed 4% or \$6,000, if 4% exceeds \$6,000. In very limited cases, a Dean may recommend to their EVP, an award in excess of 4%, based on compelling justification. Such recommendations will require the approval of the appropriate EVP and Chief

HR Officer. However, no unit or division may recommend an amount that would exceed its respective merit pool.

### **RESTRICTED AND OTHER SELF-FUNDED ACCOUNTS**

Managers of restricted and other self-funded accounts, like all other areas of the institution, should follow the guidelines established by this document. Questions regarding restricted accounts may be directed to Suelema Gonzalez, Director of Grants and Contracts, at 882-7716.

### **DISTRIBUTION ACROSS FUND GROUPS AND DEPARTMENTS ALLOWED**

To allow flexibility, division heads are not restricted to awarding merit in proportion to the amount computed for each fund group (E&G vs. Auxiliary, etc.). Merit shall be awarded according to employee performance and should be independent of the funding source. Furthermore, division heads may wish to reallocate merit pool funds among their departments.

### **ADJUSTMENTS AFTER FINALIZATION OF THE PROCESS**

Changes after the process is finalized will typically not be allowed. An example of a change that would not be allowed is redistribution of merit amounts due to employee departures. Limited post-process adjustments may be considered and typically involve an extraordinary circumstance and require the approval of the President.

### **SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

Merit recommendations shall be submitted using secure email through the organizational chain of command on the forms provided. The deadline to submit the forms to the Office of the EVPAA/EVPHA is November 20, 2019. The Office of the EVPAA/EVPHA will submit the forms to Human Resources by November 27, 2019. After the data is processed, a listing will be distributed to each division head.

## **QUESTIONS?**

Primary contact and issue resolution should be through the organizational chain of command. However, the following individuals in the EVP and HR offices are available for assistance.

Academic Affairs Contact:

David Granado, Director of Faculty  
Resources & Communication  
(956) 665-2111  
[academicaffairs@utrgv.edu](mailto:academicaffairs@utrgv.edu)

Health Affairs Contact:

Shawn P. Saladin, PhD,  
Associate Vice President for Faculty  
(956) 665-3651  
[Shawn.Saladin@utrgv.edu](mailto:Shawn.Saladin@utrgv.edu)

Human Resources Contact:

Kristina Chavez, Associate Director  
Compensation and Talent Acquisition  
Human Resources (Compensation and Merit  
questions)  
(956) 665-5395  
[Kristina.Chavez@utrgv.edu](mailto:Kristina.Chavez@utrgv.edu)

Health Affairs Human Resources Contact:

Vera Ruiz, HR Manager Health Affairs  
(956) 296-1516  
[Vera.Ruiz@utrgv.edu](mailto:Vera.Ruiz@utrgv.edu)

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<sup>i</sup> Eligible employees are *regular* permanent, benefits-eligible employees. This excludes waged, work-study and others who are not benefits-eligible.

<sup>ii</sup> UT System Operating Budget Instructions for FY 2020: “Merit salary increases are to be awarded only on September 1, 2019 unless prior approval has been received from System Administration.”

<sup>iii</sup> Eighty-sixth Legislature General Appropriations Act for the 2020-21 Biennium; Article III-250, sec. 4 and 5. *Merit Authorization*. “It is expressly provided that institutional administrators may grant merit salary increases to employees whose job performance and productivity is consistently above that normally expected or required”. *Merit Requirement for Faculty and Faculty Equivalent Employees of Institutions and Agencies of Higher Education*. “Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, salary increases for faculty or faculty equivalent employees of institutions of higher education shall be awarded on the basis of merit and performance in accepted activities. This shall not be interpreted so as to preclude salary adjustment designed to avoid salary inequities”.

<sup>iv</sup> Board of Regents Budget Preparation Policies, Fiscal Year 2020: *Merit Increases and Promotions* - Institutions should consider available resources and resolution of any major salary inequities when implementing merit salary increases for faculty and staff. As defined in Texas Education Code Section 51.962, an employee must have been employed by the institution for the six months immediately preceding the effective date of the increase to be eligible for a merit increase, and at least six months must have elapsed since the employee's last merit salary increase. These limitations also apply to one-time merit payments. Merit increases or advances in rank for faculty are to be on the basis of teaching effectiveness, research, and public service. Merit increases or promotions for administrative and professional staff and classified staff are to be based on evaluation of performance in areas appropriate to work assignments. In accordance with the Regents' Rules and Regulations, performance appraisals are to be conducted annually for all employees of the U. T. System. To verify compliance with this rule, U. T. System presidents and the Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs for U. T. System Administration shall annually certify that all eligible employees (including staff and faculty) have completed performance appraisals.

<sup>v</sup>Texas Education Code Sec. 51.962. MERIT SALARY INCREASES. (a) An institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003 may grant merit salary increases, including one-time merit payments, to employees described by this section.

(b) A merit salary increase made under this section is compensation for purposes of Chapter 659, Government Code, and salary and wages and member compensation for purposes of Title 8, Government Code.

(c) An institution of higher education may pay merit salary increases under this section from any funds.

(d) Before awarding a merit salary increase under this section, an institution of higher education must adopt criteria for the granting of merit salary increases.

(e) To be eligible for a merit salary increase under this section, an employee must have been employed by the institution of higher education for the six months immediately preceding the effective date of the increase and at least six months must have elapsed since the employee's last merit salary increase.

(f) This subsection applies to an employee employed by the institution of higher education for more than six months. The requirement that six months elapse between merit salary increases prescribed by Subsection (e) does not apply to a one-time merit payment if the chief administrative officer of the institution of higher education determines in writing that the one-time merit payment is made in relation to the employee's performance during a natural disaster or other extraordinary circumstance.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 118, Sec. 2.02, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1241, Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 2009.

<sup>vi</sup> Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) ADM 04-504, E.2.k: “Salary increases related to promotions and merit will require that a current performance appraisal be on file with the Office of Human Resources”. HOP ADM 06-502: E.5““The outcome of each faculty member's annual performance evaluation will be used in determining the amount of merit awarded to the faculty member ...”, “To be eligible for merit, faculty must receive “exceeds” or “meets” expectations in the overall evaluation result.”