

## Faculty Annual Merit Evaluation: Policy and Processes

Department of Spanish  
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences  
University of North Texas

*Last updated January 17, 2025, and approved by a full vote of the Department of Spanish faculty.*

### **Preamble**

The Department of Spanish (referred to in this document as “Department”) of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) is committed to the process of continually improving the quality of its programs and the faculty responsible for them. To assess progress toward the goal of continuous improvement, a framework for the evaluation of the professional performance of individual faculty members is essential. The framework for this process is set forth in this document, which replaces any earlier merit review documents.

The evaluation philosophy of the Department requires that faculty evaluation accommodate the following key principles:

- The Department is responsible for establishing criteria to be used in the annual merit review of individual faculty members;
- Performance standards used to assess annual merit must be consistent with those used for promotion and tenure;
- It is not expected that each faculty member will contribute equally to the accomplishment of all goals but, as a collection of individual faculty, the Department should substantially assist the College and University in meeting their mission, goals, and objectives;
- Each faculty member is to be evaluated relative to their workload, with *performance expectations being proportional to workload* in each area (teaching, research, and service);
- The Department is committed to providing the support necessary to assist faculty in the teaching, research, and service dimensions of their jobs;
- The cornerstone of faculty evaluation rests with the professional judgments of the members of the Department Personnel Affairs Committee (PAC), the Lecturer Affairs Committee (LAC), and the Department Chair.

The faculty evaluation process is designed to differentiate among levels of faculty performance and to allow evaluators freedom in determining appropriate levels of performance among a diverse faculty. Faculty are evaluated in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service. Faculty are assigned scores based on five levels of performance for each area in which they have responsibilities assigned in their official workload agreement; scores are given in tenths of a point (e.g. a 4.1 for teaching, 3.9 for research, and 4.6 for service). Anchor statements provide a profile of the type of performance represented by each of the five performance levels. The highest and lowest performance levels (5.0, 0.0) will be used only in the most exceptional cases. Activities related to each level are meant to serve as guidelines for the unit merit review committee members and the Department Chair. Achievement of one or more of the activities cited for a particular performance level does not necessarily mean that a faculty member will be rated at that level. It is essential that the merit review committee and the Department Chair complete a *holistic* review of the faculty member’s performance in all areas of evaluation.

Merit scores assigned by the LAC and PAC translate into five merit score categories and three UNT Faculty Information System (FIS) evaluation categories as per the following table:

<i>LAC/PAC Assigned Level:</i>	<i>LAC/PAC Assigned Merit Scores:</i>	<i>LAC/PAC Merit Category:</i>	<i>Faculty Information System (FIS) Evaluation Category:</i>
5	4.0-5.0	Excellent	Exemplary
4	3.0-3.99	Very Good	Satisfactory
3	2.0-2.99	Good	Satisfactory
2	1.0-1.99	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
1	0-0.99	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

### **Merit Review Principles**

Annual faculty evaluations are the basis of merit salary increases, as well as the basis of promotion and tenure recommendations. The overall process of annual evaluation is designed to enhance the quality of teaching, scholarship, and service. The evaluation parameters are defined as follows:

*Teaching* is defined as a process by which instructional objectives and learning outcomes are set forth, instructional techniques are selected to maximize the likelihood of achieving those objectives and outcomes, and students are appropriately evaluated to assess their relative achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes. It can also include working with students outside of the classroom, including membership on thesis committees, and the development and revision of courses. Teaching effectiveness can and should be assessed using a variety of measures.

*Scholarship* refers to scholarly inquiry, with particular emphasis on refereed publications that result from scholarly activities. Scholarship also includes presentations at professional conferences, invited keynote speeches for academic conferences or organizations within the field of Spanish language scholarship, external recognition or awards for scholarship, and critical activities related to journals and grant panels. For tenure-track faculty, research/scholarship excellence is paramount, consistent with UNT being a Tier 1 National Research University.

*Service* refers to faculty involvement in a range of activities on behalf of others within and outside the University community. Expected service involves, at minimum, sustained membership on Departmental, College, and/or University committees. It often also entails service to the profession. In general, *service expectations are proportionate to faculty rank*: Tenured faculty are expected to contribute more in terms of service than Assistant Professors and should have enhanced leadership responsibilities.

Merit evaluations are conducted on the basis of a moving three-year window. There are two reasons for this: 1) the nature of faculty responsibilities is such that sustained endeavor is required before activities culminate in high quality products; and 2) merit raises are not consistently available to high performing faculty, and natural variations in performance should not result in under-valuing or over-valuing faculty performance on the basis of an atypical year that occurs when merit funding is available.

Within each of the three performance categories (teaching, scholarship, and service), anchor statements

describe a profile of the type of faculty member represented by each level of performance. Following the anchor statements are examples of activities that might be found at that level. These examples are offered to guide the PAC/LAC members and the Department Chair in their discussions regarding the performance of individual faculty members and are not meant to be used to dictate the placement of a given individual at a specific level. In their deliberations, the PAC, LAC and Department Chair must consider the totality of a colleague's activities at every level of performance. Therefore, achievement of one or more of the examples in a performance level does not mean that the PAC, LAC and Department Chair will necessarily award that level. Faculty should not consider items to be additive or multiplicative.

### **Evaluation Performance Levels: Teaching and Mentorship**

The University considers excellence in teaching both a responsibility and a priority. Alongside class-based instruction, mentorship is critical as well. This can include advising and mentoring students, teaching Special Problems courses, partnering with Honors students, etc. Even though instructional activity is common to all faculty and serves as one of the cornerstones of our professional obligation, it is also one of the most difficult to measure. The Department PAC and LAC must be diligent, thorough, and flexible in measuring the quality of teaching performance. An effective teacher establishes an environment conducive to learning and uses appropriate instructional and interpersonal skills to educate students and motivate them to learn. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness should be as comprehensive as possible. The process must include a systematic assessment of student opinion, the assessment of peers and the Department Chair, and/or the assessment by other knowledgeable persons. Faculty members themselves also must have the opportunity to contribute information that they consider relevant to evaluating their teaching effectiveness. Within the FIS system, faculty members are encouraged to provide details of their completed activities. For example, faculty can provide information and context in the “Additional Course Information” textbox that accompanies entries under “Scheduled Teaching.”

For teaching each faculty member is to be evaluated relative to their workload, with performance expectations being proportional to workload.

Criteria guidelines are described below for each of the five performance levels. Performance is evaluated over a three-year period. Generally, a particular level of performance will include activities and performance from that level as well as lower levels. Successful candidates for tenure will typically perform at Level 3 or better in all areas. Achievement of one or more of the examples in a performance level does not mean that the PAC, LAC and Department Chair will necessarily award that level. Faculty should not consider items to be additive or multiplicative. The Department of Spanish places great faith in the professional judgments of the members of the PAC and LAC to determine levels of professional performance.

#### **LEVEL 5 (Excellent; 4.0-5.0):**

- High SPOT scores and student completion rates.
- Teaches new preparation.
- Proposed, developed and taught a new course.
- Successfully added a course to the core curriculum.
- Works with special programs (e.g. Honors Thesis, Special Problems Courses).
- Presents at teaching-related workshops and/or conferences.
- Nominated for or receives a CLASS or UNT teaching award.

**LEVEL 4 (Very Good; 3.0-3.9):**

- Takes webinars and maintains pedagogical expertise.
- Proposed and developed a new course that is pending approval.
- Developed new course or adapted an existing course to an online format.
- Proposed a course to be added to the core curriculum.
- Makes substantial changes to the syllabus of an existing course.
- Attends teaching-related workshops and/or conferences on or off-campus
- Undergoes a voluntary peer class observation by LAC/PAC.
- Other significant teaching-related activities and accomplishments (e.g. tutoring, reviewing textbooks, substituting classes, Canvas training).

**LEVEL 3 (Good; 2.0-2.9):**

- Creates and executes effective materials and lessons.
- Arrives to class on time and meets for the entire period.
- Teaches in Spanish.
- Maintains a positive regard in the eyes of the students (e.g. creates a positive learning environment, is available for assistance outside of class).
- Arranges for class substitution or alternative activity instead of canceling class.
- Keeps Faculty Information System (FIS) up to date; uploads syllabi in timely manner

**LEVEL 2 (Needs Improvement; 1.0-1.9):**

- Needs improvement in multiple areas of teaching.

**LEVEL 1 (Unsatisfactory; 0-0.9):**

- Does not conform with the expected instructional role of a faculty member in the Department or the College.

**Evaluation Performance Levels: Research and Research-Adjacent Activities**

Scholarly journals and scholarly book publishers must have a peer-review process in place. For journal articles, the faculty must provide a proof of peer review procedure by using reliable databases such as the MLA Directory of Periodicals or simply providing actual external reviews. For book publications, both contract and external reviews must be provided as evidence of the peer-review process. Publications will not count if no peer-review process is used by the publisher or the peer-review process does not include reviews by external reviewers.

There is no minimum/maximum number of word-length required for original scholarship, such as articles, book-length monographs, book chapters, etc. Rather, only the sum total of PR words published during the 3-calendar-year review period will be taken into account to determine the final score.

Contributions by multiple authors or editors shall be evaluated according to the percentage of the work done by each and the word count will count accordingly. In cases where one author/editor bears a larger percentage of the work then corroboration in writing by the co- authors/co-editors in question should be provided.

Each faculty member's research is to be evaluated relative to their workload, with research productivity expectations being proportional to workload.

At all times faculty members must refer to the departmental Annual Review, Tenure & Promotion

Guidelines regarding all the expectations for acceptable scholarship. Achievement of one or more of the examples in a performance level does not mean that the PAC, LAC and Department Chair will necessarily award that level. Faculty should not consider items to be additive or multiplicative. The Department of Spanish places great faith in the professional judgments of the members of the PAC and LAC to determine levels of professional performance.

**LEVEL 5 (Excellent; 4.0-5.0):**

- 25,000 or more published PR words of original scholarship in reputable scholarly venues in the 3-year-calendar period under review.
- Securing external funding for research;
- One's book reviewed positively in a reputable scholarly outlet;

**LEVEL 4 (Very Good; 3.0-3.9):**

- 20,000-24,999 published PR words of original scholarship in reputable scholarly venues in the 3-year-calendar period under review

**LEVEL 3 (Good; 2.0-2.9):**

- 10,000-19,999 published PR words of original scholarship in reputable scholarly venues in the 3-year-calendar period under review in addition to at least 2 of the following:
  - Other published scholarship: book reviews, performance reviews, etc.;
  - Citations of published work;
  - At least 3 presentations at international or national venues;
  - Securing internal funding for research;
  - Editing a book-length volume;
  - Other well-documented relevant scholarly activities:

**LEVEL 2 (Needs Improvement; 1.0-1.9):**

- 5,000 -9,999 published PR words of original scholarship in reputable scholarly venues in the 3-year-calendar period under review • One other relevant scholarly activity as listed in "Very Good" category;

**LEVEL 1 (Unsatisfactory; 0-0.9):**

- Less than 5,000 published PR words of original scholarship in reputable scholarly venues in the 3-year-calendar period under review;
- Does not consistently meet expectations as listed in "Very Good" category;

**IMPORTANT**

The departmental ATP (Annual Review, Tenure & Promotion) document has clear guidelines regarding peer-reviewed publications and these must be followed by the PAC and the Chair when evaluating professors' research activities.

In the departmental ATP peer-reviewed journal publications are divided into three tiers and it is to be used in determining total number of words to be awarded as per the tier category of the journal:

Tier 1: number of words x 1.3 weight. Example: 1,000 words = 1,300 words counted, etc. Tier 2: number of words x 1.0 weight. Example: 1,000 words = 1,000 words counted, etc. Tier 3: number of words x 0.7 weight. Example: 1,000 words = 700 words counted, etc.

### **Evaluation Performance Levels: Service**

Faculty are expected to be good citizens of the university, college, and department and to engage in service activities beyond the institution, such as service to professional organizations, to the community and to the public. A particular level of performance will include activities and/or products from that level as well as those specified in the lower levels. Wherever possible, the assessment of service will include a determination of the quantity and quality of work required by each service contribution. Typically, successful candidates for tenure perform at Level 3 or better. The duties associated with service activities (e.g., committee memberships, student organization sponsorship, non-profit organization membership) and positions (e.g., Undergraduate advisor, Graduate Advisor, TA/TF Coordinator) should be articulated. Within the FIS system, faculty members are encouraged to provide details of their completed activities. For example, faculty can provide information and context in the “Responsibilities/Brief Description” textbox that accompanies entries under “Professional” Service.

Each faculty member’s service is to be evaluated relative to their workload, with performance expectations being proportional to workload. Achievement of one or more of the examples in a performance level does not mean that the PAC, LAC and Department Chair will necessarily award that level. Faculty should not consider items to be additive or multiplicative. The Department of Spanish places great faith in the professional judgments of the members of the PAC and LAC to determine levels of professional performance.

#### **LEVEL 5 (Excellent; 4.0-5.0):**

- Organizes and/or assists with extra events for the department such as Professional Development Day for Teachers of Spanish, departmental receptions and other activities, outreach programs, etc.
- Initiates and/or directs a Study Abroad program.
- Initiates and directs a student club on a regular basis.
- Reviews articles and books for publications.
- Serves as a faculty advisor to student organizations.
- Plays a leadership role in a national professional organization.
- Serves on an M.A. or honors thesis committee as a committee chair.

#### **LEVEL 4 (Very Good. 3.0-3.9):**

- Assists with event preparations and/or assisting with event activities (e.g. helping with registration, handing out food).
- Leads an activity session for students (game, craft, etc.).
- Serves on CLASS or university committee/s and/or Faculty Senate.
- Serves on an M.A. or honors thesis committee as a reader.

#### **LEVEL 3 (Good; 2.0-2.9):**

- Attending a departmental event (e.g. guest speaker, awards ceremony);
- Serves as Secretary or Chair of departmental committee including ad hoc and search committees;
- Serves on departmental committees;
- Performs other well-documented valuable service to the college, university, professional community or local community.
- Other well-documented relevant service activities (e.g. ad hoc committees, administering or grading language placement exams, cultural activities for students).

#### **LEVEL 2 (Needs Improvement; 1.0-1.9):**

- Needs improvement in multiple areas of service.

**LEVEL 1 (Unsatisfactory; 0-0.9):**

- Does not conform with the expected service role of a faculty member in the Department or the College.

## FACULTY MERIT EVALUATION PROCESSES

The Department will conduct annual merit evaluations for all Department faculty as described in *Policies of the University of North Texas*, 06.007. The Provost's Office will distribute an announcement to faculty requesting that they complete their annual faculty merit evaluation forms. Faculty complete these with a three-year rolling window. They should also upload to FIS any information pertinent to the evaluation of their teaching, research, and service.

Each member of the department PAC and LAC will review the submitted documents and assign to each faculty member a performance-level score in one-tenth-point increments on each dimension of a faculty member's official workload assignment. A brief comment explaining the performance score for each job dimension should be provided in order to assist the PAC and LAC chairs in drafting an evaluation letter that best represents the collective sentiment of the committee.

Members of the PAC and LAC will submit their performance-level score sheets to the department staff. Department staff will use a spreadsheet to record committee members' scores and must de-identify the score sheets. Staff will then return the spreadsheet for final review to the PAC and LAC chairs respectively. Department staff will only calculate weighted averages from the average of these categories. The department chair may assist in these calculations but is only permitted to view anonymous score sheets; the department chair may not view any document that identifies individual PAC and LAC committee members. Department staff will also create a Word document with all comments that were submitted by the PAC and LAC. The PAC and LAC chairs will share the spreadsheet and comments document with the PAC or LAC and the Department Chair.

The average performance scores for each faculty member will be weighted by their respective job descriptions over the 3-year window to create a weighted composite score. For example, average scores of 4.0, 5.0, and 3.0 for teaching, research, and service, respectively, will be weighted by, for example, a job description that is 40% teaching, 50% research, and 10% service. The example weighted composite score would be 4.4 ( $4.0 \cdot .4 + 5.0 \cdot .5 + 3.0 \cdot .1$ ). If job descriptions have changed over the 3-year window, they should be averaged. Notably, the department chair will have four categories for evaluation as the administrative role is its own category.

The PAC and LAC chairs will draft an evaluation letter for each faculty member that is consistent with the weighted average performance score assigned by the PAC or LAC and takes into account the comments made by committee members on that faculty member's performance. PAC and LAC chairs will then share the draft evaluation letters with PAC and LAC members and, if necessary, revise the letter in an effort to create an evaluation letter that all PAC and LAC members are willing to sign. For faculty members who sit on the PAC and LAC the PAC and LAC chairs will exclude that particular faculty member when sharing the draft. This ensures that no faculty member, whether they sit on the PAC or LAC or not, sees their letter before it is finalized by the committee. For the evaluation letter for PAC and LAC chairs, a volunteer from the committee will draft the letter and follow the procedures

outlined in this paragraph.

Once all PAC and LAC members have signed the evaluation letters (letters may be electronically signed if needed), PAC and LAC chairs will share with each faculty member his/her evaluation letter and attempt to secure the faculty member's signature. The signature does not signify agreement, but rather indicates that the evaluation letter has been shared with the faculty member. The signed evaluation letters will also be uploaded to the Faculty Information System by PAC and LAC chairs.

Separately from the PAC and LAC, the Chair evaluates full-time faculty members on their performances in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. The Chair will share his/her evaluation letter with each faculty member, as well as upload the signed evaluation letter to the Faculty Information System. At a subsequent date, if it is determined that there will be annual merit-based raises, the Department Chair will make annual raise decisions based on the overall performance-level score that was assigned to each faculty member during the annual review process.

Adjunct or temporary faculty who are likely to teach in the Department with some regularity (at least one semester per year for several years) shall be evaluated by the LAC in the areas of teaching, professional development, and service in accordance with University and College policy. The LAC serves as a consulting body to the Department Chair who independently evaluates adjunct and temporary faculty.

As stated in UNT Policy 06.007 the PAC and LAC serve as consulting bodies to the Department Chair "who has final authority for assigning merit as per UNT Policy 06.047, Shared Governance and the Role of Advisory Committees and the Academic Administration."

#### *Tenured Faculty with Unsatisfactory Merit Evaluations*

A tenured faculty member who receives an unsatisfactory annual merit evaluation from the Department Chair are required to enter a Professional Development Program (*Policies of the University of North Texas*, 06.014, "Evaluating Tenured Faculty" and 06.052 "Review of Tenured Faculty") following an extended discussion between the Department Chair and the underperforming faculty member.

According to the University, the purposes of the Professional Development Program are to identify "substantial or chronic deficiencies in performance" and to develop a specific Professional Development Plan by which deficiencies might be remedied. It may entail a revision of the faculty member's official job description and the shifting of the workload allocation among teaching, research, and service.