

# **Department of Sociology Policy and Procedures on Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Merit Pay Distribution**

## **I. Purpose**

This policy establishes the process and guidelines by which the Department of Sociology evaluates faculty performance and determines the distribution of any available merit pay. It relies on the workload expectations and domains of professional activity established in the Department of Sociology Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Workload Policy (Workload Policy). In order to ensure the consistent and equitable review of faculty contributions and merit in accordance with the University of Maryland Policy on Faculty Merit Distribution (VII-4.00[A]), the Department of Sociology has established this Policy and Procedures on Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Merit Pay Distribution.

## **II. Policy**

The Chair of the Department of Sociology, with the approval of the Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, has the authority and responsibility to evaluate faculty performance and determine merit increases consistent with the procedures established below. This process relies on the work of the Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Merit Pay Committee (Merit Pay Committee), which takes the primary role in evaluating faculty performance and determining distribution of available merit pool monies according to the dimensions of faculty activity established in the Workload Policy. Merit evaluations occur each spring and are based on the previous calendar year's activity.

## **III. Distribution of the Merit Pool**

- A. The Chair shall provide the department with information on available sources of funds for merit increases during the merit review process each year. In years where merit money is available, 20% of the pool may be used by the Chair to account for special contributions or circumstances (e.g. promotions), or equity issues not addressed by the regular committee procedures. The remaining 80% of the merit pool will be distributed according to the evaluation ratings assigned by the Merit Pay Committee. Money available to the committee will be allocated as follows:
  - 1. 40% will be distributed according to the mean ratings for research performance,
  - 2. 40% according to the mean ratings for teaching activities, and
  - 3. 20% according to the mean ratings for service performance both within and outside the university (e.g., to professional associations, government agencies, etc.).
- B. Individuals with a modified workload developed under the terms of the Workload Policy will have merit based on their agreed upon workload distribution.
- C. Since merit pools vary from year to year, average points received over the most recent three years of evaluation will constitute the basis for determining merit increases in any one year. Faculty with

less than three years of evaluations (for example new faculty) will use an average of the most recent years available. If two or more years of no merit pay would cause any particular evaluation year to be included in less than two averages, the averaging period will be extended to four years or as many years as needed to ensure that every evaluation year is included in at least two averages.

- D. If year to year fluctuations in the merit pools are so severe that some individuals are still left without relatively appropriate rewards for particularly productive years, the Chair should seek to address this problem through special allocations from their 20% pool.

#### **IV. Composition of the Merit Pay Committee**

- A. As established in the Department of Sociology Plan of Organization, the Merit Pay Committee will consist of the outgoing tenured/tenure-track faculty members of the Policy Committee. The Chair will participate as a non-voting ex officio member.

#### **V. Merit Review Procedures - Committee**

- A. Each spring semester, the Merit Pay Committee shall meet and together determine the merit points for each faculty member according to the areas and percentages listed in III.A
- B. Each member of the Merit Pay Committee is expected to independently arrive at a preliminary rating for each eligible faculty member. Each member will also be assigned special responsibility for an in-depth review of a portion of the faculty list.
- C. At the meeting where final scores are determined, each faculty member is discussed individually. Ratings on the areas in III.A will be done on a scale from 0 to 10 (adjusted as necessary to account for modified workload arrangements). Suggested guidelines for performance ratings may be found in IX below.
- D. The primary source material for the Merit Pay Committee's evaluations will be the annual Faculty Activity Reports, a departmental review form, updated vitae, copies of publications from the previous calendar year, and other relevant research, service, and teaching materials. The committee should only use information submitted by the faculty member, and not bring in outside recollections of activities for consideration.
- E. Because of the sensitive/restricted nature of information about teaching quality, a separate evaluation will be jointly conducted by the Chair, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and the Director of Graduate Studies, who have access to additional information about teaching performance. Evaluations of teaching quality by this group will involve a review of information gathered from Student Feedback on Course Experiences, information gleaned from their administrative roles (for example, knowledge of student complaints or administrative actions regarding teaching), and any teaching observations conducted during the relevant year. These teaching quality evaluations may be used to adjust the teaching activities merit score determined by the Merit Pay Committee by up to 2 points (upwards or downwards).

- F. The Merit Pay Committee's final scores, as revised by the teaching quality review, will be communicated to the Chair.

#### **VI. Merit Review Procedures - Chair**

- A. The Chair will calculate final merit scores in light of prior years as outlined in III.C, which will determine allocation of 80% of the merit pool.
- B. The Chair will allocate the remaining 20% of the pool as they see fit.
- C. Merit monies will be distributed in dollar amounts per points received, rather than as a percentage of current salary.
- D. The Chair will communicate the final determination of each faculty member's merit rating to that faculty member in writing. This letter will also report the number of points received in each category and the average per faculty member. This letter will also report the preceding years' percentages, the average of which determines the final percentage for the current review cycle. In years when merit money is available, the letter will communicate the faculty member's new salary.
- E. The Chair shall report to the Merit Pay Committee their final salary recommendations.

#### **VII. Appeals**

- A. The Chair will meet with any interested faculty member to discuss concerns with the merit pay process.
- B. If a faculty member, after consulting with the Chair, remains aggrieved at their merit pay ratings, they may appeal to the tenured/tenure-track members of the Policy Committee within two weeks of the receipt of the Chair's letter.
- C. Tenured/tenure-track members of the Policy Committee members can either confirm the ratings of the Merit Pay Committee (as modified through the teaching quality review discussed in V.D) or raise the number of points awarded in any category. Any salary adjustment resulting from an appeal would be taken from the 20% allocated by the Chair in order to avoid recalculating merit ratings for all faculty.

#### **VIII. Policy Review and Revisions**

- A. Revisions to this policy may be proposed by any member of the tenured/tenure-track faculty. Proposed revisions will be submitted to the Policy Committee, which will review them for consistency with relevant UMD and USM policies and the department's Plan of Organization. Proposed changes will then be reviewed at a Departmental Meeting. A positive vote by a majority of the tenured/tenure-track faculty is required for passage.

## IX. Evaluation Guidelines for Rating Performance

A. Although each member of the Merit Pay Committee may use their professional judgment in assessing the value of various contributions, the following guidelines have been helpful for enabling consistency in the use of the ten-point scales.

1. Raters are encouraged to utilize the full range of points (from 0 to 10) in their evaluations.
2. In the evaluation and rating of research performance, the following activities and ranges for point allocations are suggested for consideration if present, consistent with the department's workload policy:
  - Books (3-8) - The prestige and quality of the publication outlet can be taken into account as well as the quality of the work itself, although there is not a formal ranking for journals or outlets. Books published on a top university press should be given points in the upper range (5-8 pts); books published on lower-tier university press or trade/commercial press may be in the lower range. New editions/translations of existing books should not be counted. Textbooks (unless they represent innovative integration of a specialty area in the discipline) are to be counted under teaching.
  - Refereed articles (1-3) - Articles published online before actual print publication do not count until the year of their printed publication date. As usual, you receive credit for publications actually submitted to the merit pay committee (preference for submitting pdf copies whenever possible).
  - Book chapters (1-2)
  - Reviews (0-1)
  - Public- or policy-facing research activities—such as policy reports, op-eds, or public presentations in community-based research—can be counted toward “reports” (0-2)
  - Grants and grant proposals (1-3) - External proposal writing gets a point, as does a re-submission. Receiving a grant award gets 1 to 3 points. Internal (UMD) proposal writing does not get points, but an award may earn up to a point. External grant proposals written or awarded get points only if the University will receive money (whether directly through ORAA or as payments for faculty release time, RAs, etc.).
  - Instrument development, data collection or similar checkpoint towards publication in experimental, quantitative, qualitative or historical research (1-2). Other products of the research process, such as primary data collection or open science pre-prints posted online (e.g. SocArxiv), can be counted toward “data collection or similar checkpoints on the way to publication” (1-2 points).

3. In the evaluation and rating of service performance, the following activities and ranges for point allocations are suggested for consideration if present, consistent with the department's workload policy:

- Minor or routine department, campus, or University committee work (0-3) - Committee work (e.g., searches, APTs) lasting only one semester will be counted only for the calendar year in which the work was done. Graduate Committee service gets an extra point.
- Major or extraordinary department, campus, or University committee work (1-7)
- Program, department, campus, or University administrative positions (1-7)
- Development of professional development workshops for graduate students (1)
- Serving as a faculty liaison for students groups (1)
- Committee work for local, regional, or national professional associations (0-3)
- Elected positions in local, regional, or national professional associations (1-5)
- Editorships (1-5)
- Review work for journals or grant agencies (1-3) – Provide names and numbers.
- Organizing sessions at conferences (0-2)
- Writing letters for external APT reviews, speeches or consulting for local or national agencies (0-3)
- Outreach to community organizations based on one's academic expertise or serving on boards or advisory groups that draw on one's academic expertise (0-3)
- Mentoring junior faculty counts as internal service (0-3)

4. In the evaluation and rating of teaching performance, the following facets of teaching are suggested for consideration if present, consistent with the department's workload policy:

- Each regular course taught earns 1 point (a standard 2-2 load earns 4 points) - Courses given for joint appointment departments are treated the same as Sociology courses if the department is responsible for 100% of the faculty member's merit pay.
- Each service class taught regularly (at least once an academic year) earns 2 points
- Extent of writing essay exams, term papers required in classes (0-3)
- Innovations in teaching methods or courses (0-3)

- Dissertation, 2nd year papers, and graduate student advising get points only in the year the dissertation is finished (chair=3), the dissertation proposal is approved (chair=1), or the 2nd year paper is accepted (chair=2).
- Chairing of thesis or dissertations (1-5) - An undergraduate honors thesis gets a point for the year it is completed.
- Advisory work on thesis or dissertation committees (0-3) - Membership on a committee, either dissertation or 2nd year paper, gets a point in the year it is completed.
- Chairing comps committees [and if counted at all, service on comps committees], will be counted in teaching, not service (1). Similarly, chairing specialty areas will count for teaching, not service (up to 1).
- Mentoring activity for either undergraduate or graduate students (at UMD or through professional organizations) (0-3)
- New course development (0-3)
- Supervision of undergraduate internships, service learning, and 1-credit courses will be considered for merit points depending on the number of students, the extent of involvement required, and the innovativeness and excellence of the undergraduate experience.
- Creating or updating teaching materials to incorporate diverse perspectives and/or community-based teaching activities (0-3)
- Authoring textbooks (0-2) - A new textbook generally gets 2 points, a revised edition generally up to 1 point, a new edited collection 1 point. Copies should be submitted along with the research publications.
- Teaching and mentorship awards will generally count a point, but 2-3 can be given depending on the significance of the award (e.g a college, or university-wide award vs. a department award).
- Developing open education resources (1-2)
- Participating in pedagogical workshops from the TLTC, department or professional organizations (up to 1)

Last Revised & Approved December 10, 2025