

## University of Florida College of Education

### School of Special Education, School Psychology, and Early Childhood Studies

#### Merit Evaluation Plan

##### ***Overview***

Meritorious performance is a comprehensive judgment that requires a holistic review of the evidence presented in each faculty member's annual evaluation materials in the areas of scholarship, teaching, and service.

Scholarship is defined broadly to include basic research, the integration of knowledge, the transformation of knowledge through the intellectual work involved in teaching and facilitating learning, and/or the application of knowledge to solve a compelling problem in the community. The productive scholar is involved in research, writing, and creative efforts that advance knowledge in a field.

Teaching is defined in its broadest sense to include instruction, course revision and development, analysis of the impact of one's teaching, program development and leadership, advising and mentoring, serving on and chairing doctoral committees. It also includes responsiveness to students' needs beyond the classroom.

Service is defined broadly as professional and public activities that contribute to the mission of the Program, Department, College, or University, including membership on committees, and activities that promote the advancement of the discipline. This includes working creatively to ensure that professional knowledge has an impact on families, schools, colleges, professional organizations, community agencies, or other institutions, and local, state, national, and international policies and practices.

##### ***Meritorious Performance***

In most cases, meritorious performance is defined as distinction in the area or areas of the primary assignment and at least satisfactory performance in any other assigned areas. Faculty members and the Department Chair work collaboratively to determine "primary assignment." It is recognized that faculty assignment is typically more complex than what is reflected on the Faculty Load form each semester and should be considered in relation to the varied contributions of faculty to the department, college, and university.

*Distinction* is characterized by performance that is well above the expected, typical performance. In most cases, one of the primary areas of assignment should include scholarship, unless the faculty member has an assignment that primarily reflects other responsibilities. Merit should be regarded as more important than variety of activity.

##### ***Merit Committee***

The Merit Committee shall consist of the Department Chair and four faculty members. One tenure-line faculty member is nominated for the committee from each program area (i.e., Early Childhood, School Psychology, and Special Education). One non-tenure line faculty member will be nominated by all non-tenure line faculty from all three areas. Faculty members are selected by the program faculty to serve 2-year staggered terms.

## ***Process***

Each member of the faculty submits an annual report using the college's online form. In addition, each faculty member may submit a one-page addendum to the annual report to provide a more detailed explanation of their assignment, clarification of information on the annual report, or any other information needed to evaluate the faculty member's materials. The Chair provides a summary of student evaluations of teaching and the faculty load assignment for each faculty member. The materials used by the committee for merit evaluation include the annual report form, data from student evaluations, the faculty load assignment, and the faculty member's addendum to the annual report, if provided. It is the responsibility of faculty members to communicate clearly the nature of their activities and accomplishments. It is also the responsibility of the Merit Committee members to seek additional information when needed to inform the decision-making process.

Before the meeting of the Merit Committee, each member of the committee independently evaluates the evidence presented in the annual evaluation materials submitted by each faculty member. The Chair convenes a meeting of the Merit Committee. The purpose of this meeting is to develop groupings of faculty with similarly meritorious performance. Groupings are based on evaluations by individual Merit Committee members and discussion among the members during the meeting. Although consensus among the Merit Committee members on final groupings is the goal, the Department Chair has final decision-making authority.

## ***Reviews & Appeals***

At the request of a faculty member, the Department Chair will explain where the faculty member's evaluation materials were placed in the final assigned group and why. Within a specified period after the merit evaluation process has been completed, any faculty member may request an appeal the placement of their evaluation materials in the final assigned group. The Merit Committee will review all appeals and make decisions about whether a change in the groups is warranted.

## ***Merit Allocation***

The allocation of available merit funds will be the responsibility of the Department Chair. Although the Chair has the final decision-making authority on merit allocation, faculty members in the same group should be allocated comparable merit increases in terms of dollars (not percentage of salary); and faculty in the highest group should be allocated more merit than those in lower meritorious groups.