

Department of Biology

**College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
University of Colorado Colorado Springs**

**Criteria and Processes for Annual Merit Review
Instructional, Research and Clinical Faculty**

Annual Review: Importance and Process

Biology IRC faculty must evaluate themselves annually (guidelines for faculty evaluation appear in [APS #5008](#)). The Chair's duty is to evaluate all faculty annually, and to discuss evaluations with faculty members. This evaluation serves to measure and report Biology faculty members' performance so that continued progress toward excellence in teaching and service can be achieved, and merit and other pay adjustments made. Evaluation ratings are based on criteria that the Biology Department has developed with input among faculty members and the Dean of LAS. Principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are included throughout the evaluation criteria because DEI is valued greatly by the department, college and university. Faculty must provide evidence or appropriate documentation for each criterion selected. The list of criteria is not exhaustive, and new and different forms of teaching and service will be considered at each Tier. It is up to the faculty member to defend the worth of an item that is not currently listed in the agreed-upon criteria contained herein. Merit scores in teaching and service reflect where the faculty member appears in the rating scale below.

1. Fails to Meet Expectations - Fails to meet expectations and improvement is needed in most aspects of position.
2. Below Expectations - Fails to meet expectations and improvement is needed in some areas.
3. Meeting Expectations - Fulfills performance expectations and may exceed some. Work is of high quality in all significant areas of responsibility.
4. Exceeding Expectations - Achieves performance expectations and frequently exceeds them. Demonstrates performance of a very high level of quality in all areas of responsibility.
5. Outstanding - Far exceeds performance expectation. Work is of exceptional quality in all essential areas of responsibility. In addition, makes an exceptional or unique contribution in achievement to department, college, and/or University objectives.

Special Circumstances

If a faculty member is rated as below expectations, they will be required to participate in the creation of a Performance Improvement Agreement in accordance with APS 5008.

Faculty members who do not follow the annual review process will receive a "below expectations" review and be considered for disciplinary action in accordance with APS 5008.

If a significant disruption to the well-being of the faculty member occurs, the Chair may request that the Dean delay this evaluation.

Annual Evaluation Merit Value: Teaching

5 = Outstanding

4.0 to 4.9 = Exceeding Expectations

3.0 to 3.9 = Meeting Expectations

2.0 to 2.9 = Below Expectations

1.0 to 1.9 = Fails to Meet Expectations

Performance Ratings Based on Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs)

UCCS has many excellent instructors in all disciplines. Biology instructors should strive to ensure that their teaching instruction is consistent with the level of teaching across the university, particularly in areas that concern organization, fairness in grading, explanation of course material, commitment to student learning, and respect for students.

These qualities, as perceived by students, are reflected in the following FCQ questions:

- Question 1 - Course materials (including any textbooks, readings, lectures, online content, etc.) were organized effectively.
- Question 3 - Exams and graded assignments were clearly related to the course content (including lectures, assigned readings, etc.).
- Question 4 - The course made it possible for me to increase my knowledge, skills, and understanding of the subject.
- Question 7 - The instructor explained course ideas in a clear and understandable manner.
- Question 9 - The instructor demonstrated interest in student learning.
- Question 10 - The instructor demonstrated respect for and professional treatment of all students.
- Question 11 - The instructor communicated effectively with students about the course.

Ratings on the FCQ are on a scale of 1-7, asking if a student agrees with each statement, where a rating of 4 is “neutral,” and a rating of 5 is the beginning of the “agree” range.

- 4 = neither agree nor disagree
- 5 = somewhat agree
- 6 = agree
- 7 = strongly agree

Faculty members who have a rating for these questions that 4.5 or better shall have a minimum teaching score of 4.0.

Given the subjective nature of student evaluations, faculty who do not meet these criteria shall be permitted to submit documentation to refute negative student comments that affect their evaluations, particularly comments regarding national origin, physical appearance, gender, age, or any other comments that may be perceived as demonstrating a personal and unfair bias toward a faculty member.

Additionally, evaluations must take into consideration that courses that fall into the following categories, which are predominantly taught by instructors, have been shown to result in lower scores:

- lower division courses with predominantly first-year students
- required courses
- large classes with 30-50+ students where faculty don't have time to “connect” with students
- online classes

Faculty Awards

Faculty who receive official awards from the college in recognition of their teaching accomplishments (e.g., instructor of the year) shall receive a 5.0.

Performance Evaluation Based on Teaching Outside of the Classroom

The UCCS biology department recognizes that teaching extends beyond the classroom. Additional teaching merit shall be offered for activities that enhance students' educational experiences, including, but not limited to the following:

- serving as a faculty advisor of student interns, externs, and/or service-learners
- serving as a thesis committee member
- involving students in research-related projects
- serving as an advisor for a student club that enhances student learning (e.g., biology club, SEAS, etc.)

Performance Evaluation Based on Professional Development

The UCCS biology department understands that teaching, like any other skill, is dynamic, and encourages faculty involvement in all activities that help faculty improve their teaching. Additional teaching merit shall be offered for the following activities:

- exchanging ideas and collaborating with other instructors to better improve course material
- actively seeking out feedback about teaching (e.g., by participating in peer evaluations)
- surveying students to inform teaching practices (e.g., through pre/post surveys, formative assessments, mid-course evaluations, etc.)
- engaging in collaborative teaching activities such as sharing course slides, lecture outlines, exams, etc.
- doing guest lectures
- developing new courses and/or significantly revising old courses (e.g., incorporating interactive technology, evidence-based teaching strategies, etc.)
- designing or implementing innovative assessments or assignments
- enhancing classroom learning with outside experiences such as field trips
- attending pedagogical-related conferences/workshops/training
- seeking funding or collaborations to enhance teaching practices
- achieving certifications such as Quality Matters through FRC
- specifically designing course material to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion
- developing interdisciplinary programs or degrees

Annual Evaluation Merit Value: Service

5 = Outstanding

4.0 to 4.9 = Exceeding Expectations

3.0 to 3.9 = Meeting Expectations

2.0 to 2.9 = Below Expectations

1.0 to 1.9 = Fails to Meet Expectations

Performance Evaluation Based on Departmental Service

IRC who regularly attend departmental meetings and are actively engaged in department dialogue and activities that contribute to the overall functioning of the department shall receive a score no lower than 4.0.

Examples of how IRC faculty positively contribute to the department include actions such as participating in conversations about pertinent department issues such as course curriculum, awarding of departmental honors, scholarships, and teaching fellowships to students; identifying the need for laboratory supplies and equipment, and helping the staff organize the ordering and purchasing of these items; and mentoring new faculty with all aspects of the job that are specific to the university and department (e.g., how to complete a self-evaluation).

Additional Activities Considered as Service

In addition to participation in department meetings and dialogue, the following shall increase the service score above 4.0.

- Serving an administrative position within the department, such as assistant chair
- Supervising/overseeing teaching assistants, laboratory assistants, student employees, and lecturers
- Teaching activities that extend beyond the instructor's contracted teaching load that serve the retention and degree persistence goals of the department, college, and university. These include, but are not limited to the following:
 - teaching overloads
 - teaching summer, interim, and/or weekend courses
 - accepting students into classes beyond the established course cap
- Serving as a committee member, including but not limited to the following:
 - serving on search committees at the university-wide, college-wide, and department levels
 - serving as a faculty assembly representative or on faculty assembly committees such as the IRC committee, women's committee, minority affairs committee, etc.
 - serving on campus-wide task forces
 - serving on the DIRC
- Providing student advising and support, including but not limited to the following:
 - holding regular office hours during which students can come in and discuss not only course material, but also questions related to their overall education and career-goals
 - being available to students with an "open door" policy that allows students to drop in with questions and/or concerns
 - writing student letters of recommendation to help students pursue scholarship, internship, graduate school, and job/career opportunities
 - establishing and/or connecting students with internship/research opportunities
 - participating in open houses, major/minor fairs, commencement, student recruitment, etc.

- Providing service that promotes the status of UCCS on a city and state-wide level, such as participation in community science events such as Science Olympiad, Cool Science, K-12 science fairs, etc.

- Providing relevant professional services within the department or the larger community, including but not limited to the following:
 - serving as a consultant for science education in any capacity (e.g., reviewing standardized science tests, serving as a grader for AP exams, mentoring K-12 science teachers, etc.)
 - reviewing a proposal, manuscript, book, etc.
 - serving as a conference organizer or program planner
 - participating in alumni outreach initiatives
 - contributing to diversity, equity, and inclusion projects the departmental, college, or campus level
 - serving as a member of a professional organization advisory board and/or committee
 - serving as an editorial board member
 - presenting at pedagogical-related conferences, workshops, or training sessions
 - publishing material such as a journal article, textbook chapter, lesson plans, lab manual, etc.