GUIDELINES FOR ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

Effective 2024

The purpose of the Annual Activity and Professional Development Report (AAR) is to help enhance faculty members' professional growth, development, and vitality, and to ensure they are successfully fulfilling all requirements of their positions within the English Department. The AAR guidance document serves to delineate criteria used by the Department Chair in determining the level of achievement rating of each faculty's performance as reported on the AAR according to required categories of and expectations for each member's appointment. Faculty will receive a rating based on a four category scale as defined, here, on the Office of the Provost's website.

The guidance below provides both governing principles and examples of how each level may be achieved and documented by faculty members and how each rating is subsequently determined by the Chair. Thus, AAR ratings are to be congruent with the progress, goals, and energy expenditures determined by each faculty member's Workload Agreement and particular appointment (i.e., tenured, tenure track, non-tenure track) for the year under review.

TEACHING/INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The English Department holds teaching as central to its mission and vital to the evaluation of faculty. Teaching invites a wide variety of approaches and demands, which remain flexible to different teaching occasions. Regardless of the approach, the Department expects care and attention to teaching at all levels, from required general education classes to graduate seminars.

The Department of English holds the following principles key to effective teaching:

1. **Continual Reflection and Professional Growth**. Effective teachers reflect on their pedagogy and are committed to improvement. Their commitment to growing as teachers is shown in multiple ways, including revising course content and delivery methods, staying current with pedagogical practices in their field, and seeking feedback from students and colleagues. While a reflective teacher will avoid adopting new trends for their novelty, the department encourages teachers to experiment with new pedagogies appropriate to their teaching philosophy and field in their attempt to benefit students.

2. **Challenging, Supportive, and Inclusive Learning Environments**. Effective teachers challenge students to grow as thinkers and writers, while also providing support and an inclusive learning environment. They balance a structured and organized classroom with opportunities for student engagement, creating opportunities for collaboration among students. Effective instructors prioritize inclusivity by selecting diverse course materials and ensuring content is accessible to students with different backgrounds,

experience, and technological access.

3. **Effective Use of Assessment**. Effective teachers provide clear, challenging assignments and timely, constructive feedback. They promote student learning and success through pedagogical strategies such as rubrics, scaffolded assignments, low-stakes assignments that prepare students for high-stakes assignments, peer-review, student-teacher conferences, and opportunities for revision.

4. **Support beyond the Classroom.** Effective teachers offer appropriate personalized support and demonstrate care for their students as individuals, not just learners. They provide academic and career guidance, alert students to opportunities to develop as scholars and professionals, serve on capstone committees, and serve as references and writers of recommendation letters.

DISTINGUISHED

Faculty may reach a **distinguished** rating, having met the criteria of both baseline and skilled, through evidence of exceptional teaching within a given academic year through a combination of action and evidence circumscribed by the principles of effective teaching. Examples of teaching achievements contributing to a rating of distinguished include but are not limited to the following:

- Demonstrates a pattern of student success directly attributable to a course/instructor, such as
    - Student conference acceptance
    - Student publications
    - Student internships/position
- Demonstrates a pattern of developing and implementing pedagogical innovation (e.g., new methods, new assessment measures, new texts) within courses
- Demonstrates a pattern of reflectively pursuing incremental changes that show significant results
- Receives teaching grants (e.g., CITL) with evidence of implementation, reflection, and impact
- Develops and revises new and existing courses
- Achieves departmental goals through collaboration interventions, e.g., colloquia
- Demonstrates a pattern of mentoring students: chairing committees, facilitating FUSE grants, or student professionalization from classroom experiences (e.g., service/community related projects)
- Wins a College, University, or professional organization Teaching Award (e.g., PCAL, NCTE)

These are examples by which a distinguished rating may be achieved, not criteria to be met in order to achieve the ranking.

SKILLED

Faculty members may attain a **skilled** rating, having met the criteria of baseline, through evidence of consistent engagement with and reflection on their pedagogy through a combination of action and evidence as described within the criteria below. A skilled rating indicates a level of instruction that is beyond what is expected at the baseline ranking with an emphasis on depth and quality rather than quantity. Examples of teaching achievements contributing to a rating of skilled include but are not limited to the following:

- Demonstrates reflection, revision, innovation, and creativity in one or more courses
- Demonstrates reflectively pursuing incremental changes that suggest positive results
- Maintains or increasing knowledge of course-related subject matter
- Implements best teaching practices within the field*
- Displays professionalism in the classroom as demonstrated by
    - skilled handling of particularly difficult or unusual circumstances
- Displays overall teaching effectiveness through
    - Instances but not yet a pattern of student research/creativity directly attributable to the instructor's course/instruction/mentorship

- ○ Rigor and consistency in grading
- Creates innovations that result in positive student engagement
- Engages in new teaching opportunities such as
  - ○ Co-teaching
  - ○ New courses (Department, Interdisciplinary, Honors, Colonnade)
- Displays responsiveness to students or to unique demands of the Department
- Engages with and responsiveness to SITE evaluations
- Pursues grants aimed at student success (e.g., course revision/development; student opportunities)
- Consistently receives SITE medians at 4 or above
- Consistent positive comments SITES

*This does not mean instructors must be constantly or immediately adopting changes in their field or in the field of pedagogy; change should be accompanied by reflection–before and after—implementation.

BASELINE

A ranking of **baseline** performance indicates that the instructor has met the basic expectations for teaching but has not met the criteria for Skilled or Distinguished. Basic expectations include the following:

- Fulfills instructional expectations and requirements to include all of the following:
  - ○ Provides syllabus with grading scheme/timeline of assignments
  - ○ Is generally on time for class/ no pattern of student complaints about frequent lateness
  - ○ Grades student work in a timely manner and gives students access to grades
  - ○ Holds regular office hours
  - ○ Provides appropriate artifacts for assessment
  - ○ Holds class as scheduled, i.e., no pattern of evidence of or student complaints about frequent class cancellations
  - ○ Generally responds to emails in a timely manner
  - ○ Treats students equally with no pattern of student complaints of the contrary
  - ○ Complies with SARC accommodations and procedures
- Displays behaviors or the absence of behaviors such as
  - ○ SITE ratings below scale center (e.g., 3 on a 5 point scale; 4 on a 7 point scale)
  - ○ No pattern of student complaints relating to serious concerns (see unsatisfactory listing below)
  - ○ No evidence of bias, harassment, inebriation

UNSATISFACTORY

A ranking of **unsatisfactory** demonstrates that the faculty member's teaching performance has shown, over more than one Academic Activity Report and Review period, no pattern of growth, no evidence of reflection, and no remediation to issues noted in the previous Annual Activities Report and Review processes, i.e., not keeping up in one's field as it best serves their courses and pedagogy. In essence, the faculty member is not fulfilling and has not fulfilled the minimal pedagogical responsibilities as can be supported by evidence over time. Examples of such evidence include but are not limited to the following:

- Fails to meet baseline expectations in basic instructional procedures
  - ○ Does not hold regular office hours
  - ○ Does not provide appropriate artifacts for assessment, when appropriate
  - ○ Does not hold class as scheduled or pattern of student complaints about frequent class cancellations
  - ○ Does not grade student work in a timely manner and does not gives students access to grades/a pattern of student complaints about failure to grade work or not knowing grades

　for significant portions of the semester
- ○ Generally does not respond to emails resulting in a pattern of student complaints about inability to be reached or failure to respond to emails
- ○ Fails to comply with SARC accommodations and procedures
- Consistently receives SITE ratings below scale center (e.g., 3 on a 5 point scale; 4 on a 7 point scale)
- Produces student complaints relating to serious concerns (see below)
- Generates concerning reports, backed with evidence, of bias, harassment, inebriation

Note: The Department Chair may discuss the context of SITE scores in terms of extenuating circumstances with the faculty member; however, a pattern of low scores across courses and across semesters warrants concern.

SCHOLARLY/CREATIVE ACTIVITY

The English Department expects scholarly and creative activity to be part of the professional development of faculty members who hold regular appointments as such achievements also contribute to the advancement of scholarship and development of creative works and, consequently, the reputation of the Department, Potter College, and the University.

The Department of English holds the following principles as key to Scholarly/Creative output:

1. **Progression.** Effective scholarly/creative activity that, first and foremost, demonstrates sustained progress, that is movement of a scholarly or creative work from one stage to the next (e.g., proposal > research > drafting > review > revision > proofing > publication) as compared with the previous year's report. Effective scholarly/creative activity demonstrates the faculty's conscious agenda for sustained productivity in balance with the obligations of teaching and service.
2. **Significance**. Effective scholarly/creative activity demonstrates the faculty member's conscious effort to produce meaningful contributions to the work's stakeholders: author/researcher, the field, one's courses/students, the greater community, a particular population, the reputation of WKU, or others.

DISTINGUISHED

Faculty members may reach **distinguished** ratings, having met the criteria of both baseline and skilled, through exceptional publications and/or productions within a given academic year. Examples of scholarly/creative achievements contributing to a rating of distinguished include but are not limited to the following:

- Completes a Level 1 scholarly or creative achievement as determined by concentration-specific tenure and promotion guidelines (e.g., publication of an academic monograph, novel, or production of a screenplay), multiple Level 2 scholarly or creative achievements (e.g., publication of peer-reviewed articles in academic journals) or some combination thereof
- Receives recognition which may include the following
    - ○ Conferral of an award by a recognized award-granting body
    - ○ An invitation to speak on their work as a plenary or keynote speaker at a major international or national conference
    - ○ A publication in honor of the faculty member such as a festschrift
- Secures substantial external funding for a project

These are examples by which a distinguished rating may be achieved, not criteria to be met in order to achieve the ranking.

Note: Faculty members with academic appointments that do not require a scholarly or creative publication agenda may also achieve skilled or distinguished ranking by fulfilling the requirements designated below as such actions exceed the expectation of their appointments.

SKILLED

Faculty members may attain a **skilled** rating, having met the criteria for baseline, by maintaining a publication agenda and sustained progress toward the commitments as determined by that academic year's Workload Agreement. Examples of scholarly/creative achievements contributing to a rating of skilled include but are not limited to the following:

- For Research Productive, shows evidence of significant and steady progress on Level 1 or Level 2 project(s)
- For Research Active, shows evidence of significant and steady progress on scholarly or creative activity/ies (e.g., pursuit of grants, researching book, article, other creative work idea; designing/gaining IRB approval for data collection; drafting a proposal, a panel, a conference presentations)
- For Research Minimal, shows evidence of staying up to date on developments in faculty member's field (examples of evidence may include incorporating innovative discipline research in other areas such as teaching or service or conference/workshop attendance)

BASELINE

A ranking of **baseline** performance indicates that the instructor has met the basic expectations for scholarly/creative activity but has not met the criteria for Skilled or Distinguished. A ranking of baseline is expected when a faculty member

- Articulates a current, ongoing project related to discipline in the annual activity report sufficient for the agreed upon designation for the academic year within the faculty's Workload Agreement.

UNSATISFACTORY

A ranking of **unsatisfactory** performance indicates that the faculty member has not met the basic expectations for scholarly/creative activity. A ranking of unsatisfactory is expected when a faculty member demonstrates

- Consistently reports unfulfilled scholarly or creative goals sufficient for the designation agreed upon for the academic year within the faculty's Workload Agreement.

SERVICE

The English Department expects service as part of the professional responsibility of faculty members who hold tenure-line appointments as such service contributes to the well-being of the Department, College, and University, with some service providing faculty members the opportunity to help govern the institution.

The Department of English holds the following principle as key to Service contributions:

Impact. Effective service activity demonstrates a deep commitment to the achievement of or movement toward affecting the organization and its members. Effective service agents are expected to articulate their efforts, the purpose of completing such meaningful contributions, and the consequential effects of the service for the stakeholders: Department, Potter College, the University, students, community members, and, lastly, to the professional growth of the faculty member.

DISTINGUISHED

Faculty may reach a **distinguished** rating, having met the criteria of both baseline and skilled, by

taking on leadership roles or extensive commitments beyond skilled-level engagement. Examples contributing to a rating of distinguished include but are not limited to the following:

- Wins a substantive service award (e.g., PCAL, field-specific award granting body)
- Organizes a workshop or similar on or off campus event aimed at recruitment, retention, or building community relations (e.g., University-wide event 'X' planning committee, High School mentoring program, City/County Advisory Board); OR Conducts a workshop or series of workshops (department-, college-, university-wide e.g., CITL-requested)
- Consistently mentors students within or outside of the WKU with tangible results (e.g., publishing, college enrollment, skill development such as language development);
- Chairs a search committee; OR Chairs a university level committee, i.e., senate or other university committee with evidence of the time and effort that yielded significant, identifiable results (e.g., University Benefits Committee); OR Chairs a college level committee with evidence of time and effort that yielded significant, identifiable results
- Organizes a successful conference in one's field
- Secures and implements a service grant

Notes: Faculty with academic appointments that do not require service may still achieve skilled or distinguished ranking by fulfilling the requirements designated below as these contributions would exceed the expectation of their appointments.

Service commitments which come with a reduction in teaching or scholarly/creative commitments are weighted according to the time re-allotment (e.g., graduate coordinator, assistant chair, program advisor). Likewise, faculty members who have a service commitment of 240 hours, as opposed to 120 hours per year, are evaluated per their increased service agenda.

SKILLED

Faculty can reach a **skilled** rating, having met the criteria for baseline, by active participation in service activities beyond the activities listed within the baseline category. A skilled rating reflects that the time a faculty member has put in at a baseline level has been well spent; what is not suggested is that faculty members spend uncompensated time to reach skilled. Examples of service activities contributing to a rating of skilled include but are not limited to the following:

- Serves or participates on Department, College, University, or Community committees; OR Serves on a search committee; OR Serves on other department's continuance, tenure, and promotion committees; OR Serves on college or university committees with documentation of effort and/or impact
- Mentors junior faculty OR individual students (embedded tutors, graduate theses, honors theses, internships, student conference preparation); OR members of a student organizations (clubs, student publications) yielding impactful results;
- Engages in extensive outreach endeavors
- Pursues service grants
- Provides service to field/profession: peer review, refereeing conference panel, organizational leadership

BASELINE

Evidence of service in which only the minimum activities from those listed below or fewer will result in a **baseline** designation considering their cumulative hours, effort, and impact are low.

- Attends at least one commencement ceremony (fall or spring)

- Attends department meetings, including opening week events
- Participates in departmental tenure and promotion committees (if applicable)
- Participates in departmental continuance committees (if applicable)
- Attends events with job candidates (at least one event per candidate when possible)
- Contributes to at least one department recruitment, retention, and/or outreach initiative yearly
- Actively participates by asking questions, taking minutes, offering relevant commentary, and working toward the goals of the committee/retreat/group

Notes: Full-time instructors reach baseline by attending the opening week's department meeting and retreat.

In emergency situations that may arise outside of the faculty member's control, the department Chair has discretion to excuse absences or reassign time in consultation with the faculty member.

UNSATISFACTORY

A ranking of **unsatisfactory** performance indicates that the faculty member has not met the basic expectations for service activity. A ranking of unsatisfactory is expected when a faculty member demonstrates

- Consistently fails to fulfill appropriate service hours and/or absence from required service events without prior arrangement in the case of known conflicts.