

## **COVID Impact and the Annual Review Process, Spring 2021**

The departmental annual review process for the impacted semesters should consider incorporating a COVID-19 Impact Statement for each faculty member. This statement can be brief or more extensive, or a faculty member may choose not to write one. Please make sure the faculty member checks the appropriate spot on the annual review form, just before the evaluation box, to indicate whether they chose to attach a statement. It is also recommended that each department collectively discuss and examine the annual review process considering COVID-19 impacts, and be reflective of the nuances of individual department and college annual review processes which currently exist. Please see details on both of these elements below, as well as guidance on how to document COVID-19 impacts on annual review performance criteria. We recognize the impact COVID-19 has created on time demands as well as the emotional burden. This additional request is not meant to be burdensome but to allow for documentation that will be valuable in the future.

### Optional COVID-19 Impact Statement (500 words or less)

Every faculty member should be given the opportunity to include the COVID-19 Impact Statement as part of the usual annual review documentation. In developing the Impact Statement for the annual review, the faculty member should discuss how they have risen to the challenge of the pandemic and reflect on interruptions to their ability to fulfill the responsibilities of their position. This could include disruptions and reduced productivity, and new or unusual circumstances. The Impact Statement may be framed to share *contributions*, responses to challenges, and *disruptions* to key areas (Teaching/Advising, Scholarship, Service). In the area of scholarship, faculty should provide clear statements that explain the pandemic's impacts in relation to previously expected outcomes. They may also wish to include how their teaching was affected, how they responded to shifts in delivery, and how they work to support student learning under difficult conditions. The impact of COVID-19 on personal circumstances are invited but not required. Should the faculty member not have experienced any impact, or experienced benefits (e.g., more research funding) they may note this in their statement. The statement should be kept to no more than 500 words.

### Recommended Collective Discussion about Annual Reviews during COVID

It is recommended that each department engage in collective discussions about the impact of COVID-19 on faculty productivity and workload and how these effects are exacerbated by differences among faculty. These discussions are meant to be flexible and may take any form, and involve everyone together, or in smaller groups. They should serve as a starting place for making the annual evaluation process within units more thoughtful, transparent, and equitable.

*Based on University of North Texas Draft Guidance, which was based on Guidance from the Advisory Committee on Faculty Affairs of the APLU.*

These discussions might also lead to better mentoring of faculty within the department. If departmental discussions lead to actionable adjustments of current annual review practices please inform the dean or designated associate dean in your college, who will keep the provost informed of departmental and college efforts.

## **Guidance on Annual Review Performance Criteria and COVID**

Excellence and effectiveness in teaching, scholarship, and service are considered in the annual review of all full-time faculty members. Guidance to assist departments in developing COVID-19 revised evaluation guidelines in these key areas follows.

### Workload

The percent time workload should be clearly stated and weighted accordingly in the annual review process. Note that some faculty have chosen a flexible work arrangement, such as a reduction of FTE or workload swaps between semesters. The annual evaluation should be proportioned based on the workload arrangement.

### Teaching

Departments should utilize various means for assessing teaching effectiveness and not rely solely on student course surveys. This point is not new, please see [section E.12.1 of the Faculty Manual](#). However, we realize that teaching during the pandemic resulted in strong or improved teaching evaluations for many of our faculty. The experience, though challenging, allowed them to develop new ideas and skills and to conceptualize the delivery of their content in new ways. Realizing that some faculty may wish to have these efforts recognized, faculty may opt to have student course surveys included. A rationale for doing so should be part of the COVID-19 Impact Statement. However, the faculty member may request that student course surveys be excluded, with the explanation of the reason in the COVID Impact Statement.

As the department reflects on the evaluation of teaching, please consider what we know about traditional measures of teaching, how some have previously been misused, and their potential to be even less effective measures of quality teaching for women and faculty of color. Women and faculty of color receive systematically lower teaching evaluations than their male colleagues. Please see the resources related to COVID-19's differential impacts at the bottom of this document and the letter from CoGEN about [Considerations for Faculty Evaluation in 2020-2021](#).

Further, as the Manual states, the course survey is designed to elicit valuable information on students' perspectives but *not* to evaluate teaching effectiveness. Attempting to draw “direct or comparative measure of teaching effectiveness” from course survey responses is a misuse of data that the Manual prohibits (E.12.1). In addition to the information sources recommended by the Manual, creating opportunities for faculty to share how and what they learned while teaching during COVID-19 will provide additional information about teaching that can be evaluated. This approach will foster the “reflective self-assessment” of teaching that the Manual recommends. A form for promoting concise but substantive reflection and evaluator comments is available [here](#), and related resources can be found [here](#).

For each course listed as being taught, the faculty member should indicate whether there was a mode of delivery change (for example, “CHANGED TO REMOTE”). For courses whose delivery mode is the same as the one that’s typically been used, no notation is needed.

### Scholarship

Faculty are expected to continue their research and creative activities. The potential of the pandemic to have significantly impacted the research productivity of some faculty is acknowledged. As such, consideration should be given in the annual review process.

Professional meetings, performances, exhibitions, and other scholarly activities that were cancelled or postponed, as a result of COVID-19, should be included in the annual review with the word CANCELLED or POSTPONED noted at the end of the activity in all caps. Faculty should also document whether the event was delivered in an alternative format. Scholarship activities that were cancelled or postponed should be considered with the same weight as if they had occurred as originally planned. For scholarly activities conducted virtually, departments should assign equal value as if it had occurred in-person. Note that this does not mean cancelled activities that occur in subsequent years should be counted “twice”. It is meant to recognize that some cancelled activities will not be rescheduled and that considerable work went into securing the original activity (e.g., invited performance, conference paper accepted by rigorous peer review).

Faculty may use the COVID-19 Impact Statement to detail interruptions (e.g., lab closures, conference or exhibition cancellations, unavailability of human subjects, inability to travel to field site, interruptions in manuscript review timeframes).

## Service

Faculty have experienced changes in internal and external service requirements during the pandemic. Service in some areas may have increased while service in other areas may have decreased or ceased. Additionally, some faculty may be or have been major contributors to pandemic solutions in their department, college, university or professional organizations. If faculty experience significant shifts in their service, they are encouraged to detail these changes in the COVID-19 Impact Statement. In evaluating service, special consideration should be given to contributions that advance unit-wide teaching and learning during the pandemic, and to service efforts utilizing the faculty member's expertise that supports community responses to the COVID-19 pandemic .

Service activities that were cancelled or postponed as a result of COVID-19 should be included in the annual review with the word CANCELLED or POSTPONED noted at the end of the activity in all caps. Faculty should also document whether the event was delivered in an alternative format. Service activities that were cancelled or postponed should be considered with the same weight as if they had occurred as originally planned. For service activities conducted virtually, departments should assign equal value as if it had occurred in-person. Note this does not mean cancelled activities that occur in subsequent years should be counted "twice". It is meant to recognize that some cancelled activities will not be rescheduled and that considerable work went into securing the original activity.

## **In Closing**

Fair and equitable annual review of faculty productivity has always been a critical component of the functioning of our departments and colleges. Operationalizing these reviews, given the framework of university policy and the nuances of program and departmental expertise, can only be achieved through faculty engagement and discussion. Faculty should be able to share their thoughts and experiences, and review the literature and discussion related to COVID-19 initiated in their professional organizations and societies. Please keep in mind that many COVID-related matters are private and personal and faculty need not reveal details to talk about the impact of COVID on them. The outcome of these discussions should be concrete measures that will be utilized in departmental annual reviews to ensure that differential impact is accounted for. This does not mean abandoning previously established procedures and processes but instead reviewing them with COVID-19 equity in mind.

## **Annual Review and COVID-19 Resources:**

- [Are women publishing less during the pandemic? Here's what the data say](#)

- [Asking the Right Questions: A primer for merit, tenure and promotion evaluation committees.](#)
- [Exploring Bias in Student Evaluations: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity](#)
- [Gender Equity Considerations for Tenure and Promotion during COVID-19](#)
- [No Tickets for Women in the COVID-19 Race? A Study on Manuscript Submissions and Reviews in 2347 Elsevier Journals during the Pandemic](#)
- [Opinion: In the wake of COVID-19, academia needs new solutions to ensure gender equity](#)
- [Supporting Faculty During & After COVID-19](#)