

Department of Sociology

Florida Atlantic University

Procedures and Criteria for Annual Evaluation

(Approved by Provost – May 2018)

The Department's goal is excellence in instruction, scholarship, and service to institution, discipline and community. To that end, we adopt this set of procedures and criteria for annual evaluation. The annual evaluation criteria provide members of the Department of Sociology with guidelines for how to proceed on an annual basis to achieve both departmental and disciplinary standards.

We recognize that an annual evaluation is a limited cross-section of an academic career and that, therefore, promotion and tenure criteria necessarily address a broader set of issues. Faculty are urged to regularly review the department's promotion and tenure criteria. Annual evaluations are an important part of promotion and tenure decision but are not all that is considered.

Evaluation of Instruction

The department recognized that instruction incorporates a broad range of activities along with teaching. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be used for evaluating faculty members' instructional accomplishments and to assess overall performance in this area of the assignment. The three sections below outline the sets of activities the department will consider in the evaluation of instruction. The minimal data used to evaluate instruction: SPOT scores, syllabi, and grade distributions.

A. The basic elements of instructional work are in assigned classes, and its quality is assessed through an evaluation of based:

- Student assessment of instructional quality, indicated primarily through but not exclusively by SPOT scores
 - The department recognizes that no single item adequately captures student sentiment about an instructor and a course. This is clearly shown by the relatively low inter-item correlations. Faculty are encouraged to include an analysis of their pattern of SPOT scores and any other student feedback. Analysis of multi-year patterns of student feedback may be particularly useful in demonstrating trends.
 - The evaluation committee will look at modal and average SPOT scores across all of the items. The committee will consider faculty analyses of the SPOT results, particularly as they concern outliers.

B. The evaluation of instruction will include a significant dimension of peer evaluation, as the faculty on the departmental evaluation committee also will consider:

- Syllabi
 - rigor, intellectual content
 - appropriateness of assignments
 - clarity of course objectives
- Instructional techniques
 - effectiveness
 - appropriateness to level/kind of class
- Methods for evaluation of student learning
 - Appropriateness to level/kind of class
 - Impact on students' skills
- Grade distribution for classes (to be provided by the chair, through request to IEA)
 - Appropriateness to level/kind of class

C. In addition to classroom teaching, there are a variety of ways in which the department's instructional mission can be advanced by individual faculty. As appropriate to assignment and accomplishments, faculty may provide evidence of work such as:

- serving on or chairing thesis or dissertation committees
- advising students about the graduate and undergraduate major
- writing letters of recommendation for students applying to graduate and other outside programs
- developing and revising courses
- developing and revising curricula
- participating in workshops/programs to improve and develop instruction
- participating in the design and implementation of assessment practices
- serving on college and university committees on curricular and instructional issues
- providing summative or evaluative peer evaluations of classroom teaching
 - working with colleagues to assist them in improving their instruction
 - providing instructional mentorship for graduate teaching assistants
- working on recruitment and retention of majors
- organizing and/or participating in co-curricular events sponsored by the department
- serving as faculty advisor to student clubs
- contributing to College and University recruitment and retention initiatives
- nominations for and receipt of teaching awards

Expectations of instructional accomplishments vary according to the rank of the faculty member.

Untenured faculty are expected to focus on developing their classroom teaching; the department expects the newly-hired faculty member to use his or her first few years at FAU to develop both a teaching repertoire and sufficient familiarity with FAU students' characteristics to be able to design effective classes.

As faculty members acquire more teaching experience, the department expects them to expand their instructional roles: for instance, by mentoring students, serving on M.A. and Ph.D. committees, involvement in co-curricular activities, serving on curricular committees, or supporting junior faculty in their instructional development.

Exceptional:

- For untenured faculty: very positive student feedback through the SPOT instrument; well-designed syllabi; methods for student evaluation that simultaneously challenge and provide opportunity for the development of significant critical thinking skills. Evidence that the faculty member has been able to design and deliver challenging classes that significantly improve students' skills.
- For tenured faculty: all of the above in addition to several items from section C that are of documentable significance to the quality of what we offer to our students in the Department of Sociology.
- Note: For a rating of exceptional, SPOT scores should be 2.0 or better.

A note on the SPOT instrument: Principal components analysis of the SPOT scores has identified three significant underlying dimensions in responses (IEA analysis, February 2009). Each of these components is tapped by a different pattern of questions. Therefore, the department will review responses on all questions on the SPOT instrument in order to interpret student ratings of the faculty member.

The department review committee will request additional data on SPOT scores from IEA (e.g., scattergrams) as necessary and useful.

Outstanding:

- For the untenured: positive student feedback; well-designed syllabi; methods for student evaluation that simultaneously challenge and provide opportunity for the development of significant critical thinking skills. Evidence that the faculty member has been able to design and deliver challenging classes that significantly improve students' skills.
- For the tenured: all of the above in addition to several items from section C that are of documentable significance to the quality of what we offer to our students in the Department of Sociology.
- Note: For a rating of outstanding, SPOT scores should be 2.5 or better.

Good:

- For the untenured: student feedback that is above (i.e., worse than) 2.5; syllabi that include all of the required elements; methods for student evaluation that are appropriate to the level and kind of class. Evidence of time and energy devoted to the challenges of becoming an effective classroom teacher at FAU.
- For the tenured: all of the above in addition to several items from section C that are of documentable significance to the quality of what we offer to our students in the Department of Sociology.

- NB: “average” student feedback requires modal SPOT scores in the third category and average SPOT scores (w/ appropriate comparison in terms of course level, campus, etc.)

Needs improvement:

- Negative feedback from students across a broad range of indicators in the SPOT; no compelling evidence in the material submitted for peer evaluation as to why this negative feedback should be discounted as a definitive indicator of problems.
- Note: a faculty member can earn this rating for only a single year. A second year of similarly problematic performance produces a rating of unsatisfactory.
- A persistent pattern of canceled classes and unexplained absences could result in an below satisfactory evaluation of instruction.

Unsatisfactory:

- A second consecutive year of problematic performance in instruction.

Evaluation of Research

The department is most interested in faculty demonstrating a research trajectory of scholarly growth in which, for example, conference papers eventually turn to publications; data gathered is eventually analyzed and presented in academic outlets; and scholarship demonstrates a connected body of knowledge. This pattern is the essence of a scholarly career, and these criteria – as well as the department’s promotion and tenure criteria – are organized around it.

Untenured faculty should focus particularly on standards for research productivity as measured by publication. They should be sure to review the department’s promotion and tenure criteria annually, as they prepare their annual reports, and attend carefully to feedback in the annual appraisal of progress towards tenure. An appropriate level of peer-reviewed publication is essential to a favorable tenure review.

Tenured faculty are expected to maintain an ongoing and consistent pattern of publication but, as a consequence of the more varied assignments and commitments of tenured faculty, are more able to plan for a periodic hiatus in publication as they devote time to extensive data collection and the preparation and publication of sociological articles and books.

The department includes but is not limited to the following as indicators of research productivity:

- publication of scholarly work in peer-reviewed journals
- publication of scholarly books
- publication of edited collections
- publication of chapters in edited scholarly books
- submission of competitive external grants
- awards of competitive external grants
- presentation of papers at professional meetings
- publication of book reviews
- reports and similar analyses for governmental or nongovernmental agencies
- data collection

demonstrable work in progress towards a book or academic article
publication of editorials and articles in important non-academic print media
originating in sociological scholarship
disseminating sociological scholarship to external audiences

Exceptional:

Peer-reviewed publication such as journal article, book chapter, book, edited book with significant editorial chapter

AND

Two items from the “outstanding” category

OR

Two peer reviewed publications

Books will result in an evaluation of exceptional for two consecutive years.

Outstanding: at least two of the following:

Presentation of a paper at a disciplinarily significant meeting
submission or receipt of competitive external grant
submitting written work for peer review (e.g., to a journal, editorial board)
book review
significant work in progress
publication of editorial or article in important non-academic print media

This rating normally will be awarded only for two consecutive years in the absence of substantial progress towards or accomplishment of publication. The department recognizes that there often is a significant lag between submission and a formal response to a submission, so substantial progress can be documented as submission of written work for review by a journal or editorial panel.

Good:

Work in progress

This rating normally will be awarded only for two consecutive years.

Needs improvement:

As specified above, the rating of “good” for work in progress will be awarded only for two consecutive years. In the third year, the faculty member should report a minimum level of professional activity (conference presentation, book review) or be able to provide a compelling explanation of why the work in progress should continue to be credited as meeting the minimal requirements of the research assignment. In the absence of either of these, the faculty member

will receive a rating of “needs improvement.”

Unsatisfactory

A rating of “unsatisfactory” will be given in the absence of progress towards research goals as indicated on the performance improvement plan.

Note on co-authorship: Many sociological subfields have significant traditions of co-authorship. In the case of publication co-authored by a faculty member, a distinction will be made between situations in which all work was equally shared among coauthors, in which case the faculty member will receive full credit for the publication, and situations in which there were junior and senior authors who made unequal contributions to the work, in which case the faculty member will receive a proportionate share of the credit for the publication-

Evaluation of Service

The department values service and encourages department members to consider service an important role as a faculty member. We encourage and support faculty in service at various levels of the university; in professional and associational service; and service to the community.

We acknowledge that some kinds of activities can legitimately be considered as contributing to both the instructional and scholarly work of the faculty member and to that person’s service, and we suggest that the faculty member consult the chair about how to most accurately report this kind of work.

The type and extent of service shifts during the academic career, and the department’s rating system explicitly recognizes that shift. For faculty in their first few years in the department, a rating of excellent may be earned by regular and consistent attendance at department meetings, thoughtful contributions to departmental discussions, consistent service on department subcommittees, and attendance at departmental functions (e.g., colloquia); after the third year is completed, the untenured faculty member may be assigned a somewhat increased set of service responsibilities but will still be able to earn a high rating in service for a lesser contribution than is required of a tenured faculty member. After the third year review, the department welcomes some professional service from its untenured members as well as expanded institutional service. However, the department recognizes that, just as it takes time to develop a teaching repertoire and the skills to teach effectively at FAU, it also takes time to learn the department, college and university. Although we recognize that new faculty members may be interested in engaging in a wide variety of service work, the department’s evaluation is focused on departmental service and perhaps some limited disciplinary service. The department’s policy encourages untenured faculty to focus primarily on building a strong record in instruction and research.

After tenure, faculty service expectations increase in both breadth and depth. Faculty members should become more involved in service to department, campus, college and university. This can be through participation in special projects, accepting functional responsibility (e.g., director of undergraduate studies) or through the committee system. They are also encouraged to involve themselves in leadership positions in professional associations and/or become involved in major professional initiatives such as planning conferences.

Service through public sociology may also be assigned. Public sociology seeks to bring the work of sociologists into public engagement outside the academy or university setting, through involvement in local community but also participation, dissemination of scholarship, and organizing programs and colloquia at national and international venues.

All service assignments will have some basic level of institutional service but, after tenure, the department acknowledges that faculty careers will have different mixes of institutional, disciplinary and public service. In all cases, evaluation will be on the basis of assigned service. Faculty should be sure to consult with the chair prior to accepting significant service work that might require a substantial reallocation of the focus of their service assignment.

Service includes but is not limited to: service on departmental, college, and university committees, councils, and senates; service in an appointed capacity within the department (e.g., graduate director); leadership in or work on an institutional initiative; service on professional or associational committees; professional representation of an association or university; elected or appointed positions in disciplinary organizations; organizing meetings, symposia, conferences, workshops, panels; serving as a reviewer for promotion/tenure applications; serving as a reviewer for journals or granting agencies; participation in public media as a sociological expert; providing sociological expertise to local, state, and national government boards, agencies, and commissions; public sociology.

Exceptional:

For untenured faculty: conscientious, thoughtful participation in departmental meetings and assigned projects; major contribution to some significant departmental or disciplinary project/function

For tenured faculty: significant, sustained and effective contributions to the betterment of the institution or discipline; thoughtful, collegial and constructive participation in departmental, college, university, or discipline development; significant responsibility for/leadership of one or more major functions or projects for the department, college, university or in professional organizations or in the public realm

Outstanding:

For untenured faculty: conscientious, thoughtful participation in departmental meetings and assigned projects

For tenured faculty: significant, sustained and effective contributions to the betterment of the institution or discipline; thoughtful, collegial and constructive participation in departmental, college, university, or discipline development; major contribution to some significant departmental or disciplinary project/function

Good:

For untenured faculty: regular attendance at faculty meetings

For tenured faculty: regular attendance at faculty meeting; fulfilling the terms of the basic assignment to institutional projects/committees

Needs improvement: failing to meet the requirements of attendance at and conscientious participation in departmental decision-making; failure to fulfill the terms of the basic assignment to institutional projects/committees

Unsatisfactory: Continued failure to fulfill service assignments after receiving a “needs improvement” rating during the prior academic year.

Evaluation Scale for Overall Performance

Exceptional requires a rating of “exceptional” in at least two of the major areas of the assignments and a rating of at least “outstanding” in the third area. .

Outstanding requires a rating of “outstanding” in two of the major areas of the assignment and at least a rating of good in the third area.

Good is determined by ratings of “good” in all assigned areas.

Needs improvement is determined by ratings of “needs improvement” in one area of the assignment.

Unsatisfactory is determined by ratings of “needs improvement” in two or more areas of the assignment or by failing to attain an overall rating of “good” after one year following the receipt of a “needs improvement” overall rating.