



July 1, 2003

DEANS, DEPARTMENT CHAIRS and DIRECTORS

Re: Merit Equity Review (MER) Revised Policy & Guidelines

As a follow up to my letter on January 15, 2003, attached is a revised policy for the MER effective July 1, 2003.

The revised policy has been expanded to include instructions for filing a MER (see Section IV and VI) which should provide you with a mechanism for submitting dossiers.

Once again, a request for a MER must be substantive and supported by documentation of a significant discrepancy between the faculty member's existing rank and step and that of his/her peers within the same discipline. MER may not be used to grieve a recent negative personnel action. The policy also **limits MER** to:

- (1) once at the Associate Professor level,
- (2) once at the Full Professor level prior to Advancement to Professor Step VI, and
- (3) once after Advancement to Professor Step VI.

The due date for all MERs is **Friday, January 16, 2004** (see attached Submission Deadlines). MERs must be coordinated with your Dean's Office or Department to ensure that it reaches APO by the deadline. The MER procedure is summarized in the UCLA CALL – Appendix 35 and is available online at:

<http://www.apo.ucla.edu/call/append35.htm>

The MER procedure will be reviewed after two years to examine its effectiveness and ensure that the new policy truly enables all University Ladder-Rank faculty to be at an appropriate rank and step. Should you have any questions, please contact Marsha Fractor in Academic Personnel at extension 69515.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna L. Vredevoe".

Donna L. Vredevoe, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor
Academic Personnel

Enclosure

The UCLA CALL

Appendix 35

— Merit Equity Review —

I. Policy

The Office of the President has mandated that each campus provide a mechanism for ensuring that all University ladder faculty members are at the appropriate rank and step that is consistent with achievement. The Merit Equity Review has been established for Ladder-Rank faculty and will go into effect on **July 1, 2003**.

A request for MER must be a substantive request which will require all supporting information as described in the CALL relating to the rank and step of the proposed advancement. A significant discrepancy between the faculty member's existing rank and step and that of his/her peers within the same discipline must be identified. The MER process also provides an opportunity for those in administrative positions, including Deans, Chairs, and the Council on Academic Personnel (CAP), to suggest a MER for faculty whose rank and step are found to be seriously inconsistent with attainment. A MER may not be used as a mechanism to grieve a negative action that has occurred in the current or prior academic year.

II. Purpose of the Merit Equity Review and Criteria Applied

The purpose of the Merit Equity Review (MER) is to ensure that all University ladder faculty are at the appropriate rank and step consistent with the prevailing UC and UCLA standards. The MER does not deal with salaries.

A request for a MER must be substantive; that is, it must contain a request for a specific rank and step, with documentation appropriate to support that request. The review will proceed by assessing the candidate's overall record, using the University's established criteria with one exception: where a significantly higher rank or step is indicated, the case will not require the additional demonstration of a basis for accelerated advancement.

III. Faculty Members to Whom Merit Equity Reviews are Applicable

The MER process applies to the following ladder faculty members:

- Associate Professor
- Professor
- Associate Professor-in-Residence
- Professor-in-Residence
- Associate Professor of Clinical (X)
- Professor of Clinical (X)
- Lecturer SOE
- Senior Lecturer SOE

A MER of an individual faculty member shall not occur at the Assistant Professor level. A MER may occur once at the Associate Professor level; once at the Full Professor level, prior to advancement to Professor, Step VI; and once after advancement to Professor VI.

IV. Responsibility for Preparing the File

There are two ways in which a file proposing a MER may be brought forward to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel:

- 1) Any ladder faculty member may request from his/her Department Chair that he/she be put forward for a MER. The faculty member's request should identify area(s) of the record that he/she believes were not previously sufficiently evaluated and/or area(s) of the record that indicate he/she was not hired at the appropriate rank/step commensurate with his/her accomplishments at the time of hire. The review process for a MER will be the same as that established for whatever level the candidate requests as the outcome of the MER.

Before making a recommendation, the Department Chair should:

- (a) consult with such faculty committees, or other faculty bodies, as has been prescribed by the Departmental Bylaws or customary practices for consultation in cases of this type or

- (b) establish a committee to review MER actions. Once the Chair has prepared the Departmental report and shared it with the candidate, the file should move forward to the Dean's Office and then on to CAP via to the Academic Personnel Office (APO).
- 2) In the case of a Ladder Faculty member who believes that his/her Department will be unable to act on the MER with appropriate objectivity, the faculty member may request that this action bypass the Department and be handled by the Dean's Office. In such instances, the Dean's Office will be responsible for assembling the materials for the MER. An ad hoc committee must be formed, to act in place of the departmental committee. The Dean will provide the candidate with a copy of the committee report for comment prior to the file moving forward to the APO. APO will forward the file to CAP. CAP will determine if a campuswide ad hoc committee will be assigned.

Note: If the recommended advancement involves an action that would require outside letters of evaluation, such letters must be included in the case (see "Sample Solicitation Letter for Merit Equity Review" below). In addition, the department must include a history of the candidate's employment at UCLA, including rank, step and salary at appointment, years at step, and years at rank, sabbaticals and leaves. A copy of the salary history card is required.

V. When the Review is Conducted

The MER is conducted following the established deadlines (see attached 2003-2004 Submission Deadlines). Once a department or unit recommendation has been determined, and no later than six months after a request was initiated, it is to be communicated to the faculty member for his or her response, then to the appropriate Dean for the Dean's recommendation, and to APO for transmittal to CAP, which will make a recommendation for action by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel.

VI. The Council on Academic Personnel Process (CAP)

CAP's assessment and recommendation play a critical role in MER, as CAP is the only peer review body that has the advantage of the campus-wide perspective on faculty performance; and, unlike any other reviewing body, CAP has the ability to collect and compare files drawn from across the campus. CAP strives to ensure equity with

every review. In consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel, CAP will determine if a campus ad hoc committee will be required. The Dean will have an opportunity to review the ad hoc committee report, as is done in all cases that require a campus ad hoc committee.

VII. Outcome

The Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel shall make the final decision based on the full body of evidence in the file.

VIII. Appeals

There shall **not** be appeals for Merit Equity Reviews. There is **not** a Reconsideration process for a MER.

— Sample Solicitation Letter for Merit Equity Review —

The following is a sample letter of extramural referees for a Merit Equity Review. This text must be included in solicitation letters of evaluation.

Dear _____:

The University of California, Los Angeles, is conducting a Merit Equity Review (MER) of Professor _____. The purpose of a Merit Equity Review (MER) is to determine the level within the professoriate that Professor _____'s record warrants.

A very critical part of the process is the analysis and evaluation of Professor_____’s scholarly achievement and creative activity by leading professional colleagues in the field. Your contribution and judgment are critical to our ability to maintain the high scholarly standards of the University of California. We in the Department of _____ will be most grateful if you will assist us in this important assessment.

In making your judgment, it is important to understand that the University of California has a structured matrix of “steps” which define normative movement through the ranks of Associate and Full Professor. The matrix is summarized in the attached table.

Professor _____ is currently at step _____of the rank of _____.

Your assessment of Professor _____'s scholarly achievement and creative activity is critical to our evaluative process. Your response will be most useful to the process if it addresses these matters directly and in analytic detail. We would also appreciate your evaluation of Professor _____'s teaching and service with particular reference to their originality and significance, if you have the basis for such evaluation.

In addition, I would appreciate your comments on his/her standing within his/her discipline, both within this country and abroad, and on any other aspect of his/her professional competence with which you may be familiar. It would be particularly helpful if you would compare him/her with others in the field.

For your convenience, I am enclosing copies of Professor _____'s complete bibliography and latest publications.

[incorporate statement on confidentiality or include on a separate page]

Your assistance in providing this analysis will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

University of California Matrix of Ranks & Steps

Rank	Step	Normal Period of Service at Step
Associate Professor	1	2 years
	2	2 years
	3	2 years
Professor	1	3 years
	2	3 years
	3	3 years
	4	3 years
	5	3 years
	6 (a)	3 years
	7 (b)	3 years
	8 (b)	3 years
	9 (b)	3 years
	Above-Scale (c)	4 years

- a. Advancement to Step VI is based not only upon performance since the last preceding advancement but also upon performance during the individual's entire academic career. Advancement to Step VI will be granted on evidence of great distinction, recognized nationally or internationally, in scholarly or creative achievement or in teaching. Provided, however, that advancement to Step VI will not be granted if performance under any of the criteria -- scholarly or creative achievement, teaching and service -- falls below a level of excellence. Advancement to Step VI normally will not occur after less than three years at Step V.
- b. Advancement to Steps VII, VIII and IX will be granted on evidence of continuing achievement at the level required for advancement to Step VI. Advancement normally will not occur after less than three years at the current step.
- c. Advancement to an Above-Scale salary is reserved for scholars and teachers of the highest distinction, whose work has been nationally and, where relevant, internationally recognized and acclaimed. Except in rare and compelling cases, advancement will not occur after less than four years of service at Step IX. Mere length of service and routine good performance at Step IX is not a justification for further salary advancement. There

must be demonstration of additional merit and distinction beyond the performance on which advancement to Step IX was based. A further merit increase in salary for a person already serving at an Above-Scale salary level must be justified by new evidence of merit and distinction. Intervals between such salary increases may be indefinitely long and only in the most strongly justified cases will increases at intervals shorter than four years be approved.

Checklist of Documents for Merit Equity Reviews

Please submit two copies of each (original plus one copy) in the indicated order:

Name: _____

Department: _____

- 1. Chair's Letter (optional)
- 2. Department Letter
- 3. Vote Page
- 4. Candidate's Response (optional)
- 5. Candidate's Self-Statement (optional but encouraged)
- 6. Extramural Letters (if required, see "Sample Solicitation Letter for Merit Equity Review." Letters should be a balanced selection from the Candidate and Chair's list.)
- 7. Student Letters Evaluating Teaching
- 8. Current Bibliography
- 9. List of Professional Activities and service
- 10. University and Public Service
- 11. Grant Activity (if applicable)
- 12. Student Teaching Evaluations

The UCLA CALL

Summary of Procedures

— 2003-2004 Submission Deadlines for Academic Actions —

Due dates for submission of actions to the Academic Personnel Office from Dean's Offices
for actions effective **July 1, 2004**

SCHOOL	DUE DATE	ACADEMIC ACTIONS
Medicine Dentistry Nursing	November 7, 2003 (Friday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eight-Year Limit Reviews
Medicine Dentistry Nursing	December 1, 2003 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professorial Promotions ▪ Merit Advancement to Step VI ▪ Initial Above-Scale Advances
All	January 16, 2004 (Friday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Merit Equity Reviews
Anderson School Arts & Architecture Education & Info Studies Engineering & Applied Sci Law Letters & Science Public Policy Public Health Theater, Film & TV	February 2, 2004 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eight-Year Limit Reviews ▪ Professorial Promotions ▪ Merit Advancement to Step VI ▪ Initial Above-Scale Advancement
All	February 17, 2004 (Tuesday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appraisals of Assistant Professors ▪ Renewals of Appointment for Assistant Professors
All	March 1, 2004 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accelerated Actions of Two Years or more ▪ Further Above-Scale Advances
All	April 26, 2004 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Off-Scales subject to Vice Chancellor approval
All	August 2, 2004 (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Five-Year Reviews subject to Vice Chancellor approval