

GUIDELINES FOR STEP VI REVIEWS

Step VI might be thought of as the third career review for academic professional life as made explicit in the changes to APM 220-18-b(4) issued on September 2, 2008. The changed policy seeks to strengthen and provide greater guidance on requirements for advancement and provide greater understanding of the distinction between the criteria for advancement to Step VI and Above Scale. It also serves to re-emphasize the value of University service while not usurping the primacy of notable achievements in scholarship, research, and teaching. Advancement to Step VI is an occasion for taking stock of achievements since promotion to Full Professor and pointing the way toward future goals. According to the APM, it is designed to ensure that the careers of faculty members at the highest levels of the professoriate not only manifest sustained and continuing excellence in all three areas of review but also go “above and beyond” by demonstrating “great academic distinction, recognized nationally,” in scholarly or creative activity or teaching (APM 220-18-b(4)).

BASIS FOR STEP VI CASES

Given the APM policy changes and fairly recent campus procedural changes, this document clarifies the process for Step VI Full Professor¹ reviews. Prior to academic year 2007–08 the campus required external letters be solicited as part of the advancement case to Step VI. In 2007–08 the practice was changed to make such letters optional when a clear and compelling case for the advancement could be made without them, utilizing instead a department review committee (see September 20, 2007 memo from Vice Provost Sheldon Zedeck). Therefore, whereas external letters are no longer a requirement, they remain an option to be used at the discretion of the department or when requested by campus reviewers. **However, a departmental review committee is required for all Step VI cases.**

The report of the departmental committee, composed of at least two faculty at Step VI or above, may be a standing committee on personnel or an ad hoc committee established for the purpose of reviewing Step VI advancements. In the event that two Step VI or above faculty are not available within a department, faculty from other units (either internal or external to the College/School) who meet the standard may serve on the committee. The committee must formalize its recommendation in a written report, and the report must come forward as part of the review file.

The departmental committee will still have the option to recommend that external letters be solicited, but will ordinarily be expected to base its evaluation on the record assembled. The outside letters do not take the place of the unit’s need to demonstrate the “above and beyond” excellence, but rather supplement the unit’s case. If letters are solicited, there should be at least three letters in the review with the majority coming from the department’s list (see policy on External Letters). Candidates may also request the solicitation of external letters with the expectation that more case material is better. If this occurs, the Department Chair or faculty mentor should objectively evaluate if a need for such letters truly exists and advise the candidate accordingly.

¹ For Full Researcher reviews, departments may opt to solicit external letters in lieu of a departmental ad hoc committee. In other words, for Full Researcher Step VI the departmental committee is not required, but campus reviewers would expect to see **either** external letters or a departmental ad hoc committee report.

In making its recommendation, the committee should address the Step VI criteria as set forth in APM 220-18.b(4) and should discuss particular research contributions in terms of not only their judged extent and significance but also their reception or impact on the field.

Types of evidence of the reception of works might include:

- information about the prestige and competitiveness of the publication or presentation venues, whether journals, presses, or conferences;
- quantitative measurement of citations;
- reprints and new editions;
- published reviews and other responses;
- prizes;
- inclusion in anthologies or other edited collections; and
- translations.

For certain creative activities, types of evidence of the impacts of works might include:

- information about the prestige and competitiveness of performance or exhibition venues;
- number of performances; and
- influence.

Units should also explain the specific contribution made by the candidate when publications have more than one author.

Since this is a career review, the reception of work completed before promotion to Full Professor can be considered, although the emphasis of the review will fall on the period since promotion to Professor and on the most recent review period. Moreover, although their reception can only be predicted, completed chapters of books in progress may also be considered, provided the chapters are included with the case and have been read and carefully evaluated by the unit's review committee.

In addition to assessing the impact of particular research projects, the committee should appraise the candidate's overall stature in the field, using such indicators as:

- election to national academies;
- career achievement prizes, honors, and awards;
- success in winning competitive fellowships or other funding;
- invitations to serve on editorial boards or to edit special issues of journals;
- plenary lectures given at national and international conferences;
- named lectureships received;
- appointments to panels of reviewers, advisory boards, and boards of trustees; and
- election to society/professional association positions

The above are types of evidence to be considered in the review. Units should not simply list the accomplishments but should provide qualitative comments and evaluations to assess the research.

In conclusion, the unit's case must substantiate "great academic distinction." In most cases, widely recognized distinction will be in the area of scholarly or creative production, and modes of confirming it will vary among fields. Insofar as the APM allows for cases in which the academic distinction that is recognized nationally falls in the area of teaching, the evidence for the case might consist of, for example, the production of a widely used textbook or curricular innovation, or a major national award related to teaching.