

Heidelberg University
Faculty Personnel Committee

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Faculty Guide to Criteria for Personnel Action
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I. Introduction

The purpose of this Guide¹ is to help both Faculty members and evaluative agents avoid simple evaluative errors in the Two-Year Faculty Evaluation system and the various Portfolio review processes. The Guide is intended for all members of the Heidelberg General Faculty holding academic rank. It addresses matters of concern to members of the Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC), the Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP), the Full-time Teaching Faculty, Department Chairs and academic program Directors, Deans, the Provost, and the President. Evaluative agents (FPC, FEP, Chair/Directors, the Provost, and the President) will find the new two-year Faculty Evaluation policy and the various Portfolio review policies to be very straightforward, given a solid grounding in the Criteria for Personnel Action.

While the Criteria for Personnel Action have been in place for decades in roughly the same form, the current language is more recent. The Faculty Manual Task Force, a subcommittee of the Faculty Personnel Committee, has been the driving force behind revisions of the *Heidelberg University Faculty Manual* since 2006. A modest revision of the May 2017 version of the *Faculty Manual* was approved by the General Faculty on May 1, 2018, and by the Board of Trustees in August 2018. Further changes were approved by the General Faculty in January 2019 and approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2019.

II. Overview of the Criteria for Personnel Action

The Criteria for Personnel Action are detailed in Section 2.2.7 of the *Faculty Manual*. The Criteria are used for the “consideration of promotion, continuation, tenure, and other personnel actions.” There are four Criteria for Personnel Action:

1. Teaching (2.2.7.1, et seq.),
2. Professional development and activity (2.2.7.2, et seq.),
3. Engagement in the life of the University (2.2.7.3, et seq.), and
4. Professional and ethical relationships (2.2.7.4).

They are the foundation--directly or indirectly—of the following procedures:

¹This Guide is intended to supplement, not replace, a careful reading of the *Faculty Manual*, Section 2.2.7.

- Qualifications for Promotion to Rank (2.2.9)
- Requests for Promotion (2.2.9.4, et seq.)
- Alternative Standards for Appointment, Promotion, or Tenure (2.2.9.5, et seq.)
- Faculty Evaluation (2.6, et seq.)
- Tenure Acquisition (2.7.1, et seq.)
- Acceptable Non-Tenure-Track Employment Status (2.7.7.1, et seq.)
- Termination of Tenure (2.8.4)
- Faculty Responsibilities (2.9.2)

The Criteria may be modified or superseded by a Memorandum of Understanding or by requirements of an outside accrediting agency.

With few exceptions, the common feature of the four Criteria is a list of “indicators.” Indicators are not requirements of a given Criterion. Instead, readers will find the expression, “indicators may include but are not limited to the following.” This expression is among the most important language details throughout Section 2.2.7. It is akin to the familiar “such as” topic lists in course descriptions and syllabi. The expression instructs FPC, Faculty Evaluators, Chairs, and other administrators with employment evaluation responsibilities not to treat the indicator lists as prescriptions for evaluation or to impose scoring rubrics, checklists, etc., that are supplied by the evaluative agent or by a University office. Rather, the indicators are designed to provide context for the Faculty member in building his or her Faculty Evaluation or Portfolio review case. As will be clear below, the Faculty member, not the evaluator, is the source of the actual indicators by which the Faculty member will be judged to have demonstrated fulfillment of a given Criterion for Personnel Action or not.

The evaluator, whether FPC, a member of the Faculty Evaluation Panel, the Chair/Director, the Provost, or the President, is in turn guided by the Faculty member’s statements in evaluating the Faculty member’s documents as specified in the *Faculty Manual*.

Let’s look at each of the Criteria individually.

III. First Criterion: Teaching (2.2.7.1)

The Teaching Criterion is divided into two sub-criteria: Basic Responsibilities Related to Teaching, and Excellence in Teaching. The Basic Responsibilities (2.2.7.1.1) are necessary conditions that must be fulfilled under the Teaching Criterion. In simple language, they are contractual obligations that include such items as distributing a course syllabus, conducting class during scheduled times, maintaining office hours, etc.

Applications of Basic Responsibilities Related to Teaching:

FEP Evaluators will refer to some of these obligations in each of the three semesters of the two-year Faculty Evaluation cycle:

Fall, Year One: Formal Review of Instructional Materials (2.6.3.2),
Spring, Year One: Evaluative Classroom Observation (2.6.3.3), and

Spring, Year Two: Faculty Self-Evaluation

In contrast, FPC will conduct a full inspection of all of the Basic Responsibilities Related to Teaching in the various Portfolio review processes.

The Excellence in Teaching sub-criterion (2.2.7.1.2) is different than the set of Basic Responsibilities. Instead of necessary conditions that must be fulfilled, this part of the Teaching Criterion begins with the following caveat:

Preamble to Section 2.2.7.1.2:

The list of indicators for Excellence in Teaching is illustrative, not definitive or restrictive; other indicators may be supplied, and the University makes no requirements as to which indicators should be used.

A solid grasp of this statement is essential to the evaluation of the Excellence in Teaching sub-criterion of the Teaching Criterion. The final clause deserves special attention, viz., “the University makes no requirements as to which indicators should be used.” The preamble language appears in essentially the same form in the other three Criteria for Personnel Action.

Applications of the Excellence in Teaching Sub-Criterion:

FPC members, FEP Evaluators, Chair/Directors, etc., who come from a discipline in which students are evaluated according to a “rubric” may find the above preamble to be unfamiliar. This may be because in such disciplines, detailed scoring rubrics are developed by the instructor and applied to student work. In contrast, the Excellence in Teaching indicators listed in 2.2.7.1.2 are only suggestions, any or all of which may be replaced by the Faculty member. The suggested indicators are intended to guide the Faculty member being evaluated by providing examples that the Faculty member may find useful. Note again that “the University makes no requirements as to which indicators should be used.”

The Excellence in Teaching preamble is therefore of paramount importance to the Faculty member submitting materials to the Faculty Evaluation process or any of the several Portfolio review processes. Specifically, *the Faculty member must provide the actual indicators* that he or she believes demonstrate Excellence in Teaching in the context of his or her discipline. The evaluating agent (FPC, FEP member, Chair/Director, Provost, etc.) is then able to form a judgment as to whether the documentation provided by the Faculty member or the classroom observation supports those indicators identified by the Faculty member. The burden here is on the Faculty member to clearly articulate those indicators by which the evaluating agent will make a judgment that the indicator has been demonstrated or not.

For example, suppose that one of the indicators of Excellence in Teaching that I select is providing paper copies of the lecture slide deck to the students at the beginning of my lecture so that students can take notes on the slides. When my FEP Evaluator observes my class, he or she will be able to confirm whether or not I have demonstrated that indicator.

IV. Second Criterion: Professional Development and Activity (2.2.7.3)

As with the Excellence in Teaching sub-criterion, the Professional Development Criterion has indicator lists that use the same expression, “indicators may include but are not limited to the following.”

Professional Development consists of two sub-criteria:

1. Professional Development Related to Teaching (2.2.7.2.1), and
2. Professional Development and/or Professional Activity Related to the Faculty Member’s Academic Fields or to the Scholarship of Teaching (2.2.7.2.2).

Preamble to Sections 2.2.7.2.1 and 2.2.7.2.2:

The list of indicators for each sub-criterion is illustrative and not definitive or restrictive; other indicators may be supplied. The University expects engagement in both areas of professional development and activity but makes no requirements as to amounts or types of engagement in either area.

This preamble repeats the idea that the listed indicators are illustrative only. Here, the University does expect “engagement” in both sub-criteria, but does not stipulate any amount or type.

Applications of the Professional Development and Activity Criterion:

The Faculty member must again select the indicators in each sub-criterion that he or she believes demonstrate fulfillment of each Professional Development sub-criterion.

For Faculty who teach in a program that is externally accredited, the selection of those indicators may be constrained by the accrediting body. Close consultation with the Chair/Director or Dean will be essential in such cases. The evaluating agent will face a special challenge here because it can’t be assumed that the evaluator(s) will be familiar with the indicators required by the accrediting body. Consequently, the Faculty member may need to provide specific language from an accreditation manual in order to demonstrate fulfillment of the Professional Development criterion. Accreditation “research” requirements can be quite nuanced, so accredited programs may need outside consultation to correctly advise their Faculty members.²

V. Third Criterion: Engagement in the Life of the University (2.2.7.3)

The Engagement Criterion is somewhat similar to the Teaching Criterion in that it includes both Basic Responsibilities and five sub-criteria.

²For example, a parsing by an ACBSP evaluator of the ACBSP research requirement is that research is a collective program-level requirement, not a requirement of any individual Faculty member. The point here is not whether this is a correct reading, but rather that external accreditation standards must be carefully explained to the evaluating agent in the Two-Year Faculty Evaluation process as well as a Portfolio review process. Only same-discipline evaluative agents are likely to know those standards.

The Basic Responsibilities Related to Participating in the Life of the University (2.2.7.3.1) are required of all Full-Time Teaching Faculty and include attending Commencement and Convocation, participating in academic advising, etc.

There are five sub-criteria in the Engagement in the Life of the University Criterion in which the Faculty member determines his or her indicators, guided by “such as” lists headed by the same expression, “indicators may include but are not limited to the following.” The five sub-criteria are as follows:

1. Participation in the Shared Governance of the University (2.2.7.3.2),
2. Attendance at academic, cultural, artistic and/or athletic events on campus (2.2.7.3.3),
3. Service to the Faculty Member’s Academic Unit (department, division, school, etc.) (2.2.7.3.4),
4. Service to the University (2.2.7.3.5), and
5. Service to the Community Beyond the University (2.2.7.3.6).

Here’s the same sort of preamble to the five Engagement sub-criteria (2.2.7.3.2, et seq.):

The University expects engagement in all five sub-criteria but makes no requirements as to amounts or types of engagement in any of them. The list of indicators for the sub-criteria are illustrative, not definitive or restrictive; other indicators may be supplied.

Applications of the Five Sub-Criteria of the Engagement Criterion:

FPC, FEP, Chairs/Directors, the Provost, or the President may be tempted to read indicators in the lists such as “serving on elected Faculty committees”—under the Participation in Shared Governance sub-criterion—as a *requirement* of the Engagement Criterion. That is incorrect. Similarly, evaluating agents might mistakenly believe that “participating in Scholars Day and other recruitment events”—under the Service to the University sub-criterion—is a *requirement* of the Engagement Criterion. That, too, is incorrect. In neither of these example cases, is a Faculty member *required* to demonstrate those specific indicators. Instead, a Faculty member may elect other indicators that demonstrate engagement in the respective sub-criterion.

The point here is not to discourage serving on Faculty committees, for example. Indeed, such service is a traditional mark of participating in shared governance in higher education. What evaluators must avoid is ascribing a requirement of employment in the Engagement Criterion where none exists. Practices (or documents) that propose nonexistent requirements will need to be revised.

VI. Fourth Criterion: Professional and Ethical Relationships (2.2.7.4)

Heidelberg University adopted the AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics several years ago. The *Faculty Manual* preamble to the Statement contains important instructions guiding the application of the Statement:

Instructors must maintain professional and ethical relationships with students, Faculty colleagues and instructors, administrators, and staff members of the University. The

University identifies components of “professional and ethical relationships” in adopting the following Statement on Professional Ethics of the American Association of University Professors. The components of the AAUP Statement are illustrative and aspirational, not definitive or restrictive; other indicators may be supplied, and the University makes no requirements as to any specific component of the AAUP Statement.

Applications of the Professional and Ethical Relationships Criterion:

Evaluators (FPC, FEP, Chair/Directors, the Provost, and the President) must take care not to “cherry-pick” language from the AAUP Statement as the foundation of an adverse employment action. To do so would explicitly violate the preamble language above. Instead, the evaluator should reflect on the overall conduct of the Faculty member in making a judgment about whether that conduct comports with the spirit of the AAUP Statement.

[End of Guide]