UD English Department Review Rubric

Approved by the Faculty 6 March 2019

This rubric provides standards for the annual appraisals conducted by the Department Chair, the periodic reviews conducted by the Faculty Review Committee (FRC), and the evaluation performed by the FRC for the Promotion and Tenure Committee. Since the period under review can range from one to six years or more, the rubric needs to be used with judgment and flexibility. For example, while the FRC should expect “evidence of a well-conceived ongoing scholarly or creative program” when conducting a two- or four-year review, the Department Chair might need to allow for fluctuations of progress on a project while conducting an Annual Appraisal. Still, the Chair could also use the occasion of the appraisal to mentor a faculty member if a single-year’s achievements might make it challenging to establish the longer-term records of ongoing performance required for other evaluative occasions. In this way, the rubric provides not only guidance for the annual appraisal but also context for reading the long-term implications of that year’s performance. The Chair should consider that context, in turn, when evaluating a less successful year, and should temper their judgment with a consideration of the faculty member’s ongoing record. In short, each evaluative body should use the rubric to evaluate both the process towards and achievement of an ongoing record of accomplishments, with judicious attention to the period of review under consideration.

Faculty members under review may find that some of their achievements during the review period are difficult to characterize as falling purely under Teaching, Scholarship, or Service because the three categories inevitably overlap. Work in the Public and Digital Humanities is especially likely to fall under more than one category. That being said, the intent of this rubric is to promote consistency in the department. Faculty members and evaluators are urged to make the best determination of whether a given activity counts as teaching, scholarship, or service without counting any activity under more than one heading, and to apply that determination consistently throughout the review period and ideally in consecutive periods. For particularly multi-faceted projects with explicit intentions in more than one area, faculty should clearly outline the respective categories for all activities and outcomes.

Scores of 7–9 are considered evidence of excellence in teaching, scholarship, or service; scores of 5–6 are considered evidence of high quality. To earn a particular score, it is necessary to demonstrate achievement at the level indicated by the examples and alternatives. It is not necessary to do everything listed at that level. Throughout this document, examples are intended to clarify or illustrate the particular level of achievement being described, not to constitute an exhaustive list.
Teaching

“Teaching” encompasses all activities that aid student learning and professionalization. A faculty member’s performance in areas that could be considered Scholarship or Service may be considered under the Teaching rubric if the faculty member makes the case that these activities ultimately serve students. The evaluation of teaching can thus encompass publication and professional development activities that maintain or advance the instructor’s professional expertise in a given teaching area. However, the faculty member would then not be able to also have that activity considered as part of their Research or Service contributions.

Descriptive Scale:

1. A persistent record of major deficiencies in teaching, such as recurrent student complaints, inadequate syllabi and course materials, failure to submit final grades, and exceptionally low student evaluations or a lack of student evaluations; unsatisfactory performance in meeting routine teaching obligations such as meeting classes and returning student work.

2. A record of consistently underdeveloped syllabi and/or teaching materials, poorly articulated course goals and objectives, subpar performance in providing intellectually challenging instruction or opportunities (consistent with the size and goals of the course) for students to improve their skills in writing and in the critical interpretation of texts, and low student evaluations; poor performance or substantial weakness in meeting routine teaching obligations such as meeting classes and returning student work.

3. A record showing some evidence of underdeveloped syllabi or teaching materials, subpar performance in providing intellectually challenging instruction or opportunities (consistent with the size and goals of the course) for students to improve their skills in writing and in the critical interpretation of texts, below-average student evaluations; some evidence of weakness in carrying out teaching obligations such as meeting classes, returning student work in a timely manner, and submitting final grades on time.

4. A record characterized by average syllabi and/or teaching materials, average peer evaluations, average performance in providing intellectually challenging instruction or opportunities for students to improve their skills in writing and the critical interpretations of texts, and average student evaluations; meets teaching obligations such as meeting classes, returning student work in a timely manner, and submitting final grades on time.

5. A record characterized by some evidence of well-developed syllabi and other teaching materials, including a clear explanation of course goals and policies (e.g., attendance and grading), evidence of incorporating content reflective of diversity, evidence of intellectually challenging instruction, evidence of opportunities (consistent with the size and goals of the course) for students to improve their skills in writing and in the critical interpretation of texts, good student evaluations and strong peer evaluations; evidence of consistently conscientious performance of teaching obligations such as meeting classes, returning student work, and submitting final grades in a timely manner.
6. A record characterized by frequently well-developed syllabi and other teaching materials, including a clear explanation of course goals and policies (e.g., attendance and grading), evidence of incorporating content reflective of diversity, evidence of intellectually challenging instruction, evidence of opportunities (consistent with the size and goals of the course) for students to improve their skills in writing and in the critical interpretation of texts, good student evaluations and strong peer evaluations; evidence of consistently conscientious performance of teaching obligations such as meeting classes, returning student work, and submitting final grades in a timely manner.

7. A record characterized by consistently well-developed syllabi and other teaching materials that reflect creative, effective, or engaging ways of addressing the content and goals of the course; strong evidence of intellectually challenging instruction with documented learning outcomes; evidence of substantial opportunities (consistent with the size and goals of the course) for students to improve their skills in writing and in the critical interpretation of texts; very good student evaluations and very good peer evaluations. Evidence of significant additional contributions to teaching beyond the candidate’s own classroom, such as oversight of student theses, dissertations, undergraduate research, and independent study projects; creation of new courses and approaches, including those that respond to departmental needs, appeal to a wide audience, or show evidence of incorporating content reflective of diversity; participation in interdisciplinary teaching; participation in teaching activities beyond normal classroom courses, such as service learning, teaching improvement activities, study abroad, outcomes assessment, or instructional grants; mentoring work beyond normal academic advisement of students; engagement in collegial or mentoring relationships with other faculty for the improvement of teaching.

8. A record of outstanding accomplishment on the measures outlined in Level 7; further evidence of contributions beyond the candidate’s own classroom, such as contributing to professional journals on the teaching of one’s discipline, creating online teaching resources, holding office in regional or national associations, organizing or participating in panels at national or regional conferences, publishing textbooks in one’s field, publishing books or articles about teaching, serving on teams evaluating teaching in other institutions, receiving teaching grants or awards, leading workshops or other forms of instruction for faculty, staff, and teaching assistants at UD, and offering similar instruction in the public schools or in other institutions.

9. A record of extraordinary accomplishment on the measures outlined in Levels 7 and 8; teaching awards and similar indicators of achievement and recognition; other evidence of being a model teacher, a model citizen, and a leader in creating a strong teaching culture in and beyond the department.
Scholarship

Throughout this section, the term “scholarship” embraces the acquisition, production, and dissemination of new scholarly knowledge and skills. The goal of this rubric is to recognize that the contribution to scholarly knowledge is often a process that takes several years. Therefore this rubric reflects the realities of the temporal investment required for excellence in scholarship and rewards the quality and relevance of scholarly work rather than volume. Faculty members and reviewers should assess the impact of scholarship: Is the work reviewed, cited, and influential in shaping the field? Does the scholarship reach a wider public? Does the scholarship invite new modes of analysis and challenge current thinking and methodologies?

We understand that untenured faculty are best advised to establish mastery of a single field to advance their career. This rubric is not meant to encourage either concentration in a particular field or breadth across several fields because this determination will depend upon the individual’s interests and career stage.

Scholarship seeks a public audience so that it might become a part of reflective conversations in the discipline, the academy and the public at large. One way to spark such conversation is through publication. Other methods of dissemination, however, may be equally appropriate for meeting disciplinary goals. These might include such projects as museum exhibitions (digital or physical), research-based media projects (websites, databases, films, podcasts, etc). These might also include reports to public bodies, such as state, local, tribal, and national governments, museums, libraries, heritage preservation groups, and nonprofit entities that engage the public in the arts and humanities.

Books published with university and academic presses well-regarded in the author’s field or trade presses that have an impact on a broader public are especially valued. Articles placed in influential, selective, peer-reviewed journals are more highly valued than articles published elsewhere. For scholars working in the Digital Humanities, the creation of online collections, computer-based analytical tools, and born-digital projects that are recognized and used by other scholars and the public at large are valued most highly. Although the primary gauge of scholarship is its impact in the faculty member’s field, public scholarship that extends the influence of English studies in the larger community is also highly valued. In the case of work in the Digital Humanities and public engagement, where peer review is often not the norm, we urge individual faculty members and the department to seek third party assessments of the scholarly work undertaken.

“Editorial work” refers to activities such as serving as editor of a journal or a special issue, or as series editor for a series of books or monographs. Peer reviewing articles for publication in scholarly or professional journals, evaluating book manuscripts for university presses and other publishers, and serving as an outside reviewer for promotion and tenure cases at other institutions fall under the heading of Service rather than Scholarship.

As required by the department’s merit statement, progress made on ongoing projects must be documented by a narrative statement detailing what work has been conducted since the previous
appraisal or review. Notes on archival research or interviews, drafts of chapters or of creative works, and other materials may also be presented to demonstrate continuing productivity.

Scholarship must be defined as some portion of workload in order for a faculty member to receive due credit for it. The Chair may assign a workload percentage to Scholarship even for a faculty member who is on a continuing track line if the candidate has either opted for the summer research option or made some other arrangements (e.g., by conducting funded research or having release time to serve as editor of a journal). In the absence of workload assigned to Scholarship, those on continuing track lines should identify the scholarship of teaching as part of the Teaching category.

Descriptive Scale:

1. No evidence of progress on any scholarly or creative projects since the last review. No acceptances, publications, paper presentations, websites created, or other activities associated with ongoing research.

2. Some activity related to the production of scholarly or creative work. No significant work completed, and no evidence of a broader research program. Very limited evidence of more ambitious work in progress. Acceptance or publication of very minor scholarly or creative work on the level of pieces in local newsletters or short notes in other publications.

3. Limited activity related to the production of scholarly or creative work. No significant work completed, but some evidence of a developing research program marked by modest work in progress. Acceptance or publication of such minor scholarly or creative work as short pieces in local newsletters, short notes in other publications, and presentations attesting local recognition.

4. Some evidence of an emerging scholarly or creative program and of the production of scholarly or creative work related to that broader program. A consistent pattern of minor scholarly or creative work in peer-reviewed journals or other highly regarded venues; creative works such as single poems or short stories, or comparable examples of scholarly productivity; and presentations attesting regional recognition. For digital and public engagement focused scholars: a pattern of participation in skills-oriented workshops or course programs; evidence of active and sustained interaction with targeted audience or collaborators; evidence of actively maintained and social media presence in scholarly and creative communities.

5. Evidence of a developing and ongoing scholarly or creative program designed to result in the publication of a monograph or a series of interlocking essays, as indicated, for example, by substantial articles in peer-reviewed journals or other highly regarded venues; the development of digital platforms and tools, and the creation of original content in audio/video/interactive media; creative works such as single poems or short stories in highly regarded venues, or comparable examples of productivity; and presentations attesting regional recognition.
6. Evidence of a well-conceived ongoing scholarly or creative program designed to result in the publication of a monograph or a series of interlocking essays, as indicated, for example, by substantial articles in peer-reviewed journals or other highly regarded venues; the publication of creative works such as single poems or short stories in highly regarded venues; the partial launch of the core components of digital work or new activities or programs designed for wider public engagement; comparable examples of scholarly or creative productivity; and presentations attesting regional recognition.

7. Evidence of a strong ongoing scholarly or creative program that has already yielded a pattern of publication indicated, for example, by the acceptance or publication of a critical edition of a substantial text, an edited collection of essays, a monograph, a significant article published in a competitive venue, or multiple articles or other pieces since the last review period; substantial progress on one or more ongoing projects; continued development of already launched components of digital work or new activities or programs designed for wider public engagement; evidence of significant scholarly achievement or recognition in such forms as editorial work; the submission of completed proposals for competitive grants, fellowships, and other awards; the receipt of modest, moderately competitive, or local grants or awards; reviews indicating the impact of current or previous scholarly or creative work; reprints or reissues of earlier publications; some citations in the work of other scholars; invited presentations to national or international organizations; and presentations at national or international conferences.

8. Evidence of an outstanding scholarly or creative program that has yielded a pattern of significant ongoing publication as indicated, for example, by the acceptance or publication of a single-author book or comparable scholarly or creative work; the culmination of a major project embodied in a series of related short pieces (e.g., a series of journalistic feature articles that span more than one assessment period or the completion of a series of books or monographs edited over a period of years); the receipt of significant fellowships, grants, or awards; strong evidence of additional scholarly achievement or recognition in such forms as editorial work, reviews indicating the substantial impact of current or previous publications, reprints or reissues of earlier works, frequent citations in the work of other scholars, invited presentations to national or international organizations, and presentations at national or international conferences, or major public engagement venues such as film and television or important library and museum work that reaches a wide audience. Completion of a major digital project or a series of smaller digital projects; Release of original executable algorithms and codes that advance one’s communities of practice; Launch of broadly recognized public humanities projects.

9. Evidence of an extraordinary scholarly or creative program that has yielded an extensive pattern of significant publications recognized for their excellence in reviews, scholarly citations, and other venues that signal importance in the field. Major national or international awards or recognition; highly competitive fellowships or grants.
Service

Ratings for service represent both time devoted to an activity (such as serving on a committee that meets often and at length) and the actual contribution made by the faculty member in the form of achievement or outcome (e.g., playing a major role in revising the college breadth requirements, successfully leading an initiative to improve the advisement of students in the department). Service can also include contributions to the discourse and the condition of diversity in the department and beyond. The evaluation of service work should account for faculty member's rank in the department.

To earn credit for service work, faculty must provide a narrative statement including clear and specific information about both time commitments and accomplishments. Candidates are encouraged to provide evidence illustrating the impact or results of their service.

Regular attendance at department meetings and events or other evidence of an active presence in the department contributes to service scores.

Descriptive Scale:

1. No evidence of service to the department, college, university, profession, or community, or evidence consisting primarily of records of attendance at departmental meetings and events.

2. A record of service limited to minimal contributions on one or two committees annually involving little work; little or no evidence of contributions to the department, college, university, profession, or community.

3. A record of service limited to attending meetings of one or two active committees or the equivalent annually; little evidence of additional contributions to the department, college, university, profession, or community.

4. A pattern of contributions that involves such activities as playing an active role annually on more than two committees within the department, college, or university; holding office in a professional organization over a period of several years; other low-impact service commitments to the department, college, university, profession, or community.

5. A pattern of contributions that involves such activities as chairing moderately demanding committees within the department, college, or university, or chairing one such committee over a period of several years; playing an active role on multiple committees; holding a moderately demanding office or performing comparable work for a professional organization; carrying out other specific tasks of benefit to the department, college, university, profession, or community.

6. A pattern of contributions that frequently involves such activities as continued, active service on multiple committees within the department, college, or university; inaugurating and leading a department or college initiative; developing policy or shared resources that contribute to a climate of diversity and inclusion; active engagement/ membership in
professional organizations; holding an office with the university system; holding a position of responsibility on a committee or organization outside the university; peer reviewing articles for scholarly journals or book proposals of manuscripts for scholarly presses.

7. A pattern of contributions that consistently involves such activities as chairing a very active committee within the department, college, or university; leading a challenging initiative; holding office in the college or university senate; taking responsibility for a major function, such as running graduate examinations or serving as a faculty sponsor for a student organization or publication; directing a program; participating actively on multiple committees; chairing or serving on several thesis or dissertation committees; reviewing candidates for promotion at other institutions; evaluating scholarly books.

8. A pattern of outstanding contributions that routinely involves such activities as engaging energetically in several active committees within the department, college, or university; holding a national position in a professional organization; initiating and leading a conference or special event; achieving recognition as a leader in the university or in a professional organization; serving as an editorial participant for scholarship and reviews; leading initiatives that produce significant outcomes; engaging in a range of activities that consistently demonstrate skill and leadership; frequently chairing or serving on thesis or dissertation committees; active engagement as a faculty advisor for a student organization or club.

9. A pattern of extraordinary service to the department, college, university, and larger professional communities that involves successfully engaging in the kinds of activities described in Levels 7 and 8 in an exceptionally high quantity or at an exceptionally high level of responsibility and achievement.