VCU School of Medicine

Faculty Evaluation Reference Guide

Use while completing evaluations in Portfolio

This guide includes language from the T&R Compensation Plan evaluation rubric (link), the VCU Post-Tenure Review Policy, as well as general recommendations for evaluation.

The rating scale at a glance

Rating	Where it sits	What it means
Excellent	**Exceptional · rarely achieved**	Exceptional performance, rarely achieved. Reserved for the few faculty who stand well above what is expected for their role and are recognized beyond their unit. Expect few faculty to earn it in any given cycle.
Very Good	Above typical	Clearly above typical. Consistently goes beyond what the role requires, with sustained evidence across the cycle.
Satisfactory	**Typical · the norm**	The norm. Fully meets the expectations of the role. A solid, dependable performance that is the expected outcome for most faculty in good standing.
Needs Improvement	Below expectations	Below typical expectations. Specific, documented gaps that need a plan to correct.
Unsatisfactory	Expectations not met	Expectations not met. A written improvement plan is required.

How to use this guide

- Read the criteria for each competency **before** assigning a rating. This is the shared "frame of reference" for calibrating responses.
- **Start from Satisfactory.** Satisfactory is the expected rating for a faculty member who fully meets the role. Move up or down only when documented evidence supports it.
- **Treat Excellent as exceptional.** It is rarely achieved. Before assigning it, confirm the evidence shows performance well beyond the role, sustained across the cycle, not just a strong year-end.
- Base ratings on **observed behavior and documented evidence** (self-evaluation, direct observation, student/peer/patient feedback, CV/activity report), not general impression or tenure.
- A faculty member does not need to meet every bullet under a rating to earn it. Use the overall pattern that best matches, and use the narrative comment box to note where they fall between two levels.
- One unusually strong or weak data point shouldn't override a full-year pattern (guard against the halo effect and recency bias).
- If the faculty member's role doesn't include a competency (e.g., no formal research expectation), note that in the comments and rate based on the role-adjusted expectation, not the generic scale.

Post-Tenure Review

- If a faculty member receives an overall *Unsatisfactory*, a post-tenure review is initiated.
- If a faculty member receives an overall *Needs Improvement* ***for two consecutive evaluation cycles***, a post-tenure review is initiated.
- If a faculty member receives an *Unsatisfactory* ***in any one area for one evaluation cycle***, the Department Chair initiates a professional improvement plan.
- If a faculty member receives an *Unsatisfactory* ***in any one area for two consecutive evaluation cycles***, a post-tenure review is initiated.

1. Teaching & Learning

Rating	Criteria	T&R Compensation Plan Recommendation (see plan for more details)
Excellent *Exceptional · rarely achieved*	Exceptional performance that stands well above what is expected of faculty in this role, and is rarely achieved. Teaching is outstanding across settings (didactic, clinical, small group) and has impact beyond the faculty member's own learners: adopts and shares new teaching methods, technology, or curricular improvements and mentors junior faculty or residents in teaching skills. Learner evaluations and direct observations are exceptionally strong and sustained across the full cycle. Responds to learner feedback with visible, lasting changes to practice. Would be recognized as a standout teacher by peers beyond the department.	Formal calculation of effort done by department chair: delivered a quantity of lectures and trained a quantity of students that together exceeded assigned teaching effort by 20% or more (e.g. assigned 10%, had 12% teaching activity) Excellence may also be achieved by: greatly exceeding the roles and responsibilities, major revisions to a course impacting 50% or more of the course or major need identified by OME, Completing more than assigned training in teaching/mentoring, serving as a PI (initial and continuing) on a T32 to train students and postdocs, sponsoring an F-series **new** funded grant, significant improvement in student ratings or continued excellent ratings (UME), Step 1 advisees make excellent progress. All research trainees (medical students, graduate students and postdocs) are making excellent progress.
Very Good *Above typical*	Clearly above typical performance. Delivers clear, well-prepared, and often engaging instruction. Exceeds expected teaching load or learner-contact requirements. Learner evaluations are consistently positive with only minor, isolated concerns. Takes initiative in curriculum activities beyond what is assigned. Seeks out feedback and makes adjustments in response.	Delivered a quantity of lectures and trained a quantity of students that together exceeded assigned teaching effort by 10% (e.g. assigned 10%, had 11% teaching activity) Very good may also be achieved by: exceeding the expected roles and responsibilities, major revisions to a course impacting 50% or less of the course or need identified by OME, completing assigned training in teaching/mentoring, sponsoring an F-series **ongoing** funded grant, significant improvement in student ratings or continued very good ratings (UME), Step 1 advisees on average are making good progress. All research trainees (medical students, graduate students and postdocs) are making very good progress.

Rating	Criteria	T&R Compensation Plan Recommendation (see plan for more details)
Satisfactory *Typical · the norm*	Typical, expected performance: the norm for a faculty member who is fully doing the job. Meets teaching load and learner-contact requirements. Instruction is clear, prepared, and organized. Learner evaluations are generally positive, with occasional constructive comments. Participates in curriculum activities as assigned and responds appropriately to feedback.	delivered a quantity of lectures and trained a quantity of students that together was consistent with assigned Teaching effort (e.g. assigned 10%, had 10% teaching activity) Satisfactory may also be achieved by: meeting the expected goals and responsibilities, completing most of the assigned training, modest improvement on student ratings, All research trainees (medical students, graduate students and postdocs) are making satisfactory progress.
Needs Improvement *Below expectations*	Falls short of typical expectations for teaching load, preparation, or learner engagement. Learner evaluations show recurring, specific concerns (e.g., disorganization, unavailability, disrespectful interactions). Unresponsive to feedback or repeats the same concerns cycle over cycle. Missed or cancelled teaching sessions without adequate coverage.	Delivered a quantity of lectures and trained a quantity of students that together was less than assigned teaching effort by 10% (e.g. assigned 10%, had 9% teaching activity); Student ratings show a modest decrease or continued ratings that are poor All research trainees (medical students, graduate students and postdocs) are making poor progress.
Unsatisfactory *Expectations not met*	One or more teaching expectations were not met, or performance fell below the standard for the rank and effort assigned. Includes patterns of unmet deadlines, unavailability to learners or colleagues, unaddressed quality or safety concerns, or absence of documented activity in a category carrying material effort. Required response: a written improvement plan naming the specific deficiency, the deliverables that would resolve it, the support the department will provide, and a review date within the cycle. The supervisor documents the conversation in Portfolio.	Significant decrease in student ratings or continued ratings that are very poor All research trainees (medical students, graduate students and postdocs) are making very poor progress.

2. Research & Scholarship

Rating	Criteria	T&R Compensation Plan Recommendation (see plan for more details)
Excellent *Exceptional · rarely achieved*	Exceptional performance that stands well above role expectations, and is rarely achieved. Sustains a highly productive scholarly program (publications, grants, presentations, or other scholarly products) appropriate to career stage and role. Demonstrates clear leadership: PI/co-PI on funded work, senior authorship, or leading a scholarly initiative. Mentors others in scholarship. Work is recognized externally (invited talks, awards, editorial roles, competitive funding).	>80% of Research Expectation is extramurally funded.
Very Good *Above typical*	Clearly above typical performance. Output exceeds role expectations (e.g., frequent publications, conference presentations, or grant submissions). Contributes meaningfully as a co-investigator or co-author and initiates projects. Scholarly activity is ahead of, or well on track toward, promotion/career milestones.	70-79.99% of Research Expectation is extramurally funded
Satisfactory *Typical · the norm*	Typical, expected performance: the norm for a faculty member who is fully meeting the role. Maintains steady scholarly output consistent with role and career stage (e.g., publications, presentations, or grant submissions). Contributes as a co-investigator or co-author and makes reasonable progress toward stated scholarly goals and career milestones.	50-69.99% of Research Expectation is extramurally funded
Needs Improvement *Below expectations*	Scholarly activity is well below role expectations or absent this cycle with no credible plan. Grant/manuscript submissions stalled or withdrawn without explanation. No progress on previously agreed scholarly goals.	<50% of Research Expectation is extramurally funded for 2 consecutive years
Unsatisfactory *Expectations not met*	One or more research/scholarship expectations were not met, or performance fell below the standard for the rank and effort assigned. Includes patterns of unmet deadlines, unavailability to learners or colleagues, unaddressed quality or safety concerns, or absence of documented activity in a category carrying material effort. Required response: a written improvement plan naming the specific deficiency, the deliverables that would resolve it, the support the department will provide, and a review date within the cycle. The supervisor documents the conversation in Portfolio.	<50% of Research Expectation is extramurally funded for 3 or more consecutive years

3. Service

Rating	Criteria	T&R Compensation Plan Recommendation (see plan for more details)
Excellent *Exceptional · rarely achieved*	Exceptional performance that stands well above role expectations, and is rarely achieved. Holds significant leadership roles (committee chair, program leadership, national/regional organization roles) and delivers real, lasting impact, not just attendance. Volunteers for institutional priorities and follows through reliably. Service is well-balanced with other duties (not just breadth, but meaningful contribution) and is recognized beyond the department.	
Very Good *Above typical*	Clearly above typical performance. Serves actively and reliably on committees or in institutional roles, often beyond what is required for rank. Contributes substantively to discussion and decisions and completes assigned tasks on time. May hold a minor leadership role.	
Satisfactory *Typical · the norm*	Typical, expected performance: the norm for a faculty member who is fully meeting the role. Fulfills service expectations for rank (e.g., committee membership), attends regularly, contributes to discussion when appropriate, and completes assigned tasks on time.	Full attendance and Participation
Needs Improvement *Below expectations*	Misses service obligations, is chronically unprepared or absent from required committees, or has stepped back from previously held responsibilities without a transition plan. Service commitments listed on CV are inactive or lapsed.	
Unsatisfactory *Expectations not met*	One or more service expectations were not met, or performance fell below the standard for the rank and effort assigned. Includes patterns of unmet deadlines, unavailability to learners or colleagues, unaddressed quality or safety concerns, or absence of documented activity in a category carrying material effort. Required response: a written improvement plan naming the specific deficiency, the deliverables that would resolve it, the support the department will provide, and a review date within the cycle. The supervisor documents the conversation in Portfolio.	

4. Professionalism

Rating	Criteria
Excellent *Exceptional · rarely achieved*	Exemplary performance that is rarely achieved. A role model whose professional conduct others look to. Consistently models professional behavior with colleagues, learners, staff, and patients/clients. Proactively addresses conflict constructively and demonstrates reliability (meets deadlines, honors commitments) without needing reminders. Actively builds a positive, respectful work environment and holds others to the same standard. No professionalism concerns raised this cycle.
Very Good *Above typical*	Clearly above typical performance. Consistently professional and respectful, with reliable follow-through on deadlines and commitments. Handles disagreement constructively and contributes to a positive work environment. No concerns raised this cycle.
Satisfactory *Typical · the norm*	Typical, expected performance: the norm for a faculty member who is fully meeting the role. Professional and respectful in routine interactions. Meets deadlines and commitments, with only occasional, minor lapses that are self-corrected. Handles disagreement appropriately when it arises. No pattern of concerns and no formal complaints.
Needs Improvement *Below expectations*	Pattern of missed deadlines, unprofessional communication, conflict poorly handled, or disrespectful conduct toward colleagues/learners/patients. Any formal complaint, HR issue, or repeated concern raised by multiple sources this cycle. Requires a documented improvement plan.
Unsatisfactory *Expectations not met*	One or more professionalism expectations were not met, or performance fell below the standard for the rank and effort assigned. Includes patterns of unmet deadlines, unavailability to learners or colleagues, unaddressed quality or safety concerns, or absence of documented activity in a category carrying material effort. Required response: a written improvement plan naming the specific deficiency, the deliverables that would resolve it, the support the department will provide, and a review date within the cycle. The supervisor documents the conversation in Portfolio.

Quick calibration reminders

- **Behavioral, not personality-based:** rate what the faculty member *did*, described concretely, not whether you generally like or agree with them.
- **Consistency check:** before submitting, ask whether a colleague reviewing the same evidence would land on the same rating. If unsure, use office hours or a peer-consult to compare.
- **Guard against rating inflation:** if most of your faculty are rated Very Good or Excellent, the scale is no longer distinguishing exceptional work. Satisfactory is a real, honest, and respectable rating for someone meeting expectations.
- **Don't default to the middle:** Satisfactory should reflect evidence that expectations were met, not a safe choice for someone you haven't observed closely. If you lack evidence, note that explicitly.
- **Tie the rating to the conversation:** the criteria language here doubles as behavior-specific talking points for the evaluation conversation (see R2C2 coaching guide). Use the bullets that applied as the basis for what you tell the faculty member, not just the checkbox score.