

Guidelines and Suggestions for Preparing Department and College Rank & Status Policies at BYU¹

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This document is intended to provide guidelines and suggestions to consider when constructing or revising college and department Rank and Status (R&S) policies. Rather than encouraging an exhaustive clarification of every standard and procedural point found in the university Rank and Status Policy (RSP), these guidelines focus on areas where there may be variability in academic disciplinary standards that usually require the most clarification in college and department R&S policies. However, departments and colleges should clarify disciplinary standards in areas of the RSP not mentioned herein as deemed appropriate. This document is also designed to encourage uniformity in both the clarity and rigor of department and college R&S policies.

Overview of University Policy

The University Rank and Status Policy (RSP) governs the retention, granting of continuing faculty status, and rank advancement of faculty (RSP Executive Summary). Each department and college is encouraged to create their own rank and status policies that clarify disciplinary norms and expectations (RSP 1.5, 3.4.3, 3.4.4.1A, 7.8). Colleges and departments are encouraged to review and update these documents periodically to reflect current department, college, and disciplinary standards (1.5).

Departments should use their standards to address each faculty member's performance in light of departmental and disciplinary standards (7.8). This can help guide reviewers at college and university levels as they conduct their own independent evaluations that reflect the perspectives of the college and university at large (7.8). College and department documents may not contradict or waive any requirement of the RSP, or apply a lower standard. If there is a conflict between policies, the university policy governs (RSP 1.5). College R&S documents must be approved by the dean and the academic vice president (RSP 1.5). The academic vice president relies on input from the deans in approval of department documents.

Expectations for faculty performance are communicated and evaluated during Annual Performance Reviews (RSP 3.1.4). Faculty members also bear the burden of becoming familiar with the university's policies, procedures, and standards of review that are articulated in department, college, and university R&S documents. When evaluated for candidacy, CFS and rank advancement, each faculty member is responsible for presenting persuasive evidence to the university that he or she is appropriately qualified for receiving candidacy, continuing faculty status or rank advancement (RSP 1.2). They must clearly demonstrate in final reviews by their performance that they meet or exceed the department, college, and university standards as set forth in their rank and status documents (RSP 4.4).

Document Format Guidelines

Many departments and colleges annotate sections of the university policy to avoid redundancy with the university RSP. This is the preferred approach since it facilitates ease in cross-referencing college, department, and university policies. For example, departments can annotate their college document, which in turn, annotates the university RSP by inserting text boxes and using different colored ink. Lower-level unit annotations cannot adapt, modify or change any wording of higher-level R&S policies or annotations. If departments or colleges prefer stand-alone documents, sections of higher-level R&S policy(s) should be thoroughly and appropriately referenced to facilitate ease in cross-referencing. These documents should further clarify and specify expectations, rather than repeat the RSP.

Colleges should set general standards that can be applied to all disciplines within the unit (e.g., what counts as peer reviewed scholarship and creative work). Department R&S policies typically articulate

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greater specificity in disciplinary standards that align with more general college and university expectations (e.g., acceptable academic publication outlets or public performance venues for the discipline). Policies should be formatted for easy reading and be as brief as possible, without sacrificing clarity or precision. Language that is understood by those unfamiliar with the discipline should be used. Executive summaries can be included for longer documents. Running dates of creation, revision, department or college ratification by faculty, and required approvals are generally tracked in each version of the policies.

General Content Suggestions

(Derived from Faculty Advisory Council input and reviews of submitted R&S policies)

1. Issues raised in unit reviews that impinge on internal and external faculty evaluations are often considered in drafting and revising these policies.
2. The option of an extended length of probationary status in colleges where it has been approved is noted (RSP 4.1: six-years or seven years).
3. Deadlines for the department review committee and the department chair to select reviewers, extend invitations, and submit materials to external reviewers are specified. Plenty of lead-time should be provided to assure that reviews and vitas are obtained from at least three faculty members at well-regarded academic institutions who meet RSP standards (RSP 7.9.6).
4. Dates for peer evaluations of teaching (RSP 3.3.2C) and submission of all other materials to different levels of review are specified to facilitate meeting department, college, and university calendar deadlines (RSP 4.3, 4.4, 4.5; 7.9.8, 7.9.9).
5. Discipline-specific norms/expectations and criteria for evaluating citizenship, teaching, and scholarship reflected in files not specified in the RSP are clearly described (e.g., evaluating the quality of lab-based mentoring, undergraduate student mentoring; graduate student mentoring and graduate program involvement; graduate status criteria; how authorship order in multi-authored work, relative contributions of collaborators, mentored student contributions, and categories of peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed scholarship are specified in vitas or annotated bibliographies; department procedures for selecting external reviewers) (RSP 3.3, 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 3.4.4.1, 3.4.4.2).
6. Guidelines and suggestions are provided for constructing a faculty member's file and personal statement (RSP 7.1, 7.2, 7.3; 7.4, 7.7; Appendix A & B).
7. Discipline-specific guidelines are provided that reinforce expectations that faculty pursue a faculty development plan and ongoing professional development so that they remain intellectually alive and current in their disciplines (RSP 3.1.2; 3.1.4; 3.4.1).
8. College and discipline-specific norms that describe the relative allocation of faculty time, effort, and contributions to citizenship, teaching, and scholarship are described (or citizenship and professional service for professional faculty) (RSP 3.1.3).
9. College and discipline-specific norms that distinguish between expectations for faculty seeking advancement to associate and full professor ranks are described (e.g., defining a *sufficient* versus an *established* record of high quality citizenship, teaching and scholarship; where applicable, articulating the importance of national disciplinary stature stemming from professional activities that are a result of a strong reputation for academically peer reviewed scholarly work rather than from advocacy, trade publications, policy work, etc.) (RSP 5).
10. Professional and professorial faculty roles, responsibilities and assignments in the college and departments are delineated. Professional faculty with scholarship/creative work expectations are provided with standards that articulate how their contributions are distinguished from professorial faculty (e.g., the type of scholarship emphasized -- RSP 3.4.4.2; the type of audiences addressed), particularly where less time is allotted for developing a systematic, rigorous scholarly agenda (RSP 6; Faculty Hiring Policy).
11. Standards for evaluating performance based on individualized expectations documents for professional faculty are articulated where applicable (RSP 6).

12. To minimize the risk of procedural errors (RSP 8.1) and requests for additional information (RSP 7.5; 3.4.4.1E), department and college checklists derived from RSP Appendix A and B may be created to assure RSP procedures are followed and that all of the proper materials are provided in the files for next levels of review (see department chair/administrator website for examples). Departments and colleges may choose to designate who will check the files at each level.

Scholarship and Creative Work Expectations Suggestions

Academic disciplines define acceptable forms of scholarship and scholarship standards in their R&S policies (1.5; 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 3.4.4.2). Below are elements that some colleges and departments have attended to in defining their R&S standards for scholarship. Also incorporated are suggestions from the Faculty Advisory Council. Scholarship expectations vary the most across campus, so usually require the most clarification to assist reviewers at levels above the departments and colleges.

1. What constitutes acceptable peer review in college and department disciplines is defined (RSP 3.4.4.1D; 3.4.4.2D; 3.4.4.1G). For example, one college document states, “critical peer review of scholarship, including juried creative works, by university-affiliated academic peers is the principal standard for evaluation.” Different criteria for peer review may apply in other colleges. Disciplinary criteria for defining acceptable peer reviewers for disciplinary and sub-disciplinary work are articulated (e.g., client commissioned work, artistic creative works and exhibitions adjudicated by qualified non-university affiliated professionals). Other disciplinary criteria for acceptable peer review are described (e.g., blinded, academic peer review; national academic press editorial board review that includes elements of external academic peer review; adjudicated artistic performance reviews).
2. The scholarship standard and acceptable forms of scholarship in the college and department disciplinary areas are defined (RSP 3.4.2; 3.4.3). For example, of all the forms of scholarship mentioned in RSP 3.4.4.2; 3.4.4.1G; H, what really counts from a disciplinary perspective is clarified, particularly for professorial faculty (see 10 above). The relative value of different forms of acceptable scholarship based on disciplinary criteria that can be validated external to BYU are described, emphasizing intended audiences (e.g., journal articles, books, book chapters, edited volumes, monographs, conference proceedings, open access journals, technical reports, text-books integrating existing knowledge, pedagogically aimed scholarship/technologies, trade magazines, translations, local press publications, public policy venues, newsletters, op-eds, exhibitions; juried creative works such as paintings, illustrations, public performances, poetry, and essays).
3. Acceptable publication outlets are defined. As stated in the RSP, “when faculty do not publish in nationally or internationally peer reviewed scholarly presses and journals in their discipline, the greater the responsibility of the faculty member and the department to provide for a critical evaluation that verifies the quality of the work (RSP 3.4.4.1E).”
4. What counts as *in press* or *accepted* is defined and the criterion for documenting acceptance is articulated (3.4.4.1F). For example, *in press* for books is defined by one college as in production (copyedited or galley proofs, not merely under contract or under revision). A letter from the national or international academic press stating a firm date of publication is also required. It is preferred that the book be published and that published book reviews are available.
5. Disciplinary standards for whether a program of scholarship should be focused, thematic, and coherent so that a faculty member becomes known for an area of expertise, or whether a less focused and broader array of interests and topics reflected in a program of scholarship are acceptable is articulated (RSP 3.4.2; 3.4.3).
6. Expectations for becoming an independent investigator and/or scholar are also defined and measured as part of the scholarship standard (RSP 3.4.2; 3.4.3). Some colleges and departments set standards for assessing scholarly independence by evaluating the number of sole or lead-authored papers (or student lead papers under their mentorship), relative to co-authored papers and papers with prior mentors based on disciplinary norms when establishing local R&S policies. The

relative value of jointly authored publications or creative works, including student collaboration is articulated.

7. Criteria for evaluating scholarship within disciplines are established. *Quality, quantity, and originality* are relevant in assessing scholarship (RSP 3.4.3; 3.4.4.1C). How a faculty member's scholarly record is *measured* against these criteria is explicated (RSP 3.4.3). For example, in book and journal disciplines, the *reputation and selectivity* of scholarly presses and journals are relevant in evaluating the *quality and impact* of scholarship (RSP 3.4.4.1E). Measurement indices based on disciplinary norms that can be validated external to BYU are usually multivariate and include journal impact factors (e.g., ISI, Scopus, Google Scholar depending on discipline), disciplinary rankings, acceptance rates, quality of editorial board, evidence of critical academic peer review, inclusion in recognized e-indexes/data bases, distribution data, critical peer reviews of books, publisher's reputation and selectivity, author citation counts, disciplinary perceptions of rigor and prestige, actually reading the work (most important), etc. How these metrics are applied in convincing ways to assist reviewers outside the discipline assess the quality and impact of the work within disciplinary norms is described.
8. Some departments rank journals, including open access journals where applicable, according to disciplinary norms in order to help faculty aim for publishing in quality higher tier, more selective, and rigorously peer-reviewed journals that have greater impact on the discipline (RSP 3.4.3; 3.4.4.1 E, G). Nationally and internationally recognized peer-reviewed scholarly presses for specific disciplinary content areas are similarly specified.
9. In applicable disciplines, regional, national or internationally recognized performance, presentation, and exhibit venues for juried creative works are specified as well as criteria for evaluating juried formats, juror credentials, the scope of the work, the type of venue, the stature and reputation of clients for commissioned work, the potential exposure of the product or service and/or documented critical reviews, etc. are articulated (RSP 3.4.4.2D, F).
10. Departments usually define acceptable publication, presentation, and performance rates for professorial faculty (e.g., average of 1-2 research articles per year, 1 book every 4-5 years).
11. Expectations, if any, that faculty make their scholarship openly available, either through publishing in open access journals or by depositing traditional journal articles in BYU's Scholars Archive or in disciplinary repositories are articulated.
12. Some departments recommend that their faculty produce an annotated bibliography as part of their scholarship standard. In a short paragraph under each work, faculty members briefly describe their contributions (if collaborative and verified with collaborators), indicate why the publication or performance venue was selected for this work, and provide evidence/measurement indices for the academic quality and impact of the venue. This helps evaluators ascertain the scholarly trajectory. How various works tie together in meeting department, college, university and disciplinary standards and move disciplinary discourse forward is usually articulated in the personal statement (RSP Appendix A & B).
13. Expectations and evaluation guidelines related to external funding are articulated (RSP 3.4.4.2F).
14. Expectations for faculty to present their work at professional meetings of their academic peers and which venues qualify are articulated (local, national, international). How presentations are weighted relative to lead and co-presenter roles, posters and paper symposiums, and expectations for developing presentations into peer-reviewed publications are explicated (RSP 3.4.4.2H).

Teaching Expectations Suggestions

Teaching expectations are well defined in the RSP (3.3) and can be clarified based on disciplinary standards as needed. Below are clarification suggestions provided by the Faculty Advisory Council, along with elements identified in some of the college and department R&S policies.

1. Standard teaching loads for research active faculty and those without scholarship expectations or reduced scholarship expectations are articulated, including varied loads due to high and low enrollment courses, lab intensive mentoring, etc.
2. Unusual cases such as a high or low number of students or courses, new course preps, courses that involve time-intensive grading or mentoring, travel requirements, or other unusual time commitments out of class are acknowledged.
3. Departmental expectations for mentoring, clinical, or practicum supervision are clarified.
4. Minimum standards of faculty performance in terms of student evaluations and peer reviews are articulated. Sample peer review templates are available on the department chair/administrator website.
5. Differing standards for student and peer evaluations based on types of courses within the department are acknowledged (some courses, for instance, may be perennially ranked higher or lower, regardless of the instructor).
6. The use of standardized tests, written exams, templates for peer review, measures of student learning outcomes and other indices are presented that can help describe or define teaching success based on disciplinary standards.
7. Expectations for faculty to make themselves accessible to students outside of class are articulated (e.g., number of office hours per week or means of contact).
8. Expectations regarding faculty absences from teaching assignments are articulated.
9. Beyond a list of courses taught by semester, with enrollment numbers (RSP 3.3.2A), many departments recommend that response rates, instructor and course ratings, and average course GPAs also be included in the table for easy reference.
10. Guidelines for how student written comments are analyzed and weighted are presented (RSP 3.3.2B1; 7.9.4)

Citizenship Expectations Suggestions

Citizenship expectations are well defined in the RSP (3.2) and can be clarified based on disciplinary standards as needed. Below are clarification suggestions provided by the Faculty Advisory Council, along with elements articulated in some of the college and department R&S policies.

1. General expectations and guidelines for balancing administrative assignments, committee work and professional service with teaching and scholarship expectations within the department, the university, and national/international professional organizations, taking into account different stages of faculty careers (RSP 3.1.3; 3.1.6). In these considerations, the university policy states “that professorial faculty (and professional faculty whose responsibilities include scholarship) are expected to demonstrate consistent productivity of high quality scholarship over their entire careers” (RSP 3.4.3).
2. Expectations for attendance at meetings, responsiveness to communication, and the quality of interpersonal interactions are explicated.
3. Addresses cases where candidates have unusually heavy administrative service loads, or in which service at the national or international level has been extraordinarily significant and how that plays into faculty evaluations.
4. Clarifies further expectations for collegiality, positive relationships with students, staff, administration, adherence to the Honor Code, or other standards of citizenship expressed in the university document.
5. Clarifies what types of non-traditional scholarship in some disciplines count for citizenship rather than scholarship (e.g., advocacy, trade publications, outreach publications, local performances, or policy work).