

October 31, 2016

[Advisory to Deans #AA2016-09](#)

DEANS, EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATE DEANS, ASSOCIATE DEANS, ASSISTANT DEANS, DEPARTMENT CHAIRS, AND
ACADEMIC PERSONNEL ANALYSTS

Re: Reminder on Step Plus clarification

Dear colleagues,

As a follow-up to my message to the Deans on September 20, 2016, I would like to remind you of a change to the Step Plus policy and one clarification that took effect with the 2016-17 merit and promotion cycle. Both of these issues were discussed at length by CAP and Academic Affairs this past year. The proposed clarification and policy change were subsequently supported by a vote of the Academic Council and shared with the Representative Assembly in May 2016. These changes involve the use of Step Plus criteria in evaluating 1) promotions to Associate and Full Professor that are accelerated in time, and 2) advancement actions that include previous merit advancements within their review periods (for professorial faculty, these actions are promotions and merit advancements to Professor Step 6.0 or Professor Above Scale).

➔ **Note:** A promotion action that is “accelerated in time” is one for which the candidate is seeking advancement early, without waiting normative time *at the current step*. “Accelerations in time” should not be confused with on-time Step Plus advancements of more than one step. For example, a 2.0 Step Plus advancement at normative time is not considered an “acceleration in time”, even though a full step has been skipped.

1) Step Plus policy change for promotions that are accelerated in time:

Promotions to Associate and Full Professor can be accelerated in time or can be evaluated according to Step Plus guidelines, but not both.

Please note that this policy also applies to promotion actions in other academic series that are on the Step Plus system (e.g. for promotion from LPSOE to LSOE, or from Associate Specialist to Specialist).

Rationale: The Step Plus system eliminates accelerations in time, except for promotions to Associate and Full Professor. It has proven difficult to make consistent recommendations on such accelerations in conjunction with Step Plus criteria. Some departments have considered the acceleration to be equivalent to a half-step advancement for candidates who are outstanding in one category of review, and then use Step Plus criteria to recommend an additional half-step advancement based on outstanding performance in another area. Other departments have applied the Step Plus criteria without taking the acceleration in time into account. This policy change for 2016-17 preserves

flexibility to allow for early promotion, while making it easier to make consistent recommendations for advancement in such cases.

Implementation: A dossier that is being evaluated for a promotion that is accelerated in time (i.e., an “early” promotion that occurs before normative time has elapsed for the next eligible action) will not be considered or approved for advancement of more than one step. For example, a candidate at Associate Professor Step 3.5 who is going up for promotion one year early will not be considered for advancement beyond Professor Step 1.5. **Candidates can request an early promotion without waiting for normative time at their current step, but there will be only two possible advancement outcomes: promotion to the lateral step, if applicable, or 1.0-step promotion. Merit advancement to overlapping steps will not be considered if an early promotion is denied.**

Examples of Step-Plus Promotions that can be accelerated in time
(please note that this is not a comprehensive list):

Current rank and step	1.0-step promotion to:	Lateral promotion to:	Acceleration in time of:
Assistant Prof 4.5	Assoc. Prof. 1.5	--na--	1 year
Assistant Prof. 5.0	Assoc. Prof. 2.0	Assoc. Prof. 1.0	1 year
Assistant Prof 6.0	Assoc. Prof. 3.0	Assoc. Prof. 2.0	1 year
Associate Prof. 3.5	Professor 1.5	--na--	1 year
Associate Prof. 4.0	Professor 2.0	Professor 1.0	1 or 2 years
Associate Prof. 5.0	Professor 3.0	Professor 2.0	1 or 2 years

Candidates at Assistant rank, Steps 1.0-3.5 and Associate rank, Steps 1.0-2.5 are not eligible for promotion that is accelerated in time. That is, if these candidates do not wait for normative time at the current step before seeking promotion, they are not eligible for more than 1.0-step advancement and, accordingly, cannot promote to the next rank. Eligibility for promotion that is accelerated in time begins only after the candidate has achieved Assistant rank Step 4.0 or Associate rank Step 3.0. For example, a candidate who has spent only one year at Assistant Professor Step 3.0 is not eligible for promotion. In contrast, it will occasionally be the case that an Assistant Professor Step 3.0 or an Associate Professor Step 2.0 may seek advancement after spending normative time (2 years) at their current step; they could receive an on-time 2.0-step Step Plus promotion if the dossier includes all requirements for promotion review, the overall record is judged as worthy of promotion, and there are two areas of outstanding performance, including research.

Candidates who have been at the Assistant Professor rank for 7 years and must be considered for promotion before normative time has elapsed at the current step (a “technical acceleration”) may still be considered for Step Plus and may be put forward for a ‘greater-than-one-step’ advancement.

Candidates for promotion who wait for normative time to request advancement may be considered under the Step-Plus criteria for promotion of greater than one step, assuming that the Step Plus criteria for advancement *and* the expectations for promotion are met. In addition, on-time requests for promotion, if not approved, may result in merit advancement without promotion, if applicable.

Examples of normative-time promotion requests resulting in advancement of more than 1 step under Step-Plus (please note that this is not a comprehensive list):

Current rank and step	On-time, 1.5-step Step Plus promotion to:	On-time, 2.0-step Step Plus promotion to:
Assistant Prof 3.0	--na—*	Assoc. Prof. 1.0*
Assistant Prof. 3.5	Assoc. Prof. 1.0*	Assoc. Prof. 1.5*
Assistant Prof 4.0	Assoc. Prof. 1.5*	Assoc. Prof. 2.0*
Assistant Prof. 4.5	Assoc. Prof. 2.0*	Assoc. Prof. 2.5
Assistant Prof 5.0	Assoc. Prof. 2.5	Assoc. Prof. 3.0
Associate Prof. 2.0	--na—*	Professor 1.0*
Associate Prof. 2.5	Professor 1.0*	Professor 1.5*
Associate Prof. 3.0	Professor 1.5*	Professor 2.0*
Associate Prof. 3.5	Professor 2.0*	Professor 2.5*
Associate Prof. 4.0	Professor 2.5*	Professor 3.0
Associate Prof. 5.0	Professor 3.5	Professor 4.0

*Alternatively, merit advancement of 1.5 steps (or, very rarely, 2.0 steps) would be allowed

Also, during this last year of the transition to Step Plus, some faculty members are still eligible to pursue merit actions that are accelerated in time. The few such actions allowed in 2016-17 will all be to or within the Above Scale step, and will not be evaluated using Step Plus criteria.

2) Clarification on how to apply Step Plus criteria in the context of promotions and merit advancements to Professor Step 6.0 or Professor Above Scale:

When evaluating a candidate for promotion, or advancement to or through a barrier step, Step Plus guidelines should be applied to the entire period of review. Advancements beyond a normal 1.0-step merit should be recommended when achievements during the period of review have not been recognized, or have been insufficiently recognized, by advancements during previous merit evaluations.

Please note that this standard applies to promotion actions and barrier step advancements in other academic series currently on the Step Plus system, as well.

Rationale: There has been inconsistency in how Step Plus criteria are being applied when candidates undergo evaluation at promotion and barrier steps. Some departments have been applying the criteria to the full period of review since terminal degree or last promotion, asking whether the candidate's record in research, teaching, and/or service has been outstanding over the entire period. Other departments have first assessed the candidate's suitability for promotion or barrier step advancement, and then have applied the Step Plus criteria just to the period since the last merit advancement. Inequities can arise when the Step Plus criteria are applied in either manner. For example, applying the criteria to the entire period of review can lead to situations in which the record is judged as outstanding based on activities for which a candidate already received accelerations in time or

additional half-steps during preceding merit reviews. Alternatively, applying the criteria only to the period since the last merit advancement can lead to situations in which an additional half-step advancement could be given based on an outstanding recent record when the overall record during the period is marginally satisfactory.

Implementation: To be consistent, Step Plus guidelines should be applied to the entire period of review for all promotions or advancements to or through a barrier step.

In closing, I first want to thank my colleagues on CAP-OC for their very thoughtful work in developing creative solutions to Step Plus challenges, and then to thank all of you for your continuing commitment to Step Plus.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ML Stanton', written in a cursive style.

Maureen L. Stanton
Vice Provost—Academic Affairs
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