

UCSF CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENTS – FACULTY SERIES

This document provides campus guidelines for on-time advancements in rank (promotion) as well as accelerated advancements

ADVANCEMENT FROM ASSISTANT RANK

The Academic Personnel manual ([APM 220-18 b.2](#)) indicates that “...the normal period of service at a given step in this rank is two years. The first four steps in rank...are for normal use.” At UCSF, this policy has been interpreted as follows: On-time advancement from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor is calculated based on the step of the initial appointment.

Initial Appointment As	On-time Advancement to Associate Rank (promotion)
Assistant step I	Minimum 6 years - 8 years at rank*
Assistant step II	Minimum 6 years at rank*
Assistant step III	Minimum 4 years at rank*
Assistant step IV	Minimum 2 years at rank*

*utilizing Assistant Steps I-IV as appropriate

Promotion to the associate rank with fewer years at the assistant rank, based on the step associated with the initial appointment (see table above), or to a step higher than Associate Professor, Step I, would constitute an acceleration.¹ All accelerations require justification in the Departmental Evaluation (Chair) letter. Promotion to the associate rank after additional years at the assistant rank does not constitute a deceleration.

Use of Steps V and VI at the assistant rank requires both an explanation of the exceptional situation and a proper justification for the department’s decision in the Departmental Evaluation letter. A merit advancement to Assistant Professor Step V or VI, rather than a promotion, is considered on-time if it occurs 2 years after the previous advancement action.

Promotion from Assistant Step V or VI: Per [APM 220](#), “Service at Assistant Professor, Step V, **may** be in lieu of service at Associate Professor, Step I...Likewise, service at Assistant Step VI, **may** be in lieu of service at Associate Professor, Step II...” [**bold added**]. Whether or not the time at these steps counts in lieu of service at the associate level is not automatic and must be addressed in the departmental evaluation of academic performance and achievement at the time of the promotion review. All promotions from step V or VI will be considered on-time.

¹ Please see section titled “Advancement in rank subsequent to an accelerated action within rank” for additional information.

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They will not be considered decelerated; however, they will require justification for the proposed step in the Departmental Evaluation letter.

Eight Year rule: At UCSF, the total period of University service for faculty appointed as an Assistant Professor in an Academic Senate series shall not exceed eight years regardless of step at initial appointment. For additional information regarding the eight year rule, please see [APM 133](#).

Promotions from step V or VI to ranks higher than Associate Professor, Step I that are proposed by the department must be justified by evidence of performance commensurate with the step proposed. If it is determined that the candidate’s performance and achievement are **not** commensurate with a higher step at the associate rank, then promotion to a lower step of the associate rank should be considered.

Example: Dr. Jones is appointed at Assistant Professor, Step IV and after two years receives a merit to Assistant Professor, Step V. The merit is considered on-time since it occurred after two years at step IV. He is considered for promotion two years later. The Department must determine whether to propose a promotion to Associate Professor Step I or II (i.e. whether the time at step V counted in lieu of Associate Professor, Step I) based on his performance and achievement.

ADVANCEMENT FROM ASSOCIATE RANK

At UCSF, on-time advancement from associate to full Professor is calculated based on the step of the initial appointment or the step at promotion to Associate rank.

Initial Appointment As or Promotion to	On-Time Advancement to Full Rank (promotion)
Associate step I	Minimum 6 years at rank*
Associate step II	Minimum 4 years at rank*
Associate step III	Minimum 2 years at rank*

*utilizing Associate Step I-III

Promotion to the full professor rank with fewer years at the associate rank, based on the step associated with the initial appointment (see table above), or to a step higher than full Professor, Step I, would constitute an acceleration.² All accelerations require justification in the Departmental Evaluation (Chair) letter. Promotion to full rank after additional years at the associate rank does not constitute a deceleration.

² Please see section titled “Advancement in rank subsequent to an accelerated action within rank” for additional information.

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Use of steps IV and V at the associate rank requires both an explanation of the exceptional situation and a proper justification for the department's decision in the Departmental Evaluation Letter. Should the department wish to propose the individual for a merit to Associate Professor, Step IV or V rather than a promotion, the merit would be considered on-time if it occurs after 2 years at step III or 3 years at steps IV or V.

Promotion from Associate Step IV or V: Per [APM 220](#), 'Service at Associate Professor, Step IV, **may** be in lieu of service at Full Professor, Step I...Likewise, service at Associate Step V, **may** be in lieu of service at Full Professor, Step II...' [*emphasis added*] Whether or not the time at these steps counts in lieu of service at the full professor level is not automatic and must be addressed in the departmental evaluation of academic performance and achievement at the time of the promotion review. All promotions to the full professor rank from Associate Professor, Step IV and Step V will be considered on-time. They will not be considered decelerated; however, they will require justification for the proposed step in the Departmental Evaluation letter.

Promotions proposed by the department for a rank that exceeds full Professor, Step I must be justified by evidence of performance commensurate with the step proposed. If it is determined that the candidate's performance and achievement are **not** commensurate with a higher step at the full rank, then promotion to a lower step of the full rank should be considered.

Example: Dr. Martínez is appointed at Associate Professor, Step III and two years later receives a merit advancement to Associate Professor, Step IV. Three years later she is considered for promotion to the full professor rank. Based on Dr. Martínez's performance and achievements, the Department must determine whether to propose a promotion to Professor Step I or Step II (i.e. whether the time at Associate step IV should 'count' in lieu of Professor Step I).

Interaction with Other Policies:

Family Accommodations: Per [APM 220-18](#) and [APM 760-31](#) "Personnel reviews that are deferred due to a family accommodation, as defined in APM – 760, should be treated procedurally in the same manner as personnel reviews conducted at the usual intervals. The file shall be evaluated without prejudice as if the work were done in the normal period of service and so stated in the department chair's letter".

ACCELERATED ADVANCEMENTS

Accelerated advancement is a form of recognition that rewards faculty who perform at an exceptional level over a sustained period of time. Within this context, the term "accelerated advancement" denotes merit increases or promotions that are awarded one or more years earlier than the usual, *on-time* schedule for such academic actions.

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On-Time Schedules for Advancement

Merits

The usual period between each step is 2 years at the Assistant and Associate Professor ranks, 3 years at the Professor rank, and 4 years for Professor Above Scale. Accelerated actions are defined as merit actions that are proposed when the faculty member has served less than the usual number of years at any step.

Promotions

Promotions that are proposed when the faculty member has served less than the minimum number of years at rank are defined as accelerated actions. Promotions proposed beyond step I at the higher rank are also considered accelerated actions unless the promotion is from a “special step,” i.e. from Assistant Professor Step V or VI or Associate Professor Step IV or V (see above). Please refer to the charts on Page 1-2 of this document for the minimum number of years required at rank for on-time promotion.

Guidelines for Accelerated Advancement

Proposing an accelerated advancement

A recommendation for accelerated advancement is usually made by departmental faculty following a review of a faculty member’s academic portfolio since the time of the faculty member’s prior academic action. Any member of the faculty, including the Department Chair, may propose that an individual faculty member be evaluated for accelerated advancement. Additionally, any member of the faculty can request that his or her name be placed in consideration for accelerated advancement. Such requests should be made, in writing, to the Department Chair and submitted by the Departmental deadline. Requests for retroactive accelerated advancements will not be considered.

Review of accelerated actions

All advancement actions, including on-time and accelerated actions, are subject to review and approval by the Dean and the Vice Provost, Academic Affairs.

- Merit actions that are accelerated by one year are reviewed at the Departmental and School levels and do not usually require review by the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP).
- Merit actions that are accelerated by more than one year, as well as promotion to the next rank, must be reviewed by the CAP.
- Consecutive accelerated actions require review by CAP.

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Non-consecutive accelerated actions

The faculty member must demonstrate that the criteria for an accelerated advancement have been fulfilled *based on accomplishments since the date of the last academic action*.

Accelerated actions will not be awarded based on achievements in prior review periods.

Consecutive accelerated actions

Consecutive accelerated actions are rare. The faculty member must demonstrate that the criteria for the requested accelerated advancement have been fulfilled *based on accomplishments since the date of the last action*.

Information for Department Chairs

Accelerated advancement may be proposed as a retention strategy when a faculty member is actively being recruited to another institution. In this circumstance, the faculty member must meet the academic standards for *exceptional* performance and the dossier must include sufficient information to justify the request for accelerated advancement. It is highly recommended, but not required, that Department Chairs consult with the Vice/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs prior to proposing a multi-year and/or a consecutive accelerated action.

Criteria for Accelerated Advancement

Exceptional performance is defined as work that exceeds departmental expectations in one or more of the following categories: teaching and mentoring, research and/or creative activities, professional competence, and University and public service. In addition, the faculty member who is being considered for accelerated advancement must meet departmental criteria for advancement in *all other* categories of evaluation.

Examples of Exceptional Performance in support of a one-year accelerated action [rev 02/19]ⁱ:

- Award of a prestigious, competitive grant representing achievement beyond that expected for advancement within the individual's academic series.
- Receipt of a competitive professional service award that recognizes outstanding national or international contributions to the profession, to a discipline, to diversity/equity/inclusion or to professional education.
- A sustained level of exceptional achievement (since the last academic advancement) in one or more of the four categories listed above, i.e., exceptional teaching or mentoring evaluations or awards, research or creative activities, or service to the University and/or the public that exceeds expectations for the individual's academic series.

ⁱ Examples of Exceptional Performance were updated February 2019.

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- Exceptional and unusual productivity in publishing original scholarly work in peer-reviewed publications at a level that exceeds the expectations for the individual's academic series.
- Extraordinary service or development of innovative programs that advance the mission(s) of the department, School, or University.
- Sustained (minimum of 3 years) and dedicated University service on a major campus or Academic Senate committee such as CAP, IRB, the School of Medicine Admissions Review Committee (ARC) or another School's Admissions Committee (as defined by each School).
- Academic Senate Divisional Leadership: Sustained (minimum of 3 years) and dedicated Academic Senate service as Division Vice Chair and/or Division Chair.

Examples of Exceptional Performance for multi-year accelerated actions *not related to retention (achievements since the last review period)*ⁱⁱ:

- Extraordinary, sustained achievement (since the last academic advancement) in any single category that distinguishes the faculty member from her/his peers and distinguishes the faculty member from those who receive one year accelerated actions.
- Exceptional performance in multiple areas (see the section on one-year accelerated actions)
- Receipt of multiple, competitive professional service awards that recognize outstanding national or international contribution to the profession, to a discipline, to diversity/equity/inclusion or to professional education.
- Sustained (minimum of 3 years) and dedicated University service on multiple major campus or Academic Senate committees such as CAP, IRB, the School of Medicine Admissions Review Committee (ARC) or another School's Admissions Committee (as defined by each School).

When evaluating a request for an accelerated action, the faculty member's rank will be considered by all reviewing parties. Generally, requests for one- or two-year accelerations are most appropriate at the Assistant or Associate ranks; requests for one- two- or three-year accelerations are most appropriate at the Professor rank.

Advancement in rank subsequent to an accelerated action within rank

At any rank, an approved accelerated advancement within rank (i.e., accelerated merit) generally reduces the number of years a faculty member spends at rank. Therefore, any promotion following an acceleration may be considered "on time" provided that the actual

ⁱⁱ Examples of Exceptional Performance were updated February 2019.

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number of years at rank plus the acceleration in years is ***not less than the policy requirement for that rank.***

Example: Dr. Chen is appointed as Associate Professor, Step I and after two years receives a two-year accelerated merit to Associate Professor, Step III. Two years later she is considered for promotion to full Professor Step I. The proposed promotion would be considered on-time because the combined service would be equivalent to six years at rank (4 years of service plus a 2-year accelerated merit).

Accelerated advancement to or within Professor Above Scale:

UCSF follows the guidelines provided in [APM 220-18 b.\(4\)](#):

“Advancement to an above-scale rank involves an overall career review and is reserved only for the most highly distinguished faculty (1) whose work of sustained and continuing excellence has attained national and international recognition and broad acclaim reflective of its significant impact; (2) whose University teaching performance is excellent; and (3) whose service is highly meritorious. Except in rare and compelling cases, advancement will not occur after less than four years at Step IX. Moreover, mere length of service and continued good performance at Step IX is not justification for further salary advancement. There must be demonstration of additional merit and distinction beyond the performance on which advancement to Step IX was based. A further merit increase in salary for a person already serving at an above-scale salary level must be justified by new evidence of merit and distinction. Continued good service is not an adequate justification. Intervals between such salary increases may be indefinite, and only in the most superior cases where there is strong and compelling evidence will increases at intervals shorter than four years be approved.”

Accelerated actions to Professor Above Scale or within Above Scale are extremely rare since on time advancements at this level already require an extremely high level of distinction and performance. Accelerated actions will only be considered when there is demonstration of a seminal achievement in one or more of the following categories: teaching, research or other creative activities, professional competence and activities, and University and public service.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

[APM 760](#) – Benefits & Privileges, Family Accommodation for Childbearing and Child Rearing

[APM 133](#) – General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees, Limitation on Total Period of Service with Certain Academic Titles