

GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY SALARY EQUITY REVIEWS

(2014, updated 2018)

University of Minnesota

Twin Cities Campus

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the college Salary Equity Review Committee (hereafter referred to as the “SERC”) is to examine salary data for tenured and tenure-track faculty in academic units of the Twin Cities campus to determine if individual faculty—both women and men—receive salaries that appear to be lower than those who are in the same unit (and typically in the same or related disciplines) and who have similar years of experience as indicated by years since terminal degree. This determination is reached using a uniform method of review, which involves review of comparator faculty CVs and activity reports to ascertain whether differences in salary appear to be legitimate and can be explained by merit, market testing (e.g. retentions and outside hires), or other factors.

APPOINTMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SERCs

Salary Equity Review Committee members consist of tenured faculty appointed by the dean. It is recommended that the composition of a SERC include a minimum of four members. Each college makes its own determination regarding the term of membership and colleges may elect to have a subset of other standing collegiate committees serve as the SERC (e.g. a subset of members of the college P&T committee may form the SERC). SERCs are advisory to the dean, they do not make decisions regarding adjustments. They are charged with a) reviewing appeals regarding annual salary decisions, and b) advising the dean regarding faculty salary equity matters in the college. SERCs likely will find they have access to some but not all of the information needed. For this reason, the HR director in the college will serve *ex-officio* on the SERC and will help gather such information.

An associate dean or decanal designee from the college is also a welcome *ex-officio* addition to the SERC as well, serving in the role of information provider, including knowledge of the context of collegiate processes and procedures.

UNIFORM METHOD FOR SALARY EQUITY REVIEW

The uniform method for salary equity review relies on the selection of one or more “comparator faculty” who share attributes similar to the individual being reviewed (the “target faculty”).

To aid in the process of identifying comparators as well as individuals whose salaries may warrant adjustment, the uniform method for salary equity reviews relies on department salary data scatter plot displays that provide a graphical representation of the salary structure of a department. The Provost’s Office will each year provide colleges with scatterplot displays that contain salary data from a salary data snapshot of the ninth pay-period. The scatterplots include salaries of full-time employees, but, in an effort to ensure apples-to-apples comparisons, do not include data for faculty on phased retirement or faculty who hold administrative appointments as their primary job code.

Colleges are welcome to develop their own scatter plot data displays or amend those supplied but should be particularly cautious with respect to including faculty with augmented or reduced appointments.

Colleges should not rely exclusively on an analysis of outliers—salary data points that exist one or two standard deviations from the mean in a regression analysis—as a means to identify individuals whose salary may need adjustment. It is entirely possible that a faculty member whose salary falls close to the mean is underpaid relative to her/his peers with similar data profiles (i.e. date since degree, productivity). Likewise, it is entirely conceivable that salaries of statistical outliers can be accounted for by factors that contribute to legitimate salary disparities such as low or high merit increases or market testing through retentions or outside hires. It is therefore recommended that scatterplot displays be used to provide only overviews of a given unit's salary structure and to aid in identifying target faculty and comparators.

- The salary data are organized as two sets of scatterplots – one represents salary as a function of years since degree and the other represents salary as a function of years since hire. Different shape symbols are used for gender, with squares representing male professors and circles representing female professors. Rank is shown with color: full professors are shown in blue, associate professors in yellow, and assistant professors in red.
- These two scatterplots are on one page. On the second page, the data charts show faculty sorted by rank, and then ordered within rank by their salaries as of the ninth pay-period of the academic year. Scatterplot ID number, degree year, years since degree, hire year, years since hire, and gender are displayed for each faculty member as well.

Identifying Target Faculty

In cases in which the SERC has agreed to review an individual salary equity request by a faculty member, the individual is considered the “target faculty” and the committee should proceed to identify comparator as described in the next section.

In cases in which the dean has charged the SERC with a comprehensive review of a unit, the committee should follow these steps for identifying target faculty:

The first view of the scatterplots can provide insight into salary as a function of rank. The comparison of the two scatterplots can allow SERC members to determine if this unit is one, for example, that hires a number of more highly paid, outside hires. By examining the tables on the second page, the SERC members can also view the range of salaries and whether salaries of male and female faculty are separate (not sure what this means?) from each other.

It is helpful to examine vertical swaths of each scatter plot, examining those faculty at the same rank who show disparate salaries.

If the SERC identified individuals whose salaries appear lower, this group will be called the preliminary “target faculty” within this process. These target individuals warrant further examination to understand whether legitimate explanations exist for these salary differences or if the SERC judges that a salary adjustment may be justified. Reviewing the CVs, and if necessary, the annual faculty activity reports for these individuals will be important in determining whether productivity differences may account for the salary differences.

Identifying Comparators

Comparator faculty are peers who may share with the target faculty member (the individual being reviewed) similar number of years since degree attainment, years of professional service, professorial rank, and discipline. If the department does not have one or more highly comparable faculty members with respect to the listed variables, it may be possible to consider the selection of faculty from a department where work is being carried out that is similar to that of the target faculty, within the same college. This is only feasible if the salary ranges for the two units are similar.

- In most cases, perfect matches (with every value being identical) will not exist. From the same department, first select comparators who are most similar in rank, years since degree, and years of service at U of M.
- Because the 2013 salary equity study signaled an overall 2.4% salary gap favoring men, SERCs should make certain to choose, as far as possible, male comparators when undertaking a salary review of a female faculty member.

Assessing Comparisons

For each target faculty member identified, list any factual information that may explain differences.

Consider pursuing data to address the following:

- Was the target faculty transferred to her/his current department from a faculty appointment in another department or another college?
- Was there a significant difference in starting salaries for faculty who show the same number of years since hire or years since degree?
- Have one or more retention offers affected the salary provided to the comparison faculty member at the same rank?
- Has target individual extended his/her probationary tenure clock for one or two years? Have any of the comparison individuals extended their probationary periods?
- Have one or more comparison faculty members received one or more types of awards that involve recurring increases to base pay?
- Did the target faculty graduate with PhD or terminal degree from this college?
- Was target faculty hired first at a rank below that of assistant professor?
- Was target faculty member hired away from a smaller, less research-oriented higher education institution?

Comparing productivity

Some of the above factors may serve to explain differences between a target faculty member and his/her comparison faculty members, but most importantly, is there evidence of productivity differences? Do productivity differences appear to have led to different merit pay decisions in some years? In which categories (teaching, research, service/outreach) are productivity level differences most pronounced?

Factors to compare:

- Number of publications, presentations, or creative/scholarly products for the discipline (quantity metric)
- Quality of publications, presentations, or creative/scholarly products for the discipline (top journals, presses, venues, etc.)

- Number and size of external grants and contracts
- Presentations, symposia, etc. in national and international venues
- If few or none of the differences listed above are observed, are there differences in teaching evaluations from students or peers?
 - What is the teaching load of the faculty member?
- Service obligations of the faculty members
 - Are there differences in the amount of service activities or in the time-intensive nature of the service activities?
- Evaluation of teaching results (peer-review/SRT)

Other Information needed for SERC reviews:

- SERCs should review the merit criteria for each of their units before beginning their review of faculty salaries.. See appendix I, “Information Gathering Template” (Note: Many SERCs completed these surveys for their units during 2013 process and should be reviewed before implementing a new survey).
- Access to updated CVs and annual faculty activity reports for faculty in its college. Note that in some cases, CVs and faculty activity reports will be available from a college-wide repository but in other colleges, departments are the repositories for their own faculty
- Access to statements of current departmental/collegiate standards and criteria guidelines for awarding annual merit increases (See: Information Gathering Template). The merit guidelines statements for each department will inform the SERC about the priorities placed on different types of accomplishments in each department and should be obtainable from the department chair/head’s office.

DELIVERABLES TO THE DEAN

The task of the SERC is to make recommendations to the dean of its college regarding whether or not a faculty member’s salary, in their judgment, requires adjustment. The SERC does not, however, have the authority to make decisions regarding whether any particular faculty member receives an adjustment.

In their reports to their respective dean, SERCs should indicate who was reviewed, who was recommended for further review by the dean and why, and who was not recommended for further review and why.