

COVID Equity in Faculty Evaluations Task Force

Tenured and Tenure-Track Guidelines for Candidates and Evaluators

What are the COVID Equity in Faculty Evaluations Guidelines for?

These guidelines are for tenured and tenure-track faculty members and evaluators as they prepare their Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) files (candidates) and prepare to evaluate the files (evaluators). The Task Force will create a separate set of guidelines for lecturer candidates in the Fall semester, prior to the start of the lecturer evaluation period which is initiated in the spring.

The COVID pandemic and its fallout have exposed structural inequities across the United States, and institutions of higher education are no exception. CSULB faculty members have been impacted in disparate ways, and some face potential long-term negative impacts to their career trajectories, particularly if they have not yet reached Full Professor status. A simple example of disproportionate impact may help to illustrate this problem: imagine an early career faculty member who is within one to two years of completing a major research project that is essential to a successful tenure bid. This person has completed their research and now needs time to write, edit, and publish the results. If this person had no, or no, additional caregiving responsibilities from March 2020 on, they may have found they had the same amount of time available to dedicate to writing, or even more writing time, as many typical activities were no longer available. However, if this faculty member was the primary caregiver to children, elderly family members, and/or sick family members, this person may have been responsible for things like providing full-time childcare, homeschooling children, supervising online school, managing doctor visits, and providing direct care on top of their instruction & instructionally related activities, RSCA, and service duties for CSULB.

Please note that these guidelines are separate from (though complementary to) the optional COVID Impact Statement. Candidates may choose to discuss the impact of COVID in their narrative, or in their optional COVID Impact Statement, or both -- or they may choose not to discuss the impact of pandemic at all. These guidelines are not official University policy, and they do not replace or alter RTP policies. They are simply a tool that highlights promising practices for preparing and evaluating files in light of the pandemic. They are based on the collaboration of Task Force members from across the University, as well as extensive research into how faculty members around the country have been impacted by the COVID pandemic.

What is the COVID Equity in Faculty Evaluations Task Force?

The COVID Equity in Faculty Evaluations Task Force is comprised of [a diverse group of tenured, tenure-track and lecturer faculty representatives](#) from each College, the University Library, and Counseling and Psychological Services (Division of Student Affairs), as well as several administrators, The Office of Faculty Affairs, and the California Faculty Association (CFA). The Task Force is charged with developing campus-wide guidelines for advancing equity in the RTP/Evaluation process during the pandemic and in the period following the pandemic. The Task Force also has plans to conduct a series of workshops across campus in the 21-22 academic year. Please note that while the Task Force was created by Academic Senate in Spring 2021 with support of the Provost and the CFA, it does not write or revise University policy and can only suggest promising practices.

Why do we need special guidelines to ensure equity in the RTP/Evaluation process during the pandemic and in the period following the pandemic?

Our hope is that the guidelines will lead to more equitable RTP/Evaluation outcomes, helping us to sustain and increase the diverse body of faculty members that we, our community, and our students need. Faculty members across the university were impacted by the pandemic. Many experienced increased workload and stress. In particular, the pandemic also exacerbated existing structural inequalities among diverse faculty. CSU-wide data show that the greatest numbers of historically underrepresented faculty and women faculty -- some of the groups most impacted by the structural barriers posed by COVID and its fallout -- are currently at the Assistant and/or Associate levels. Some of these faculty members are caregivers, others may have been sick themselves, or cared for family members who fell ill. Others were more vulnerable to COVID or its fallout due to pre-existing physical or mental health conditions. Faculty members of color are more likely to come from communities disproportionately affected by the COVID pandemic and face a higher demand for informal student mentoring and uncompensated service responsibilities as a representative of their identity group (cultural taxation). Faculty members without additional responsibilities at home may have been asked to take on more work to cover for colleagues who were unable to complete their normal duties. Moreover, the impact of the COVID pandemic on faculty members likely varied by discipline and even scholarly focus. RTP decisions can affect not only a faculty member's chances at tenure and promotion, but also their related supplemental salary increases and their subsequent financial well-being. For these reasons, guidelines for how to document and assess the impact on faculty work are essential.

What is equity and why is it important in faculty evaluations?

These guidelines are designed to promote a more equitable review process in the wake of the unforeseeable circumstances brought on by the COVID pandemic. Equity is a principle and practice that centers well-being, fairness, and justice. It is different from the notion of equality, which focuses on giving the same help to all groups, regardless of their need. Adopting an equity lens assists us in focusing on the groups that have faced structural obstacles and systemic inequities that have and continue to produce historical marginalization and disadvantage. For example: extensive scholarly research has shown that bias impacts student evaluations of teaching, with lower SPOT scores reported for women faculty, international faculty, LGBTQI faculty, and faculty of color, particularly with online teaching. To interpret SPOT scores more equitably, an evaluator may consult the candidate's RTP documents to see if there are other instruments that evaluate teaching more holistically, including pedagogical innovation, assignments, and/or peer review of teaching.

How can/should candidates address the impact of the COVID pandemic in their RTP files?

These guidelines are designed to help candidates prepare their RTP narratives if they would like to discuss the impact of the COVID pandemic therein. They may also use these guidelines to help them formulate their COVID Impact Statement if they choose to include one. It is up to candidates to decide if they want to address the COVID pandemic in their narrative, or their impact statement, or in both. *Disclaimer: all candidates should follow RTP guidelines for their departments and colleges, are welcome to prepare a narrative in the format they find most useful (including bulletpoints and tables, if desired), and are advised to consult with their Department Chair for best practices and advice.*

What kind of evidence should be provided to support any claims about the impact of the COVID pandemic on the faculty member's career?

In the RTP process, it is up to candidates to select the strongest possible evidence to support their files. Evidence that can help to document the impact of the COVID pandemic may include items such as emails asking for/granting extensions or documenting delays in reviewing times; emails documenting the cancellation of performances, talks, conferences, etc.; syllabi or assignments before/during the COVID pandemic, and many others. Please also note there will inevitably be other situations where it might not be possible to provide

evidence (e.g., of additional caretaking duties). In those instances, we encourage candidates to be as specific as possible about the impact.

If a candidate chooses to report on how they experienced the pandemic’s impact and this reveals personal information, how will that information be used?

When candidates choose to disclose personal information, it may provide context that may help evaluators to understand their file. However, evaluators are bound by university policy to evaluate candidates by ascertaining whether candidates met standards as outlined in official Department, College, and University RTP policies. Regardless of personal information that may be volunteered in the narrative or COVID Impact Statement, evaluation is not based on personal information or circumstances.

Furthermore, if information provided in the faculty candidate’s COVID Impact Statement or RTP narrative reveals a protected status as listed below, the candidate should be aware of the CSULB policy to provide programs, services, and benefits, including employment without regard to race, religion, color, ancestry, ethnicity, gender/gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, and protected veteran status, consistent with federal and state mandates. Allegations of discrimination may be reported to the Office of Equity and Diversity and/or the California Faculty Association (CFA).

How should evaluating committees use these guidelines?

Evaluators cannot nullify the stated expectations in Department and College RTP documents. However, evaluators can reasonably interpret these documents with a more flexible and compassionate approach. One approach could be to assess a candidate’s achievements relative to available opportunities, i.e., if a candidate explains the pandemic and its fallout limited their opportunities for research/publications/performances, how did the candidate negotiate that change? Evaluators may also wish to pay special attention to the time displacement the pandemic imposed on faculty members, given the additional workload of converting classes to online format; caring for children who were not able to attend school or care centers; the impossibility of conducting research and/or research travel, etc. Evaluators may also wish to look more holistically at a candidate’s file, assessing their trajectory prior to the pandemic to help them understand job performance afterwards. This approach may be particularly helpful with SPOT scores and research output, in some cases. Evaluators and evaluating committees who find a record of research that was extremely strong but then suddenly dropped off may want to recognize the likelihood that the barriers to job performance may have been caused by the COVID pandemic.

If evaluators find a faculty member voluntarily discloses anything in their RTP documents that pertains to their personal circumstances (sickness, caregiving, pre-existing conditions, single parenthood, loss of spousal income, death of a loved one during the pandemic, etc.), how should evaluators treat that information?

The evaluator may take into consideration the extenuating personal circumstances voluntarily self-disclosed by candidate, but this should not be a factor in the evaluator’s overall assessment. Based on federal and state laws, evaluators may not include verbal nor written information regarding a candidate’s protected status (race, age, medical condition, disability, etc.). Consultation with the Office of Equity & Diversity is strongly recommended if questions arise. Evaluators should balance these factors equitably, since not all faculty members may choose to self-disclose.

How should candidates who selected a tenure extension because of the pandemic be evaluated once they return to the evaluation cycle?

Faculty members who chose to take a tenure extension should not be evaluated differently in any way. They should not be held to higher standards. Neither should any extensions taken have any bearing on the faculty member’s supplemental salary increase recommendations.

Please note that an extension of the probationary period is not the same as “stopping the clock,” with the primary difference being how many years of work are considered when making the tenure and promotion decision.

- A one-year **extension** means that the probationary period is seven years long rather than six years long, that the tenure decision is made during the seventh year and not the sixth year, that the cumulative record over seven years rather than six years is considered, and that any application for tenure and promotion made prior to the seventh year is considered early.
- A one year **stop in the clock** also means the probationary period is seven years long, that the tenure decision is made in the seventh year, but only work completed in a six of the years is considered – work completed in the year in which the clock was stopped is not considered, and that any application for tenure and promotion made prior to the seventh year is considered early.

How should evaluators consider the files of faculty members who took advantage of the university-offered Family Medical Leave made available in Fall 2020?

Faculty members who chose to use this program should not be evaluated differently in any way. They should not be held to higher standards. The time for which they were on family leave should not be considered in terms of instruction and instructionally related activities, research, or service. Neither should any such leaves taken have any bearing on the faculty member’s supplemental salary increase recommendations.

Evaluators should refrain from commenting on whether a faculty member utilized disability or medical leave due to their own or family member's leave. Evaluators should be mindful that some candidates may voluntarily self-disclose personal impacts or may choose to refrain from self-disclosing any personal impacts during their evaluation cycle.

Below, please find prompts the COVID Equity in Faculty Evaluations Task Force has created for candidates and committees to consider in each of the three areas of evaluation: Instruction and Instructionally Related Activities, RSCA, and Service. Not all prompts will apply to all candidates, and this list is not comprehensive.

Instruction and Instructionally Related Activities Questions*

The Candidate should consider addressing:

Changes in Departmental Responsibilities

Any additional workload taken on to cover for what other members of the department would normally have done. For example: did a faculty member suddenly find themselves needing to take on new administrative work, such as becoming department chair or a graduate advisor? Did a faculty member offer to help others with fewer technical skills to manage the conversion to online instruction, etc.?

Changes in responsibilities for advising and/or mentoring student research and theses, and/or Honors and graduate students change due to the pandemic.

New or different teaching preparations. Did the candidate assume any of these voluntarily to better suit departmental need or availability of teaching materials?

Changes in departmental advising responsibilities or workload. Note formal changes as well as additional mentoring/advising that may have happened.

The Effort to Convert Courses to AMI/Online Format

The number of courses converted to AMI (Alternative Modes of Instruction/Online) modalities during

the pandemic. How quickly was the candidate forced to do so? How much time and what type of effort did this require?

In the migration, how substantially the course materials and strategies changed. Candidates may wish to discuss any new assignments, new lectures, addition of group work, more one-on-one meetings, new readings, etc. If possible, it may be helpful to give a quantifiable amount of estimated extra work hours this created.

The need to learn new programs or platforms to migrate coursework online. How much time was spent doing this?

Changes in Instructor-Student Interactions

While teaching or undertaking official advising, any increase in student need for emotional or psychological support

Any disproportionately large number of cases of academic dishonesty compared to pre-COVID time. What measures did the candidate need to take to report the cases? If possible, it may be helpful to give a quantifiable amount of estimated extra work hours/days this created.

Low or lower than usual Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) scores during the pandemic.

How being a member of a group (or groups) typically subjected to bias (woman, person of color, LGBTQI, disabled, or otherwise part of an underrepresented group) typically subjected to student bias on evaluation may have impacted the candidate's student evaluations. Disclosure of any such information is purely voluntary.

Structural Impacts on Instruction and Instructionally Related Activities

The impact of working in a different environment on student evaluations or their work performance in any way. For example: working from home. Disclosure of any such information is purely voluntary.

How any technological or supply issues that impeded their ability to work effectively and quickly. For example: Lack of internet or slow internet at home; sharing internet with homeschooled children and/or partners who were also working from home; lack of software/hardware i.e., computer, laptop, printer, whiteboard, etc.; delay in receiving equipment loaned from the University, etc.

What resources, if any, were received from the candidate's department and/or the university. If no campus resources were allocated to the candidate, what additional measures did the candidate need to take to continue working effectively (e.g., researching technological solutions on their own, purchasing their own technological solutions and/or office supplies if they were not permitted to take office supplies home from campus, etc.)?

*Note: For Counselor Faculty, the teaching section shall be understood to include the provision of clinical and other direct services as outlined in the Counseling and Psychological Services Department RTP document.

RSCA (Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity) Questions

The Candidate should consider addressing:

Impacts on Conducting and Disseminating RSCA

Loss of access to specialized spaces needed to conduct research, etc. For example: labs/clinical/healthcare settings, libraries & archives, creative & performing arts/venues, etc. If so, explain how long the disruption lasted. Also explain if it was possible to conduct this RSCA in alternate ways.

If applicable, how conducting community based RSCA in the local area was affected by the pandemic.

Any increased opportunities for RSCA during the pandemic, explaining and detailing the ways in which advantage of these opportunities was taken.

Any interruptions in plans to present RSCA at conferences, performances, shows, symposiums.

Any interruptions in plans for creative performance or exhibitions.

Loss of access to RSCA subjects (human subjects, laboratory specimens, animal subjects, etc.) due to social distancing or lab closures.

Any donation of personnel or supplies to assist medical personnel in the fight against COVID.

Any impact on scholarly or creative agenda due to lack of technology and/or access to other office supplies.

Time-Related Impacts on RSCA

How, if at all, a sabbatical, externally funded research, creative leave, or unpaid leave was interrupted by the pandemic.

Loss of RSCA time because instruction and instructionally related activities and/or service (including advising and mentoring) required more time commitment during and immediately after the pandemic. Please estimate time lost if possible.

If, as re-population began, time normally spent on RSCA was dedicated to creating new protocols in labs, or to finding alternate arrangements to conduct RSCA.

More generally, any additional time and effort spent to restart RSCA, if a restart has been possible.

Any delays encountered with Institutional Review Board/Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IRB/IACUC) approval and/or denial of review due to the pandemic.

Any delays encountered in ordering and/or receiving supplies/material/equipment necessary for RSCA.

Any delays in journal lag times and reviewer responses for books, articles, or other RSCA.

Impacts on RSCA Funding

Any effect on grant funding, fellowships, etc., including limited opportunities for such.

Grant, fellowship, creative or funding opportunities that would normally have been available to the candidate and that may have existed prior to the pandemic that became closed to them as a result of the pandemic (e.g., granting agency shut down, or made grants available only to early career faculty, etc.).

Any delays in responses from grant or funding agencies.

The need to use RSCA funds on Personal Protective Equipment or other safety measures that would have normally been spent elsewhere pre-COVID pandemic.

Impacts of Health and Family Issues on RSCA

Loss of RSCA time or opportunities to health issues exacerbated or created by the pandemic, including quarantine of themselves or a family member, following a COVID diagnosis or a possible COVID exposure.

Loss of research time due to caregiving responsibilities (for children, the disabled, the elderly) due to the pandemic and resulting closure of public services (self-disclosure of personal information is strictly

voluntary).

Impacts on RSCA Travel

The impact, if any, on conducting RSCA-related travel abroad or domestically due to the pandemic.

Limited access to RSCA travel because of visas and/or flight restrictions/travel bans due to the pandemic.

Impacts on Collaborative RSCA

Loss of access to graduate students who were trained to or planning to collaborate on RSCA projects.

Loss of access to colleagues with whom the candidate was previously collaborating in person, in labs/other RSCA spaces, in creative activities, in the field, in performances, in archives, etc.

Service Questions

The Candidate should consider addressing:

Impacts on Service Commitments

Any additional service duties that the candidate was asked to perform that they may not have been asked to perform were it not for the pandemic. What was the nature and extent of their service?

Any typical service commitments that were interrupted due to the pandemic (e.g., social distancing requirements prohibited meeting with community groups in person, etc.). Detail how and when this happened.

Any shift in service due to pressing issues created by the pandemic that aligned with their own academic expertise and networks (e.g., racial and social justice education, healthcare and access, etc.).

If and how, service was impacted differently if more time was taken up by instruction and instructionally related activities, mentoring, and advising.

Additional Mentoring Responsibilities

Any voluntary shift to informally mentoring students and/or other faculty members with technology because of the conversion to online format.

Any additional mentoring roles Associate and Full Professors filled to help early career faculty during the COVID pandemic. For example: an increase or new cultural/identity taxation, defined as service obligations to sit on committees, mentor students, or perform other service work to represent their identity group, even though this work is not typically compensated or fully recognized, etc.

COVID Equity in Faculty Evaluations Task Force Members

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	DEPARTMENT	COLLEGE
Berquist-Soule Co-Chair	Emily	Professor	History	CLA
Alimahomed Co-Chair	Sabrina	Associate Professor	Sociology	CLA
Russell Co-Chair	Jessica	Associate Professor	Communications	CLA
Aarons	Rhiannon	Lecturer	School of Art	COTA
Chesler	Josh	Professor	Mathematics & Statistics	CNSM
Chun	Kirstyn	Counselor Faculty	CAPS	CAPS
DeMars	Michelle	Sr. Asst. Librarian	University Library	UL
Fleming	Kirsty	AVP	Faculty Affairs	FA
Garrido-Ortega	Claire	Lecturer Faculty	Health Sciences	CHHS
Hahn	Alexander	Assistant Professor	Music	COTA
Hamada	Larisa	AVP	Equity & Diversity	OED
Haviland	Don	Chair/Professor	Educational Leadership	CED
Kang	Christine	Assistant Professor	Marketing	COB
Lounsberry	Monica	Dean	CHHS	CHHS
Richards-Tutor	Cara	Professor	School of Art	CED
Terzic	Vesna	Associate Professor	Civil Engineering & Construction Engineering Management	COE