

To: Faculty members in ARTS
From: Alexie Tcheuyap, FRSC, Dean of Arts
Date: October 1, 2026
Re: Recommendations for FPR and upcoming process

Your School Directors have been working to implement the “Recommendations for FPRs” put forth jointly by FAUW and the University (see below). I am grateful for these efforts, as I believe the results will bring greater transparency and equity to our Faculty Performance Review processes in ARTS and will help our UW colleagues to appreciate our high standards for performance recognition.

The appendix to the attached report shows that over the five years studied, ARTS overall ratings have been among the highest when compared with other Faculties. This has been noted by the Provost in our annual meeting when I present ARTS FPR results and it has been remarked on by members of the University Tenure, Promotion, and Permanence Committee when we are reviewing candidate files.

ARTS does not make use of the full range of ratings available to the extent that other Faculties do - but we would benefit from doing so. Our high standards of excellence in ARTS require that clear, fair, constructive, and celebratory feedback be provided consistently, that ratings of Satisfactory, Good, and Very Good be used when these are accurate reflections of performance, and that ratings of “Outstanding (2.0)” and anything less than “Satisfactory” (less than 1.0) are used judiciously and in alignment with School-level FPR addenda that will clearly specify what constitutes these ratings, in keeping with the “Recommendations for FPR” that are currently being implemented.

I expect that greater use of the full range of available ratings when assessing Teaching, Research, and Service will result in closer alignment of overall ratings in ARTS with other UW Faculties. It is important that this not be confused with the overall pool of merit dollars or number of Outstanding Performance Awards that will be distributed in ARTS. Each Faculty’s available pool is calculated in accordance with a formula described in section 13.3 of the [MOA](#); the pool is determined prior to FPR being carried out and is fully disbursed (alongside OPAs) across the members each year. **Any change to the average overall ratings in the Faculty does not impact the total merit dollars or number of OPAs to be awarded.**



It is also important that ARTS pool of merit dollars be distributed equitably across our six Schools. As overall ratings determine merit increases, I am committed to ensuring very little variation in average overall ratings across our Schools as a matter of financial equity.

I recognize that some members may be concerned about how the use of the full range of ratings might be viewed in the context of consideration for tenure and promotion, particularly if a lesser rating in a performance area is more reflective of recalibration of ratings usage in ARTS than actual change in performance recognition. We will work to ensure that those involved in performance review processes are aware of the context surrounding these changes and the rationale for them.

I look forward to working in concert with you, your colleagues, and School Directors to implement these changes aimed at increasing transparency, equity, and respect for performance standards in ARTS from within our Faculty and across the University.



Sent: January 20, 2026 9:26 AM

To: Chris Houser <chouser@uwaterloo.ca>; Lili Liu <lili.liu@uwaterloo.ca>; Bruce Frayne <bfrayne@uwaterloo.ca>; Jochen Koenemann <jochen@uwaterloo.ca>; Alexie Tcheuyap <atcheuyap@uwaterloo.ca>; Mary Wells <mawells@uwaterloo.ca>

Cc: Tara Charlton <tara.charlton@uwaterloo.ca>; Bonnie Bishop <b3bishop@uwaterloo.ca>; Fred Zhu <fred.zhu@uwaterloo.ca>; Mona Skuterud <mona.skuterud@uwaterloo.ca>; Kathryn MacDonald <kathryn.macdonald@uwaterloo.ca>

Subject: FPR Working Group Recommendations

This message is sent on behalf of the Faculty Relations Committee:

Dear Deans,

In February 2025, FRC struck a joint Faculty Performance Review (FPR) working group with two FRC members from FAUW and two members from the University to review current faculty performance practices and to better understand differences in Faculty Performance Ratings processes and outcomes between and within faculties with the ultimate goal of improving equity in this process across the University. Since February 1, 2025, the group has met five times and a report was submitted to FRC at its June 26, 2025 meeting and discussed at several meetings following the working group's presentation (please see the attached report for more details on the consultation process).

The report highlighted the role and activities of the working group, and presented: 1) an analysis of FPR data for all faculties 2) a summary of survey responses from Chairs and Directors from all faculties, and 3) a discussion of defining the term "satisfactory" in Teaching/Research/Service, which should correspond to an FPR score of 1 according to the MOA Article 13.5.3.

Attached are a set of recommendations put forth jointly by FAUW and the University as an outcome of the FPR Working Group's report and presentation. These recommendations have been endorsed unanimously by FRC. We would encourage you to pass on these recommendations to your Chairs/Directors in preparation of next year's FPR process (for the 2025-2027 full biennial FPR process cycle), and we would be happy to meet with you, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tom Duever

Interim Vice President Academic and Provost

David Porrecca

President, Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo

Report of FRC Working Group on Faculty Performance

The following recommendations are supported by (i) a survey of faculty performance assessment practices and (ii) analyses of merit scores across campus (all units and Faculties). These analyses included quantitative pair comparisons of merit score histograms for teaching, research and service, as well as historical trends (2020-2025) of the mean and median of the overall rating (R) by rank, unit and Faculty. Presentation of the results to FRC have been made on June 26, 2025, September 4, 2025, September 18, 2025, November 13, 2025. Representative results are included in the Appendix.

The data show that while overall R scores do not increase over time during the period investigated, the scores are generally inflated. Merit scores representing “less than satisfactory” performance (<1.0) in research, teaching or service are hardly observed, while merit scores representing “more than excellent” performance (2.0) are often observed with unreasonably high frequency. In general, merit score distributions are highly skewed to the low end. Merit score differences between faculties are more significant than differences across time, and differences between ranks are even more significant. Pair comparisons show significant differences between units in the same faculty that are difficult to explain.

All the above observations are indicative of faculty performance evaluation practices lacking clarity on how **the full spectrum of the FPR scores available (MOA Article 13.5.3) is to be interpreted and applied** - as is also suggested by the results of the survey of unit heads conducted by this FRC Working Group.

Recommendation 1:

Each Department is required to have an Addendum to their Faculty Performance Evaluation Guidelines setting out the performance expectations in the Department for scholarship, teaching and service (MoA Article 13.5.1b).

It is recommended that Faculty Performance Evaluation Guidelines explicitly require Departmental Addenda to clearly specify what constitutes less-than-satisfactory (a rating less than 1.0) and outstanding (a rating of 2.0) performances in each of scholarship, teaching and service.

The revised addenda should be submitted to the Dean by October 15, 2026, in accordance with the MOA13.5.1.b.

Recommendation 2:

Nine of the 26 departments/schools that responded to the survey conducted by the FRC Working Group on Faculty Performance indicated they differentiated between “research active” and “non-research active” tenure-stream faculty. Definitions of “research active” typically included holding research grants and supervising at least a specified number of graduate students, although variability in definitions existed. In some departments, research-active faculty have reduced teaching loads. However, the normal contractual weighting for research for tenure-stream faculty is not zero (and typically is 40%), such that faculty members are contractually obligated to be research-active.

It is recommended to discontinue the use of the terms “research active” and “non-research active” for tenure-stream faculty. In addition to Article 13.5.3 of the MoA, a faculty member’s research activity should be assessed in accordance with Faculty Guidelines and Departmental Addenda that make no reference to these terms.

Recommendation 3:

Adoption of the above two recommendations is expected to result in (i) reduction of the average merit score to 1.5 or less in each of research, teaching and service, (ii) reduction of the skewness of merit score histograms, and (iii) reduction of unwarranted variability (e.g., between ranks).

It is recommended that analysis of merit score data along the lines informing this report be carried out on a biennial basis to quantitatively assess the effect of Recommendations 1 and 2.

Appendix





