

15 January 2025

Insights

Article 21 - “Professional Activity Reports (PARs)”

February 14th is fast approaching! While we hope it brings you chocolates and flowers, 14 February 2025 is also this year’s PAR deadline. This year, many full-time Members will be required to submit their reports for review by their Chairs and/or Deans. If you are unsure about your requirement to report, please reach out to your supervisor as soon as possible.

For some new Members, this year may be their first experience with the PAR, while senior faculty will have submitted many reports. For all Members, the PAR process is important and worth understanding fully.

Where does the requirement come from?

In 2014, the FA proposed a new form of reporting more comparable to standards at other institutions. We moved away from “evaluation” reports to “activity” reports, with the primary goals of (a) enhancing mentoring and formative feedback toward professional development and career progression, rather than focusing on summative annual evaluations; (b) safeguarding the academic freedom of our members; and (c) ensuring the utmost fairness in the linkage between evaluation and the awarding of career salary increments (CDIs). Our secondary goal was to reduce the workload of Chairs and other Members, in part by reducing the frequency of reporting for Members who were tenured/continuing and/or fully promoted within their classification.

Submission of PARs at the appropriate interval is mandatory (21A.2.4) and linked to the awarding of Career Development Increments, or CDI “steps.” On the basis of the PAR, the relevant Dean, the University Librarian, or the AVP of the Division of Medical Sciences (as appropriate) will recommend the awarding of a grid step for satisfactory performance or, in rare cases, may choose to initiate a formal performance evaluation of a member (21C.1).

The “appropriate interval” is determined by the Member’s rank and is stipulated in Article 21A.1. Tenure-track Faculty Members, Probationary Senior Instructors, Probationary Senior Lab Instructors, Probationary Librarian Members and Full-time Term Members submit *annual* PARs. Tenured Faculty Members, Continuing Senior Instructors, Continuing Senior Lab Instructors, and Continuing Librarian Members submit PARs *every two years*. Finally, Tenured Full Professors, Continuing Senior Instructors III, Continuing Senior Laboratory Instructors IV, and Continuing Librarians IV submit PARs *every three years*.



However, the reporting interval is fixed and applies to everyone in a given rank. For example, consider the case of a Tenure-Track Faculty Member or Probationary Librarian Member who reports in January of an odd-numbered year and is tenured or granted continuing status later that year. The Member will have to report the following year despite now being required to report only biennially. That is because even-numbered years are reporting years for ALL individuals in the Tenured Faculty Member and Continuing Librarian Member category, except for those who have received their final promotion. It may sound complicated, but the simple rule is that you report with the rest of those in your current rank, and you must report on the fixed schedule circulated every January. If you have any questions about your reporting schedule, once again, consult with your supervisor.

The PAR process, as it now stands after several more rounds of bargaining, provides opportunities for feedback, mentoring, and recognition at career-stage-appropriate intervals (one, two, or three years, depending on rank), strengthening the career progress of Members and ensuring mentoring and academic freedom.

What is the process?

The PAR process is governed by Articles 21A, B, and C of the Collective Agreement. They provide the following guidelines:

- Members report to their immediate supervisors by the second Friday in February (14 February this year). The contents of the report vary by category. Corresponding requirements can be found in Article 21A.5 (Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty Members); 21A.6 (Full-Time Term Instructors); 21A.7 (Senior Instructors); 21A.8 (Senior Laboratory Instructors; and 21A.9 (Librarian Members). Program Chairs also have additional reporting requirements, covered under 21A.10. The Collective Agreement requires reporting in particular category and stipulates information that *must* be included. Each Member, regardless of job classification, *may* include additional material if so desired.
- After the submission of the report, the supervisor reviews the PAR and, by 15 March, provides draft formative feedback to the Member. Thereafter, the Member and the supervisor meet to discuss the feedback. After the meeting and by 30 April, the supervisor provides the final formative feedback (modified where appropriate based on discussions in the meeting) to the Member. Both parties sign it, and it is then submitted to the relevant Dean (except in the case of Librarian Members and Chairs—please review 21A.14 or 21A.15 if you are in one of these categories). A Member’s signing the formative feedback indicates that the Member has read it. A signature does not indicate agreement with the contents; indeed, if a Member disagrees with the feedback, the Member may submit a rebuttal memorandum, which will be forwarded to the next step and entered into the Member’s Official Personnel File (OPF) along with the feedback and Dean’s (or equivalent) evaluation.
- The final step is the decision to award a Career Development Increment (CDI) for satisfactory progress. This is a holistic appraisal by the Dean (or equivalent) based on activities across all assigned duties and responsibilities. The Dean will send each Member an assessment by 15 May. The vast majority of Members will be evaluated as satisfactory; any Member who is denied a CDI is encouraged to discuss the process with the Faculty Association.

How does the PAR process relate to Continuing Appointment/Tenure and Promotion?

One of the key goals of the PAR process (see 21A.11.1) is to provide “evidence for promotion and tenure/continuance deliberations.” Therefore, at each application for Continuing Appointment, Tenure, and/or Promotion, it is mandatory to include PARs in the application package.



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For this reason, one of the requirements for formative feedback stipulates that it must include “**comment on progression** to Tenure and promotion for Faculty or to Continuing and promotion appointments for SIs, SLIs or Librarian Members” (emphasis added). This includes the requirement to “comment on the Member’s objectives for the coming review period where appropriate” (21A.12.2[a]). That is, the supervisor should comment on whether the Member’s stated objectives are in keeping with timely career progression. In addition, the formative feedback should include “comments and suggestions to assist the Member in their assigned duties leading to **successful career progression**” (emphasis added, 21A.12.2[b]). Members who have not achieved Tenured/Continuing status and/or their final promotion in rank should ensure that comments on progression appear in the formative feedback and are clear enough to guide Members in the period to follow.

The PAR process comes at a busy time of year, and reporting can be an onerous requirement. However, PARs are also an important opportunity for career reflection, recognition, and mentoring. If you have any questions about the PAR process, discuss them with your supervisor or the Faculty Association. And Happy Valentine’s Day!

