

**Tenure Track and Professional Track Faculty Merit Review Plan**  
**University of Maryland Extension College of Agriculture and Natural**  
**Resources University of Maryland, College Park (2023-2027)**

- A. University of Maryland Extension (UME) is a Department of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR). UME faculty are located at College Park, field offices, and regional research centers, throughout the state of Maryland to conduct applied research and implement extension programs for the disciplines of 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Food Systems, Environment and Natural Resources, and Family & Consumer Sciences. All Tenure Track and Professional Track faculty members of UME (herein referred to as UME Faculty) are eligible for merit consideration serving in the Agent, Agent Associate and Faculty Specialist ranks. The "Department Chair" of University of Maryland Extension is the Associate Dean/Associate Extension Director of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. UME has chosen to integrate all faculty into one merit pay distribution plan with one Merit Review Committee.
- B. Merit pay is, by definition, distinct from cost of living adjustments and promotion increases (Per 1.C from The University merit pay policy). Up to 10% of the money from the faculty merit pool may be reserved for the UME Department Chair's discretionary use to address special salary inequities or meritorious awards for superlative achievement or exemplary department service. The remaining funds in the merit pool will be awarded to the faculty members in a manner based upon recommendation of the Committee of Merit Pay Review as delivered to the UME Department Chair.
- C. Merit pay will be considered for UME Faculty, based on a percentage of the total faculty salary pool, regardless of funding source. UME recognizes faculty who receive funding from sources other than the state (i.e., county/city dollars, grants, federal funds) are not automatically calculated in the merit pool given by the state to UME, and UME cannot require external funding sources to provide merit dollars. Faculty paid solely with grant dollars, county/city dollars, or federal funds would not automatically be a part of the state-funded merit pool. The granting agency or county/city funder would have to be willing to provide merit money. If provided, the faculty member would then be treated the same as state funded faculty in the merit review process. Faculty can include salary increase projections into grant proposals, or this may be addressed under special consideration by the Dean. UME will be responsible for finding funds to cover

(permanently or temporarily) merit pay for UME Faculty who receive funding from sources other than the state.

- D. Per consultation with HR and OFA, Professional Track faculty or non-exempt staff who transition to a tenure track or professional track faculty position will be considered for merit pay on a case by case basis.
- E. The purpose of the merit pay committee is to provide faculty involvement in the overall merit pay allocation process and provide faculty input in the development and structure of the AFR policy. The Merit Pay Committee will be composed of 11 UME faculty members. The members of the Committee of Merit Pay Review will be elected by a majority vote of the UME faculty. Tenure Track faculty will vote on Tenure Track committee members. Professional Track Faculty will vote on Professional Track committee members. The committee will comprise one Tenure Track and one Professional Track person from each discipline to assure representation from each discipline (4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Food Systems, Environment and Natural Resources, Family & Consumer Sciences and SNAP ED). The Committee will be composed of faculty from across the State, and representative of gender, race and ethnicity diversity within the organization. Additionally, there will be two At Large members who are appointed by the UME Department Chair.

The process for election of committee members will be as follows:

1. Open committee member nominations are provided to the UME Department Chair in January.
2. UME Department Chair approves a slate for election.
3. UME faculty vote by secret ballot and elect the committee members in February. Voting will be conducted electronically.
4. When needed, the committee will vote on a Chair-elect in March. With the Chair-elect becoming the new Chair of the committee when the current Chair's term on the committee is over.
5. Members serve for 3 years with their terms beginning in March; at which time, members of the committee will appoint a committee chair for the ensuing review year. The member terms will be staggered with approximately one-third of the committee changing each year. To assure that all program areas are represented equally, empty positions can be filled by appointment from previously nominated committee candidates. If none are available, others can be appointed by

recommendation of the program area leader. Appointees are to serve until new members are elected by the majority of the faculty.

6. A committee member can only serve two consecutive terms. After sitting out at least one term, the faculty member could then be eligible to serve another term or two consecutive terms.
  7. Committee members will meet at least twice a year in May and November, to review the plan, even when there is no merit pay..
- F. The UME Department Chair will meet with the Merit Review Committee in the beginning of November of each year to review the merit and evaluation process, in order to initiate changes, adjustments, and improvements as directed by the committee. The Department Chair will include the most current "Faculty Evaluation Consideration for Annual Ratings" in email correspondence to all faculty along with information pertaining to the annual performance evaluation, goal setting expectations and timelines at the beginning of each fiscal year.
- G. All UME Faculty will be reviewed annually based on the current UME AFR process and will be given a performance ranking of "Exceeds Expectations", "Job Well Done" or "Needs Improvement." The responsibilities of the merit pay committee include:
- Involvement in the discussion and development of changes in the AFR Rubric.
  - Committee will review UME's AFR process and make recommendations on any policy and process changes including sources of input on faculty performance.
- H. The Committee of Merit Pay Review will use the faculty member's performance rankings as determined in Section G from at least the most recent three years to determine an overall ranking for possible merit increases. The annual merit pay committee will determine a formula for merit pay distribution. Examples of potential merit pay distribution formulas may be found in [Appendix X](#). Merit pay will be distributed in dollar increments rather than as a percentage of salary per [University of Maryland Policy on Faculty Merit Pay Distribution](#).
- I. After determining the committee's final faculty merit formula at the November meeting, the Chair of the Committee of Merit Pay Review will convey the formula to the UME Department Chair for review and implementation.

- J. When merit pay is being awarded by campus, the UME Department Chair assumes the following responsibilities:
1. Report to the Committee of Merit Pay Review their final salary recommendation decision (Per III.D.1.e. from the University policy). This report should contain:
    - i. percentage of merit pay reserved by administration and its use,
    - ii. the calculation of the total salary and merit pool,
    - iii. the calculation of the "X" merit pay factor,
    - iv. this report should be anonymous and not include individual salary or merit pay awarded.
  2. Certify that the Committee of Merit Pay Review has followed the department's plan or indicate areas where they have deviated from the plan with a rationale.
  3. Send a letter of notification to each faculty member of merit pay being awarded/not awarded containing:
    - i. the "X" merit pay factor including their merit pay allocation,
    - ii. the faculty member's calculated evaluation rating,
    - iii. notification of the right to request a meeting with the department chair, and
    - iv. notification that the decision may be appealed and the appeal process.
  4. Review the makeup of the Committee of Merit Pay Review over the previous three years to assure that a reasonable representation of faculty diversity has been achieved and if it has not, take appropriate action to rectify the situation; and
  5. Evaluate the salary structure of the department and consult with the appropriate administrators (Dean or the Provost) to address salary compression or salary inequities that have developed in the unit. Share an anonymous report at the end of each fiscal year of these findings on salary compression and inequities with the merit pay committee (Per III.D.3. from the University policy).
- K. Within 10 business days of receiving the letter of notification of their merit pay allocation, any UME Faculty member may request an appeal of their merit pay allocation by submitting a letter to the UME Department Chair. The letter must specify the faculty member's basis for appealing. The appeal will be reviewed by the UME Appeals Committee that will be composed of the UME Department Chair, the UME Director of Human Resources, a Program leader

other than the one primarily responsible for that individual's evaluation, a faculty member not of the Committee of Merit Pay Review, and the Chair of the Committee of Merit Pay Review or designee. A decision will be rendered by a majority of the Appeals Committee and the decision of the Appeals Committee is final. The UME Department Chair will inform the faculty member in writing of the Committee's decision within one month of the receipt of the appeal letter.

- L. The committee shall submit a formalized updated Merit Pay plan no later than May 30, 2027, in accordance with University Policy VII-4.00(A), section IV.
- M. This policy is subject to all applicable University policies and individual employment contracts.

**Approved by UME faculty vote – March 2023**