



Promotion and Tenure: CODA National Standards

The present document is intended to assist Promotion and Tenure committees in assessing the unique nature of the work of the academic orchestra conductor. These guidelines are to be utilized within each institution's established P&T parameters. CODA's goal is to assist P&T Committees in understanding on what the academic orchestral conducting profession sees as the essential criteria on which those committees should base their deliberations. Areas addressed include:

- Research, scholarship, and creative activity for the academic conductor
- Pedagogical criteria for the academic conductor and how to evaluate teaching effectiveness
- Service categories for the academic conductor

While the present document endeavors to separate the evaluation into the three standard categories (Research/Scholarship/Creative Activities, Teaching, and Service), it is common for the activities of a college conductor to simultaneously penetrate multiple arenas. Therefore, certain activities might be listed under a category that would vary, depending on the institution's specific parameters.

Scholarly, Research and Creative Activities

For the college orchestra director, several considerations must be made prior to rehearsing or performing any orchestral work. The college conductor must select music that is pedagogically appropriate, has artistic merit, presents opportunity for growth and brings a meaningful contribution to the university community. *The academic concerts of the college conductor – his or her creative work - constitute and validate his research and scholarship component.*

The main research/scholarship component of the work involves:

- analysis of the historical context of the composition
- determination of aesthetic value and technical demands of the compositions relative to the player's abilities (individually and collectively)
- performance practices for each work programmed
- instrumentation requirements and an understanding of modern and period instruments

- structural analysis of each compositions with all its numerous components (melody, harmony, dynamics, instrument combinations and doublings, musical form, and more)
- preparation and publication of program notes
- practical decisions for the performance (length of the pieces in relation the entire program, technical demands, practicality of the instrumentation, costs involved such as music rental, use of soloists, and more)

The main creative component of the work is expressed through the individual interpretation achieved through performance. While the preparation for the concerts and rehearsals constitute classroom teaching, the knowledge base and interpretation constitutes both Scholarship and Creative Activities. Therefore, the quantity and quality of the performances of the student orchestra would be representative of the body of scholarly and creative work for the college conductor.

The conductor takes music represented by notes on a page, written perhaps hundreds of years ago, or music never before heard, and brings it to life. ¹

*“Singers and instrumentalists are able to look at a musical work and transform it immediately into musical sound...In contrast, conductors spend the majority of their preparation time for a performance without access to their instrument, the orchestra. Their musical and technical experimentation occurs in a vacuum...[However,] they are expected to imagine sound, colors and textures; develop a deep and true musical concept; and decide how to communicate and lead most effectively through physical gestures...from the first rehearsal, orchestra members expect a musical framework within which the composition will be performed and a consistent set of physical signals.” (Gustav Meier, *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor*)*

Guidelines for the Evaluation of Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities

1. Score analysis, historical research, and rehearsal preparation are major elements of the research component.
2. This component is enriched through the performance of choral-symphonic repertoire and opera conducting. Another important category is the exploration of contemporary music and premiere of new compositions.

College conductors are often expected to have a DMA degree, which is usually obtained through *dissertation recitals* as opposed to *written dissertations*. Similarly, the primary research component of their P & T evaluation should be centered upon preparation and performance.

¹ Two aspects of the standard orchestral repertoire included in the curricula make the assessment of the academic orchestral conductor’s work unique. First, the great majority of the literature was written for performance by professional musicians with no consideration for the limitations of student ensembles. Second, a well-known and widely available body of recordings of this repertoire by the world’s finest orchestras creates a standard against which our results with student orchestras are often compared.

3. There should be reasonable expectations as to the nature of the performances accepted (quality and quantity of performances, level of prestige of the venues and ensembles conducted).

a) It is easier and more practical for a member of the studio faculty to give a recital in an outside venue than a conductor, who needs to rehearse another ensemble in order to give a performance.

b) It is not reasonable to expect a college orchestra conductor to guest conduct major professional orchestras. It is far more likely that a college conductor's off-campus invitations will be from student, amateur, community or regional ensembles. Such performances should be considered in the orchestral conductor's portfolio in exactly the same way that they would for a choral or wind band conductor.

4. Presentations, papers and publications in the areas of musicology, theory, music review, ethnomusicology, music education, pedagogy, composition and performance areas outside the specific area of conducting should also be acceptable research.

5. Conference presentations with the student orchestra constitute a research component more specifically related to the college conductor's primary area of expertise.²

6. Other important items that may be included under the category of creative/research component of candidates for promotion and tenure are included below. These items should be separated when the performances are with the university/college orchestra and when they are with other ensembles.

a) Recordings, particularly if for commercial labels should be considered under the category of publications

b) Broadcast performances and interviews on radio, television and websites depending on the nature of these activities. For example, a concert abroad with a professional orchestra that is broadcast on national television would have an important weight.

c) Special awards and commendations. For example, the American Prize in Conducting at the Collegiate Level.

d) Participation in juries relating to the profession, when appropriate. For example, participating in the jury of a Competition for Conductors.

e) When available, concert reviews constitute appropriate evidence of the quality of research/creative activities (college orchestra concerts are rarely reviewed).



Teaching for the Academic Conductor

² In the present scenario college orchestras have fewer opportunities to participate in conferences selected through blind audition tapes in comparison with bands and choirs.

The teaching component for a college orchestra conductor is unique in many respects. The conductor/teacher needs to exercise a different kind of leadership than the classroom teacher. Every semester a conductor needs to essentially prepare, research and have ready the equivalent of an entire new course. By researching new repertoire, preparing the orchestra materials, auditioning and distributing the parts among all students, besides addressing all details for the performance of new material this constitutes the work equivalent to preparing an entire new course.

The orchestra class is unusual, in that: a) it is highly participatory, where students instead of being passive auditors take active participation in the rehearsal process; b) it requires that students remain in the same class for several semesters; c) it requires a much more strict adherence to a demanding attendance and punctuality policy; d) it requires public performances, which are very different from individual students just taking “exams” in other disciplines. Performances happen outside of and in addition to the regular meeting times for the class; e) students tend to present a wide range of proficiency in their instruments and musical interests, particularly if the ensemble includes music majors and non-majors; f) it requires daily practice on the part of the students in order not only to learn the material but also to maintain the level of performance skill (usually different from the homework for a theoretical discipline).

The traditional collegiate orchestra is rooted in the conservatory tradition as Applied/ Performance based training. Within the liberal arts setting, this expands into other behavioral and cognitive objectives such as collaboration, leadership, dialecticism, listening skills, multicultural perspectives, aesthetic philosophy, historical and literary perspectives.

Teaching excellence in the case of college orchestra conductors is a complex issue as unique as the nature of the position itself. The primary item to be measured is the college conductor’s impact on the orchestra program and appropriate weight should be given to all the multiple facets of the work, and can include:

- Growth of the orchestra program: expansion in membership and the music director’s role in accomplishing this objective
- Building the quality of the orchestra: including advancement in repertoire level and in performance quality
- Activities in other conducting-related areas: opera, ballet and choral symphonic repertoire

- Workshops and master classes held at/for other colleges, universities or conservatories
- Evidence of the Scholarship of Teaching that documents intentional efforts to improve understanding and effectiveness of pedagogy related to the various aspects of the orchestral role, and the application of that improved understanding to one's own teaching.³
- Mentoring of students, including academic advising, individual coaching, and job placement
- Student success rate: while it is not necessarily appropriate to claim credit for the achievements of all students who played in the orchestra, the success of certain students or the overall achievement of the students who performed in the orchestra should be considered an indicator of teaching excellence.
- Development of Innovative Teaching Materials and/or Rehearsal Techniques
- Curriculum Development: e.g., multidisciplinary projects with the orchestra that provide the students with unique learning experiences
- Recruiting efforts in support of the studio faculty can be placed either under teaching, or perhaps more appropriately under service



1. Use of multiple evaluative tools is highly recommended.
2. Peer evaluations prepared by other college conductors are the most reliable tools for measuring teaching excellence for college conductors.
3. Self evaluation providing the P&T committee a perspective on challenges faced within the orchestra program.
4. The preparation of a Teaching Portfolio for evaluation is beneficial. Materials may include concert recordings, videos of rehearsals, select concert programs over a period of _____

³ In certain institutions this item is considered under the category of Research. Such evidence may include items such as thoughtfully designed curricula, imaginative and thought-provoking programming that brings educational value, supporting documents that provide context for programming, design of assessment measures that document growth in student comprehension and practice of musical, collaborative and cognitive behavioral goals, and others.

years, repertoire list with performance dates, reviews if available, unsolicited letters and emails from peers and audience members addressing the quality of concerts, appropriateness of repertoire, letters from former members of the orchestra, etc.

5. Student evaluations need to be interpreted as multidimensional. The relationship of a college conductor and the members of the orchestra is unique and unlike any other ensemble.

6. Depending on each specific case and when appropriate, there are other potentially quantifiable measures of teaching effectiveness: teaching awards; ensemble awards (e.g. American Prize); ensemble participation in conferences and festivals, where the selection criteria is based on blind audition tapes; number of advisees served per semester; hours per week spent in coaching outside of rehearsals; record of recruiting, retention and placement of students, etc. Arguably some of the above items could be placed under service (student advising, recruiting, etc.)

7. Other documented evidence of teaching excellence includes:

- a) Live concert recordings of the college orchestra
- b) Documentation of the impact on the students' lives (demonstrated by unsolicited letters of appreciation from current or former students)
- c) Public recognition of teaching effectiveness (including selection to be clinician for off-campus workshops and/or conferences)
- d) Peer ratings (e.g. unsolicited letters from faculty peers and audience members)
- e) Samples of course materials (e.g. syllabus, orchestra manual, and other similar, appropriate items)



Administrative Duties

The academic conductor, as chief administrator of the orchestra program, performs tasks that are not required of the classroom or applied faculty. The breadth of administrative responsibilities for the college orchestra conductor varies from institution to institution, making it challenging to establish national standards.

Administrative duties usually constitute the bulk of the work of a college conductor, but these activities are not apparent within the highly visible presence that the position entails. These administrative activities usually are not evaluated under a separate category, so conductors need to include them under the other categories: teaching, research or service. In most instances, these administrative tasks are not even included or considered anywhere in the college conductors 'load.'

Depending on the availability of staff help, the workload of the college conductor can be quite taxing, specially considering the necessary time the conductor needs to prepare the 'new course' (new repertoire) every semester. A number of the tasks are performed during the summer, with no compensation, or outside of regular working hours.

The summary below while not exhaustive, indicates some of the most important administrative activities. Most of them are complex and require expertise and the dedication of a substantial amount of time, involving multiple steps for their successful conclusion.

- Selection of repertoire, involving the review of sometimes hundreds of scores and recordings
- Ordering/obtaining the music from publishers, including all aspects of music rental
- Maintaining and oversight of the orchestral library, and librarians
- Maintaining and managing a budget as well as dealing with various financial necessities
- Preparation of the orchestra materials for the musicians, including string bowings, creation of *ossia* passages, re-orchestrations, etc.
- Management of orchestra personnel, ranging from auditions and taking attendance at rehearsals to the assignment of orchestra parts
- Organization of and posting schedules of weekly rehearsals
- Management of equipment (chairs, stands) and instruments, including transportation for concert venues
- Venue arrangements for rehearsals and concerts
- Publicity and Marketing (flyers, concert announcements, calendars, radio, and other aspects)
- Maintaining constant communication with current and prospective students

- Preparation of concert programs, including the research and writing of program notes
- Organization of pre-concert talks and post-concert receptions
- Hiring and/or arranging of guest artists (faculty soloists or off-campus guests)
- Organization and overall administration for trips, tours, and special events
- Contract professional soloists and organize master classes
- Organization of orchestra set up and student staff (if any exist)
- Recruitment
- Organization of the Concerto Competition
- Maintenance of a network outside and inside of the university



Service for the Academic Conductor

An orchestral conductor's service takes many forms and centers on the orchestra's role on campus and the community at large. While committee work may nonetheless be expected, it should be noted that the conductor and the orchestra (and other performing arts groups) provide unique service, and this service can overlap with other areas of teaching and research, as can be attested by the examples below:

- Institutional services – supporting performances of guest artists brought to the campus by other areas of the University of Faculty colleagues, commencement ceremonies, convocations, other ceremonial occasions, memorial concerts, special programming
- Recruitment activities in support of the studio faculty
- Master classes and workshops for high school and youth groups
- Outreach activities: tours and off campus performances, children's concerts, partnerships with local schools, inclusion of community members in the ensemble (especially music educators or exceptional high school students), public lectures, *etc.*
- Adjudication at festivals or competitions

Some of the items above were addressed previously under other categories. It is the responsibility of each institution to determine under which component each activity of the orchestra conductor should be placed, considering the existence of such overlap and having in mind the present guidelines established by the College Orchestra Directors Association, the national organization for college, university and conservatory orchestra directors.