

Pamplin Expectations for Promotion and Tenure For Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty

Policy 420

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The purpose of this policy document is to provide supplemental guidance for faculty in Pamplin with respect to reviews for tenure and promotion.

Procedures

The procedures for review for promotion and tenure are outlined in the Faculty Handbook Sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.5. As specified, each case for tenure and for promotion in rank is reviewed at up to three levels—the department, the College, and the University.

The departmental review is conducted first by a departmental committee. Each department is required to have specific procedures for the formation of the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. Further review is conducted as specified in the Faculty Handbook.

Procedural Note: Each faculty member involved in the review may vote only once in the review process. In Pamplin, the department's representative to the College P&T Committee votes at the College level and thus cannot be a member of the departmental committee. He or she may attend the meetings of the departmental committee as an observer and address technical points in the case; once the committee begins its discussions of the final decision, the College P&T Committee representative should not participate further. The same constraint applies to the department head and to the representative to the University P&T Committee. In sum, while the observers are not constrained to silence, the observers should not seek to cast a "constructive" second vote by taking an overly active part in the committee's deliberations.

Rank and Tenure decisions for new hires also follow these procedures. Any decision to grant tenure to a new hire requires reviews including external letters at the department, college and university. Procedures for hiring tenured faculty can be found on the Provost's web site [[Promotion & Tenure | Faculty Affairs | Virginia Tech \(vt.edu\)](#)]. New tenure-track (untenured) hires at the associate or full professor rank require review of rank at the department and college. If the position description was open to hiring an associate or full untenured professor, the Dean's decision on rank is final.

Standards

1. Definitions

Teaching is defined as activity leading to the education of students, the application of knowledge to practical problems in that educational context, the development of teaching and other instructional materials or methodologies, the provision of academic and career advice to students including participating on thesis and dissertation committees. The results of teaching can appear in a variety of forms including but not limited to classroom teaching, one-on-one teaching, textbooks, cases, instructional software and videos, articles on instructional practice in refereed and non-refereed journals, and contributions to teaching seminars and workshops.

Research is defined as activity leading to the production of new knowledge, new insights,

creative synthesis of existing knowledge, and new methods. The results of research will most often appear as articles in peer-reviewed research journals. In some cases, they may appear as articles in non-peer reviewed research journals, chapters in books, as books, and occasionally as translational scholarship in practice-oriented journals. Research activity can also be indicated by the editorship of important research journals, presentations at academic meetings, or contributions to research seminars and workshops.

Service is defined as activities other than those defined as research or teaching that help maintain or improve the operations of a department, a program, the College as a whole, the University, or the profession. Service also includes meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations with partners outside the academic community. Examples of service include but are not limited to: Attending departmental and college faculty meetings; serving as an advisor to student organizations; participating in the promotion and review process of faculty in the department or college; reviewing manuscripts submitted to journals and academic meetings; serving on the editorial board of important research journals; serving as an appointed or elected head of any academic group at the departmental, college, or university level; serving as a leader or member of task forces or committees at the departmental, college, or university level; serving in departmental, program, or college leadership roles; serving on high profile community and government committees, task forces, and commissions; and serving as an elected or appointed officer of academic or other professional organizations.

Faculty members at all ranks are expected to demonstrate professional collegiality as part of their service obligation. Collegiality includes but is not limited to participating in meaningful and positive ways in the activities of the department, College and University, interacting with others in respectful ways, supporting the intellectual and professional development of colleagues, and acting with integrity.

Accepting service roles in a department, the College, or the University is a necessary but not sufficient condition for being judged to have demonstrated a rank-appropriate level of service. In addition, faculty members must be judged to have made appropriate contributions through their service activities. In general, making significant contributions in a few service roles will be valued more highly than making minor contributions in a large number of service roles.

2. Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

The award of tenure represents a substantial commitment by the College and University. It is therefore essential to evaluate and judge the probability that faculty members, once tenured, will continue to develop professionally and contribute to the department's academic mission at a high level for the duration of their time at the university. The Faculty Handbook Section 3.4.4 addresses university expectations for tenure and promotion. The Handbook requires general competence in teaching, research, and service, and excellence in at least one. However, in Pamplin, successful candidates for promotion to associate professor with tenure must present strong evidence of excellence in **research** and substantial achievement in teaching including a high level of general competence. In addition, candidates for promotion to associate professor with tenure must demonstrate rank appropriate service. These attainment levels are described in greater detail below:

- a. Excellence in Research: Faculty members are judged to demonstrate excellence in research when they are engaging in activities that can reasonably be expected to lead to nationally and internationally recognized excellence in research in the faculty member's discipline over the next several years. To this end, for promotion to associate professor with tenure, a faculty

member is expected to have:

- i. Published a body of work in high-quality peer-reviewed venues that contributes substantively to knowledge in the discipline and shows evidence of influence on the work of others. While no specific number of publications or pages of publications are either necessary or sufficient to demonstrate excellence, the corpus of research publication must be of enough substance to garner growing national recognition for the faculty member's program of research. With respect to publication in the College's elite journals, the College's expectations for Promotion and Tenure are explicit – publication in the College's list of elite journals is required both for promotion to associate professor with tenure and for promotion to full professor. Beyond the quantity of published works, the work is evaluated in terms of:
 - Quality as reflected in attributes such as the reputation of the publication outlets, the rigor of the peer-review process, and degree of dissemination of publication venues. Journal publications are weighted more heavily than conference proceedings, published research more than unpublished research, and original works more than edited works
 - Contribution of the research in terms of the importance of the information revealed, conceptual/theoretical sophistication, and methodological rigor
 - Influence on a line or lines of inquiry in the discipline reflected in recognition by scholars in the field of the unique contribution of the work

The significance of the research contribution to the academic discipline is a critical determinant of whether a candidate has attained the standard for promotion and tenure. The quality or ranking of the journal or other outlet in which the research is published is only one indicator of impact even though the expectation for promotion to associate professor is that the successful candidate's key work will appear in the elite journals recognized by the College. Beyond this, the candidate's publications should be concentrated in major journals recognized by the individual's academic department.

In addition, the evaluation of the candidate's research portfolio involves a forecast of future development. As such, the pattern and timing of publications, including recent work conducted and published while a Virginia Tech faculty member, and the level of intellectual development and accomplishment represented in the published research are all critical elements of the evaluation.

The case for promotion and tenure should address how the body of work developed to date clearly supports the forecast of future productivity and scholarly development.

- ii. Developed a growing national/international scholarly reputation in his or her discipline. Examples of evidence include external evaluations, invitations to present at recognized prestigious forums, invitations to review research papers, and a trend of positive citations in other researchers' publications.

This standard recognizes that the faculty member must, through his or her research, be making significant scholarly contributions. One measure of this standard is how the faculty member's scholarly contributions compare to those for similarly positioned

colleagues in the faculty member's discipline who receive tenure at peer institutions. The specific types of evidence critical to this standard may vary by department. However, 2nd and 4th year reviews should provide explicit guidance and feedback on the faculty member's progress toward meeting this standard.

While the faculty member's publications may be outgrowths of the Ph.D. dissertation or other work initiated with the Ph.D. supervisor or post-doctoral mentor, there should be publications that show the candidate's further intellectual growth and research leadership. If the bulk of the faculty member's research is published jointly with senior and more established scholars, it is particularly important that there be evidence of the faculty member's important original contributions.

Chairing or co-chairing a Ph.D. student's committee can also show the capacity to teach and mentor doctoral students. However, there is no expectation that all successful candidates for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure will participate as the chair or co-chair of a Ph.D. Doctoral Dissertation Committee.

- iii. Demonstrated a high degree of ethics in the conduct of research including but not limited to full and timely adherence to all regulations relevant to the research program and ethical treatment of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and collaborators
- b. Achievement in Teaching: A faculty member is judged to have demonstrated achievement in teaching when he or she demonstrates consistently good classroom teaching and appropriately contributes to department/college teaching programs. Depending on departmental needs, expected contributions may include advising of students and serving on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty members are expected to provide evidence of strong teaching performance as reflected in:
- Good student evaluations relative to the appropriate comparison set
 - Strong peer teaching evaluations that reflect the faculty member's provision of up-to-date content at an appropriate level, appropriate pedagogy including appropriate organization and presentation, treatment of students with respect and courtesy, and provision of appropriate and timely feedback to students throughout the instructional process

Beyond this baseline, possible added indicators of teaching accomplishment include:

- Continued growth in subject matter knowledge
- Creativity in the use of various modes of instruction, classroom technology, and other teaching strategies to create an optimal learning environment
- Curriculum improvement through revision or new development of courses and academic programs
- Receipt of departmental or college teaching awards
- Service as an advisor to an appropriate number of graduate students given the department's graduate student/faculty ratio and the faculty member's area(s) of

expertise

- c. Rank-Appropriate Service for Promotion to Associate Professor. Assistant professors should focus their internal service efforts on activities which may include participating constructively in faculty meetings and in a limited number of departmental and college committees and task forces.

Assistant professors should focus their external service efforts on activities that will facilitate their scholarly work, e.g. serving as a reviewer for high quality journals or academic association national or international conferences.

As is true with faculty members of other ranks, assistant professors are expected to demonstrate professional collegiality as part of their service obligation. Indicators of collegiality include interacting appropriately with students, staff and faculty members in both verbal and written communications; attending, participating in and showing respect for others in departmental meetings and research seminars; and engaging appropriately with organizations and groups outside the College and in so doing contributing positively to the reputation of the College and University.

3. Promotion to Full Professor

According to the Faculty Handbook Section 3.4.4: "Promotion to the rank of professor is contingent upon national or international recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator." In Pamplin, the following standards supplement the expectations stated in the Faculty Handbook. Promotion to the rank of professor requires continued excellence in research, including publication in the College's elite journals, along with additional considerations elaborated below. The College, in addition, requires sustained achievement in teaching and rank appropriate service.

- a. Continued Excellence in Research: Whereas the granting of tenure is based on initial demonstration of excellence in research, candidates for professor must demonstrate maturation of this excellence while at Virginia Tech in the form of an established national and international scholarly reputation in their discipline, substantial influence nationally and internationally on scholarship in their chosen area of study, sustained scholarly achievement including continued publication in elite journals as recognized by the College, and professional contributions to their discipline.

Publishing research articles in leading scholarly journals is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for demonstrating excellence in research. Excellence in research at this stage is judged in terms of the importance of the faculty member's contributions. Publishing numerous papers, even in leading journals, does not, by itself, indicate that a person has demonstrated excellence in research in a field. Nor does writing several books indicate that a faculty member has reached this status. Only if these contributions have a significant influence on scholarship in a field has the standard of excellence been met. Indicators of significant impact in research include publication of work that:

- Has successfully addressed fundamental questions in a field
- Has identified important new questions in a field

- Has helped shape the direction of research in a field
- Is known and respected by leading scholars in a field, and has influenced their thinking
- Is known and respected by leading scholars in other fields of work
- Has significantly altered management practice

Research excellence at this level also implies research leadership. This may be reflected in activities such as mentoring younger Pamplin faculty members or doctoral students, senior editorial activity for major scholarly journals, and development of research collaborations outside the department or College.

Faculty seeking promotion to full professor should demonstrate the capacity to effectively mentor doctoral students. This can be shown through chairing doctoral dissertation committees.

Serving as the principal investigator or co-principal investigator on substantial research grants could be one indicator of research excellence, particularly if the grant is obtained in a competitive process from a major government agency, corporation, or foundation. However, grants are primarily means to enable specific research projects that will ultimately result in publications. The impact of the publications, particularly those in major journals in the faculty member's field, form an important basis for evaluating the contribution of the grant to the faculty member's research attainment. Sponsored research activity may strengthen a case for promotion but does not supplant the expectations for publication, influence, and leadership outlined above for continued excellence in research.

Sustained Achievement in Teaching: A faculty member is judged to have demonstrated sustained achievement in teaching when he or she demonstrates consistently good classroom teaching, and appropriately contributes to the department and College teaching program through activities such as quality engagement in curriculum development, advising students (at any level), serving on thesis and dissertation committees, participation on program advisory and ad hoc program committees, and involvement in student recruitment and placement. As in the case of candidates for promotion and tenure, baseline evidence of sustained achievement in teaching must show:

- Good student evaluations relative to the appropriate comparison set
- Strong peer teaching evaluations that reflect the faculty member's provision of up-to-date content at an appropriate level, appropriate pedagogy including appropriate organization and presentation, treatment of students with respect and courtesy, and provision of appropriate and timely feedback to students throughout the instructional process

At this level, evidence of sustained teaching contributions should include additional accomplishment, such as:

- Continued growth in subject matter knowledge

- Creativity in the use of various modes of instruction, classroom technology, and other teaching strategies to create an optimal learning environment
 - Curriculum improvement through revision or new development of courses and academic programs
 - Receipt of departmental or college teaching awards
 - Service as an advisor to an appropriate number of graduate students given the department's graduate student/faculty ratio and the faculty member's area(s) of expertise
 - Documented efforts to sustain and improve performance in teaching
- b. Rank-appropriate Service for Promotion to Professor: Tenured faculty members are expected to engage in the full range of service activities including participating constructively in faculty meetings, serving as an advisor to student organizations, participating as departmental needs dictate in the promotion and tenure review process of faculty in their department and in the College, and serving on and providing leadership to departmental, College, and University committees and task forces.

Senior faculty members are expected to demonstrate professional collegiality as part of their service. Indicators of collegiality include appropriately interacting with students, staff and faculty members in both verbal and written communications and engaging appropriately with organizations and groups outside the college, thereby contributing positively to the reputation of the College and University.

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