

**DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER TENURE  
AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES**

**APPROVED BY FACULTY April 27, 2019**

**Introduction**

The quality of research and education in the Department of Biology is sustained through the dedicated and creative work of the faculty. Objective, systematic, and thorough appraisal of each candidate's credentials for initial and continued appointment, for promotion in academic rank, and for the granting of indefinite tenure is therefore important. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide common criteria and procedures for tenure and promotion for all faculty in the Department of Biology.

Promotions in rank and the granting of tenure are based on merit. They are never automatic or routine, and are made without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, political affiliation, or national origin. In general, promotions are awarded to recognize the level of faculty members' contributions to the missions of the department in teaching, research, advising, service, and other assignments; and in scholarship and creative activity.

Responsibility for promotion and tenure recommendations rests principally with the senior members of the faculty, unit administrators, and academic deans. Final responsibility rests with the Provost and President. Reviewers base their recommendations on carefully prepared dossiers that document and evaluate the accomplishments of each candidate measured relative to the duties of each individual. These guidelines are in addition to the guidelines already adopted by The University of Texas at Tyler and not intended to replace them.

**Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee**

The T&P committee evaluates portfolios for Tenure, Promotion, and third-year review. The Chair of the Department will assign the T&P committee for each candidate. The chair of the committee, in consultation with the committee, will write the letter that goes into the faculty member's portfolio. All tenured committee members of higher rank than the candidate seeking tenure and/or promotion will vote on decisions regarding the third-year review, tenure, and promotion for the candidate. In the event that there are less than three qualified voting members, the Department Chair will seek a committee member from outside the department.

**Pre-tenure Review**

In addition to the annual evaluation, a comprehensive review of tenure-track faculty will be conducted no later than the end of the faculty member's third year of service. The purpose of this review is to determine if the candidate is making satisfactory progress toward tenure and, if needed, recommend ways to address deficiencies. Although a faculty member may be given notice of nonrenewal of appointment at any time during the probationary period, the pre-tenure review does constitute a major assessment of the faculty member's record of achievement and progress toward tenure. The timing of the review gives chairs and faculty a substantial period of performance on which to judge achievement and gives tenure track faculty enough time before the mandatory sixth year tenure review to address areas of deficiency.

The process for this review within the department will be similar to the one described below for tenure, except for the external review. The faculty will prepare all documents in Faculty 180. The review within the department will be conducted by the Department Chair and the Departmental T&P Committee. Recommendations from both will be sent to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for review. After the completion of the third year review, the dean will forward a memorandum to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs that the review has been conducted along with a summary of the recommendations by the Department.

The result of the pre-tenure review is not a commitment to grant or to deny tenure in the future. A faculty member may receive notice of non-renewal at any time after the review regardless of the outcome of the review. Where the review concludes that progress toward tenure is unsatisfactory, non-reappointment may be warranted. In the case where non-renewal is warranted, the faculty member will be notified no later than August 31 of the third year that the appointment will not be renewed beyond the end of the fourth year. Tenure track faculty who are notified that the subsequent academic year will be the terminal year of appointment shall not be entitled to a statement of the reasons upon which the decision for such action is based. (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 31008, Section 6).

### **Guidelines for granting tenure and promotion to Associate Professor**

To be tenured, faculty must achieve a strong record in 1) teaching and 2) research/scholarship/creative activity. The faculty member further is expected to demonstrate outstanding achievement in one of these areas. The faculty member is also expected to have a satisfactory record of service to the University, profession, and/or community. In addition to demonstrating quality in these traditional areas, the candidate for tenure must also demonstrate professional collegiality.

i. *Teaching*. To qualify for tenure, faculty members must have a consistent pattern of effectiveness in teaching. Tenure will not be granted unless the candidate is deemed to be a strong teacher and demonstrates a commitment to lifelong improvement of his or her teaching skills. Thus it is vital that information concerning teaching effectiveness, gathered from multiple and flexible assessment methods, be part of the tenure review.

ii. *Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity*. The purpose of research/scholarship/creative activity is to make a substantive contribution to the body of knowledge and understanding in one's discipline. For tenure to be granted, a faculty member must have established a strong, consistent, and progressive program of research/scholarship/creative activity and must evidence a commitment to continue making contributions throughout his or her career.

iii. *Service*. To qualify for tenure, the candidate must display evidence of commitment to service to the University and to the profession and/or the civic community.

iv. *Collegiality*. U.T. Tyler defends the concept of academic freedom, which assures each faculty member the freedom to criticize and advocate changes in existing

theories, beliefs, programs, and policies, and guarantees faculty the right to support any colleague whose academic freedom is threatened. Collegiality is a professional, not personal, criterion relating to the performance of duties within a department. Collegiality should not be confused with sociability, likability or conformity to certain views. Instead collegiality addresses such issues as the faculty member's compatibility with department missions and goals, an ability and willingness to work cooperatively within the department and college, a willingness to engage in shared governance, and a high standard of professional integrity in dealing with colleagues and students on a professional and personal level.

The University subscribes to the following description of collegiality from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) statement on professional ethics:

*As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.*

The department and university are committed to educating, both on and off campus, the citizens of Texas, the nation, and the international community, and in expanding and applying knowledge. The responsibilities of individual faculty in relation to these fundamental commitments will vary and will be enumerated when the person has assumed the duties and modified with mutual agreement between the candidate and the department. Whatever the assignment, faculty in the professorial ranks will engage in appropriate scholarship, research, and other creative activity.

### ***Faculty Responsibilities***

A faculty member's responsibilities may be subdivided into the categories of teaching and advising, research, service, and other duties as assigned. In addition, faculty are expected to produce scholarly outcomes, including, but not limited to peer-reviewed journal articles. A general description of assigned duties and scholarship expectations follows. The position description may contain more specific expectations that form the basis for evaluation.

**Teaching:** The teaching of students is central to the mission of the Department of Biology and The University of Texas at Tyler. Most faculty have significant responsibilities in instruction:

- in presenting resident and online credit courses;
- in directing undergraduate and graduate research or projects, and theses, and serving on thesis committees;
- in collaborating with and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, and postdoctoral associates.

When teaching is part of the faculty assignment, effectiveness in teaching is an essential criterion for appointment or advancement. Faculty with responsibilities in instruction can be promoted and tenured only when there is clear documentation of effective performance in the teaching role. Faculty must demonstrate command of their subject matter, continuous growth in the subject field, and ability to organize material and convey it effectively to students. Other activities that provide evidence of a faculty member's particular commitment to effective teaching include:

- contribution in curricular development, including collaborative courses and programs;
- innovation in teaching strategies, including the incorporation of new technologies and approaches to learning;
- documented study of curricular and pedagogical issues, and incorporation of this information into the classroom.

Evaluation of instruction is based on a combination of systematic and on-going evaluations; tabulated responses from by students in courses taught by the candidate; and evaluation by the Chair. Where possible, evaluation is enhanced by evidence of student learning.

These forms of evaluation will be analyzed by the Departmental T&P Committee and the Department Chair to get an overall picture of a candidate's teaching. These items will be used to determine a candidate's strengths, weaknesses, and progress in teaching. Careful attention will be paid to the candidate's numerical and narrative evaluations across the curriculum, from introductory to advanced courses. After considering all the evidence provided by a candidate, the T&P Committee will determine whether the candidate's performance in teaching as being "Outstanding", "Strong", Satisfactory" or "Below Satisfactory".

**Advising:** All faculty members must also be committed to the well-being of students, both inside and outside the classroom. Effective advising helps create an environment which fosters student learning and student retention. The formal and informal advising and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students is an indispensable component of the broader educational

experience at the university. Faculty advising may take the form of assisting students in the selection of courses or careers, serving as faculty adviser with student groups, assisting learners in educational programs both on and off campus, and mentoring students. For promotion and tenure, performance in such activities must be documented and evaluated. Evidence of effective advising should be well documented and can include:

- Documentation of the number of students served and the advising or mentoring services provided;
- The innovation and creativity of the services, and their effectiveness;
- Systematic surveys of and assessments by students and former students who received these services;
- Unsolicited comments from students will be considered when signed by the student(s).

**Research:** Research is the active pursuit of new ideas and knowledge. Research may add to our theoretical understanding of an area or may focus on the improved application of existing knowledge or methods. Scholarship related research results are demonstrated by characteristics such as peer review affirmation (see below). However, there are other outcomes of research activities that could be accommodated.

All faculty are expected to participate actively in research. Although research outcomes are discipline-specific, within the life sciences, the outcomes will include the following: peer-reviewed journal articles, review articles, book chapters, books, grants/funding to support research, and mentoring of graduate students. All faculty are expected to produce scholarly works as noted above. Peer-reviewed articles are paramount in the evaluation. Review articles indicate that the author is an authority in his/her chosen field. Seeking competitive grants and contracts is an essential responsibility, and success in this endeavor - particularly when the grants are highly competitive and peer-reviewed - is a component of achievement in scholarship. Therefore, faculty are expected to apply for and obtain grant funding from local, regional, state, and national funding agencies to support their research endeavors. Faculty are also expected to recruit and mentor graduate students to prepare them for their chosen career.

*Scholarship and Creative Activity:* Scholarship and creative activity are understood to be intellectual work whose significance is validated by peers and which is communicated. More specifically, such work in its diverse forms must be based on a high level of professional expertise; must give evidence of originality; must be documented and validated as through peer review or critique; and must be communicated in appropriate ways so as to have impact on or significance for publics beyond the University, or for the discipline itself. Intellectual work in research, teaching, service, or other assignments is scholarship if it is shared with peers in journals, in formal peer-reviewed presentations at professional meetings, or in comparable peer-evaluated forums.

The research record of the candidate will be assessed annually by the Department Chair during the annual evaluation, at the third-year review by the Department Chair and the Departmental T&P Committee, and at the time of application for tenure and promotion by the Department Chair, Departmental T&P Committee, and external reviewers. Recognizing differences in sub-disciplines and in the expected pace of different

research topics, no specific guideline is set for the number of publications, presentations, or other research output necessary at the time of review for tenure and/or promotion. After considering all the evidence provided by a candidate, the T&P Committee will determine whether the candidate's performance in research as being "Outstanding", "Strong", "Satisfactory" or "Below Satisfactory".

**Service:** Faculty service is essential to the department's success in serving its central missions, and is a responsibility of all faculty. Faculty will be held accountable for that responsibility, and rewarded for their contribution according to specific expectations laid out in their position descriptions.

Faculty members perform a broad array of services that are vital to supporting and sustaining the quality and effectiveness of the department and to their disciplines (professional service). Faculty members are expected to provide service to the department, its students, clients, and programs, as collegial and constructive members of the department and the broader community. Examples include:

- Service in faculty governance;
- Service to academic and student-support units;
- Service to community and state programs;
- Mentoring students and student groups; and
- Service on department, college, and university committees.

Service to professional organizations contributes to the national and international intellectual communities of which UT Tyler is a part. The part of faculty members' service duties that draw upon their professional expertise and/or are relevant to their assignment, may be considered as a component of a faculty member's scholarship or creative activity, if the work meets the standard criteria of peer validation and dissemination. The appropriate designation of each service duty should be discussed with the individual's supervisor prior to taking on the duty.

Many faculty make important service contributions to university relations or to the community that are not directly related to their appointments. Though valuable in their own right, and ideally a responsibility of all citizens, these efforts are considered in promotion and tenure decisions only to the extent that they contribute to the mission of the University.

After considering all the evidence provided by a candidate, the T&P Committee will determine whether the candidate's performance in teaching as being "Outstanding", "Strong", "Satisfactory" or "Below Satisfactory".

**Collegiality:** U.T. Tyler defends the concept of academic freedom, which assures each faculty member the freedom to criticize and advocate changes in existing theories, beliefs, programs, and policies, and guarantees faculty the right to support any colleague whose academic freedom is threatened. Collegiality is a professional, not personal, criterion relating to the performance of duties within a department. Collegiality should not be confused with sociability, likability or conformity to certain views. Instead collegiality addresses such issues as the faculty member's compatibility with department missions and goals, an ability and willingness to work cooperatively within the department and college, a willingness to engage in shared governance, and a high standard of professional integrity in dealing with colleagues and students on a professional and personal level.

The University subscribes to the following description of collegiality from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) statement on professional ethics:  
*As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.*

### **Guidelines for Promotion to Professor**

Promotion to the rank of Professor is based upon evidence of the candidate's:

- demonstrated outstanding ability in teaching, advising, service, or other assigned duties, as evident in continuing development and sustained effectiveness in these areas, new and innovative teaching, curricular development, awards and recognition;
- outstanding distinction in scholarship, as evident in the candidate's wide recognition and significant contributions to the field or profession;
- demonstrated outstanding ability to obtain competitive and non-competitive grant funding to support research on a sustained basis;
- strong institutional and professional service, and an appropriate balance between the two.

Like tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, promotion to Full Professor is granted for achievement and not years in rank. Promotion to Professor is based on achievements above and beyond those considered for promotion to Associate Professor and/or tenure. Examples include invited review articles or book chapters, significant and sustained competitive grant funding, invitations to international and national conferences, plenary or keynote speaker invitations, peer recognition, etc. Promotion to Professor will not be considered based on credentials and achievements that are substantially similar to those that were considered for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. In other words, in order to be considered for promotion to Professor, the candidate must demonstrate achievements well beyond those demonstrated for granting of tenure – both qualitatively and quantitatively.

After considering all the evidence provided by a candidate, the T&P Committee will determine whether the candidate's performance in teaching, research, and service as being "Outstanding", "Strong", Satisfactory" or "Below Satisfactory".

### **Procedure**

The candidate wishing to be considered for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or promotion to Professor will submit a dossier according to the university stipulations no later than August 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which he/she wishes to be considered for tenure.

Because the tenure process is a collegial one, the judgment of both faculty colleagues and responsible administrators is required. There should be no recommendation regarding tenure without formal consultation with the tenured faculty of the department/school and/or college in which the faculty member will hold rank. To that end, each department/school and/or college shall adopt procedures governing the consideration of faculty member seeking tenure. At minimum, such procedures shall include the following:

1. All cases for tenure shall pass sequentially through the recommendation levels as described below.
2. Faculty eligible to vote are those with tenure in the case of a faculty member being considered for tenure. Where there are fewer than three eligible faculty in a department, the dean, in consultation with the candidate, will select eligible faculty from similar or related departments.
3. The tenured faculty of the department shall vote by secret ballot on the tenure of the faculty member being considered. The outcome of the vote and the vote count shall be recorded.
4. A college committee of tenured faculty shall vote by secret ballot on the tenure of a faculty member being considered. The outcome of the vote and the vote count shall be recorded.
5. The appropriate administrator at each level of review shall inform the faculty member in writing of the vote or recommendation before the file is sent forward to the next level.
6. No person shall serve as a voting member of any tenure committee during an academic year in which he or she is under consideration for tenure, nor shall any individual make a vote or recommendation on his or her tenure nomination.
7. Voting members shall leave the room during deliberations on a faculty member with whom they share a significant personal or professional relationship and shall abstain from voting or making a recommendation concerning that faculty member.



## External Letters

External letters of review from peers outside the University will be required for tenure-track faculty members applying for promotion and/or tenure. Guidelines for the external review process are provided in Section 3.3.5 D 6 of the Handbook of Operating Procedures. The department will adhere to these guidelines.

A recommendation for tenure must include supporting evidence that the individual's contributions have had an impact on the discipline; that is, the research/scholarship/creative activity should have made a significant contribution to candidate's discipline and be recognized by professional colleagues. To that end, the dossier for tenure of all candidates after the implementation dates described above must include a minimum of three (3) outside review letters, with a minimum of one (1) letter from the candidate's list of external reviewers.

Letters of review should be solicited from disinterested scholars of appropriate rank or stature not affiliated with U.T. Tyler who serve in the faculty member's field of training, specialty, or a closely related field. Individuals who may have a bias or perceived bias, such as dissertation committee members, co-authors, classmates, former students, research collaborators, departmental colleagues, and friends should not serve as external reviewers.

Reviewers will be nominated by the department chair and the candidate. The candidate should provide the department chair with the names of at least five (5) potential reviewers as well as a statement of their credentials and clarifying the nature of any prior contact the candidate has had with any suggested reviewer. The department chair will likewise compile a list of at least five (5) additional qualified reviewers. Chairs will also disclose their relationships with potential reviewers to the dean of the college. The final selection will be made by the dean of the college. The dean will select three (3) potential reviewers from each list (candidate and chair), resulting in a total of six (6) potential reviewers. Understanding that not all reviewers will agree to participate or that reviews will not arrive in a timely manner, the final list will contain no fewer than five names. At least two (2) reviewers must be from the candidate's list. The final list of names of external reviewers is to be kept confidential from the candidate.

The department chair shall contact the external reviewers to request their willingness to participate in the external review process. If the reviewers agree to participate, the department chair shall prepare and mail letters requesting outside reviews. Letters shall follow the standard template approved by the University. In the case where an insufficient number of reviewers are unable to participate, alternate reviewers may be selected by the dean.

Reviewers will be provided with the candidate's c.v., appropriate reprints and other representations of the candidate's scholarship, and a summary of the candidate's teaching and service responsibilities since arriving at U.T. Tyler. The contents of all outside review letters will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and University regulations. Candidates will be informed when reviews are received and may have access to them. The department chair will place all reviews into the candidate's dossier before the departmental committee begins its review. Outside letters received after the departmental committee begins its deliberations will not

be included in the review process without the approval of the dean.

The department chair shall prepare a summary of the outside review process that will be included in the candidate's dossier. This summary shall list the name, position, and organization of each person from whom evaluations were requested. For those whose letters are included in the dossier, the summary shall include relevant information about the reviewers' professional/academic qualifications for evaluating the candidate for tenure and/or promotion.

### **Tenure Process**

The institutional tenure decision-making process begins with the faculty member being considered and ends with the President. A faculty member should consult the dean regarding the timetable for the process.

#### **a. Request for Early Decision**

Faculty members may request consideration of an early tenure decision by presenting a written request to the department chair by June 1, prior to the academic year during which the tenure decision is to be made. If the Department chair makes a positive recommendation to the dean for early tenure, it must be justified with evidence that the candidate meets the written criteria established for those who apply for tenure during their sixth year of service. If the Department chair denies the faculty member's request for early tenure, the faculty member may request that the dean review the department's decision. The dean will not recommend early tenure unless the evidence of accomplishment meets the written criteria established for those who apply for tenure during their sixth year of service. There is no appeal beyond the College dean.

A denial of early tenure shall not prejudice action on tenure at the completion of the usual probationary period.

#### **b. Faculty Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all faculty to be aware of departmental, college, U. T. Tyler and U. T. System rules and regulations regarding tenure. The faculty member who is to be considered begins compiling his or her files in the summer. The documentation of professional accomplishments shall be submitted in accordance with the criteria, standards and guidelines established by the department and/or college.

At no time after the deadline for submission of the materials may additional materials to be used in the review process be placed into or withdrawn from the file without the permission of the dean.

A faculty member being reviewed may withdraw from further consideration for tenure promotion at any point in the process by submitting to the dean a written request for withdrawal. Withdrawal from consideration of tenure in the sixth year of the probation period may be done only by formal resignation, which is effective no later than the end of the subsequent, or seventh, year.

#### **c. Departmental Recommendation**

The departmental recommendation for or against tenure is the responsibility of the tenured faculty. For all cases of tenure that are reviewed at the departmental level,

there shall be a recommendation and a record of votes of faculty qualified to participate. That recommendation and vote shall be forwarded to the department chair.

d. Department Chair

The vote of the qualified faculty in the department is advisory to the department chair. After making an independent judgment on the tenure, the chair shall submit his or her recommendation and written summary to the chair of the college committee. The department chair will notify the affected faculty member if his or her recommendation differs from that of the department faculty. In cases where the chair's recommendation and that of a departmental faculty differ, the faculty may submit a dissenting report to the college committee.

e. College Committee

Committee members shall individually review the file of the faculty member being reviewed, taking into consideration the departmental criteria and guidelines for tenure. The recommendation of the members and a vote count are recorded and forwarded by the committee chair to the dean along with the file of the faculty member and the department chair's recommendation and summary.

Committee members shall leave the room during deliberations on a faculty member with whom they share a significant personal or professional relationship and shall abstain from voting on or making a recommendation concerning that faculty member.

f. Dean

The dean, after review of the faculty member's file and, if appropriate, consultation with the department faculty, department chair and college committee, prepares his or her recommendation. Before submitting the recommendation to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the dean will notify the affected faculty member of his or her recommendation and provide him or her a copy of the college committee's recommendations.

g. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

After review of all materials and consultation with the dean and any other appropriate individuals or groups, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will prepare his or her recommendation regarding tenure. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will notify the candidate of his or her recommendation. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs' recommendation, along with all previous recommendations, shall be forwarded to the President.

h. President

After review of all recommendations, the President will prepare his or her recommendation regarding tenure. The President will notify the affected faculty member of his or her recommendation and provide the candidate an opportunity, within two weeks of notice, to discuss the recommendation. Recommendations for tenure are then forwarded to the U. T. System for appropriate review and required action.

## **Periodic Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty (Post-Tenure Review)**

Annual and comprehensive periodic evaluations will be conducted as described in the UT Tyler HOP, Section 3.3.6.

### **Review**

This policy will be revisited every 5 years, and the reporting responsibility resides with the Department Chair. Last revision approved April 27, 2019.