



**College of Liberal Arts  
Department of Psychological Science  
Criteria for Tenure and Promotion**

*Background Information*

With the opening of UTRGV in September 2015 came the need for new UTRGV policies including new tenure and promotion elaborations for each department. Each department was charged with developing new tenure and promotion guidelines that are consistent with the UTRGV's aim of becoming an emerging research institution.

The following is a series of specific elaborations on the evaluative criteria and the processes for tenure and promotion in the Department of Psychological Science at the UTRGV. These policies are consistent with the UTRGV's Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP), section ADM 06-505, and the UTRGV's Division of Academic Affairs Guidelines for the Selection of External Reviewers for Faculty Promotion and Tenure, Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation of Teaching, Annual Faculty Evaluations Process and Guidelines, and Institutional Format for Faculty Review Dossier. Moreover, these departmental elaborations are in line with the UTRGV's goal of becoming an emerging research institution.

Unless specified in a candidate's offer letter, the department assumes that the probationary period for an assistant professor is six years, with evaluation based on the first five years. The department may consider a candidate's pre-UTRGV academic record at other academic institutions during its tenure and promotion evaluation if the candidate is successful in negotiating credit toward completion of the probationary service. The candidate, however, is expected to have demonstrated evidence of excellent teaching, professional activity, and service during the candidate's time at UTRGV. For the purposes of annual evaluations and/or tenure and promotion evaluations, the assistant professor will submit a dossier to the department using the format prescribed by the office of Academic Affairs and in accordance with the UTRGV's Handbook of Operating Procedures. A candidate for promotion to full professor will use the same dossier format.

As the UTRGV's academic reputation grows, the expected standard of performance for awarding tenure and promotion will increase concomitantly. When the department's tenure/promotion criteria are revised and officially adopted, the revisions will not be applicable to faculty for two full academic years unless a faculty member chooses to be governed by the revisions.

It is understood that the burden of proof that a faculty member is ready for tenure and/or promotion falls on the candidate. It is the responsibility of the candidate to assemble detailed documentation of performance outcomes that are persuasive to the individuals involved in the candidate's evaluation process.

The evaluation for granting of tenure and promotion shall be based on the faculty member's past performance and the faculty member's potential for future performance. In addition to past

meritorious accomplishments, successful candidates for tenure and promotion should demonstrate a high potential for continued excellence and effectiveness in performance.

The composition of the department's Tenure and Promotion Committees shall consist of only tenured faculty members. A Committee of the Whole, consisting of associate and full professors, shall evaluate candidates seeking tenure and promotion to the associate professor rank. A Committee of the Whole, consisting of full professors, shall evaluate candidates seeking promotion to the full professor rank.

In general, in pursuing tenure or promotion, the candidate must, at a minimum, meet established departmental expectations in teaching, professional activity, and service during her/his time at UTRGV.

### **External Review of Tenure and Promotion Candidates**

The department requires all candidates seeking tenure and promotion to be externally reviewed. In the fall semester of the year before a candidate plans to apply for promotion, the candidate, department chair, and the department's tenure and promotion committee will compile a list of at least six names to contact for external reviews of the candidate's professional achievement. These potential reviewers will be contacted during the spring semester prior to the candidate's final review year.

### **Selection of Reviewers**

1. The candidate will supply a list of five (5) potential reviewers, with brief reasons for each choice, and his/her relationship to each reviewer. The candidate may provide a list, with brief explanations, of any external peers whom (s)he prefers not to be contacted.
2. Peer reviewers, with well-established expertise in the field of the candidate, will be selected as follows:
  - a. The Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee will prepare a list of proposed reviewers. The list will include the entire list supplied by the candidate plus up to an additional four (4) potential reviewers recommended by the Tenure and Promotion Committee.
  - b. The candidate will be informed of all the names on the list and will have the opportunity to comment on them.
  - c. The Tenure and Promotion Committee, in consultation with the department chair, will select at least four (4) reviewers from that list, with at least two (2) names from the list provided by the candidate. The candidate's listing of those (s)he wishes to be excluded will normally be honored.
  - d. The names and affiliations of the reviewers selected will not be divulged to the candidate and will remain confidential.
3. The Department Chair will request written peer reviews from the selected reviewers to be placed in the candidate's dossier. External reviewers will be provided with two (2) forms to complete; one (1) for their contact information along with a brief description of their qualifications and the other for their written review. The review form will not contain any identifying information. A copy of the review letter will be included in the candidate's dossier. The reviewer's form which contains the contact information, along with the reviewer's CV will be placed in a manila envelope and included in the dossier.

4. All review levels must ensure that all identifying information/material of the external reviewers is removed from the dossier before allowing the candidate to access or review the dossier.

### **The Review Process**

The external reviewers will provide an evaluation of the candidate's achievements in the category of professional achievement only. The Department Chair will provide the external reviewers with a current curriculum vita and publications, as well as the following information about the candidate:

- a) Department tenure and promotion requirements
- b) Teaching load (i.e., class sizes, number of course preparations)
- c) Startup funding
- d) Travel support
- e) Lab space
- f) Number of university funded research assistants
- g) Service contributions
- h) Student advising

This information will be provided by the candidate and reviewed by the Tenure and Promotion Committee and Chair prior to inclusion in the external review invitation email.

External reviewers will be asked to respond to the following questions: 1) What are the candidate's strengths including any contributions and/or impact on their profession or discipline. 2) In your opinion, does the candidate demonstrate the potential for continued scholarly or creative productivity? Please support your answer with a brief description of the candidate's potential for continued scholarly or creative productivity. 3) Do you believe the candidate compares favorably to other scholars at a similar stage in their career and at similar institutions to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley? 4) Can you identify any weaknesses of the candidate?

Reviewers will send their reviews to the Department Chair. It is possible that fewer than three reviews will be received in a timely fashion. If the candidate met his or her responsibility in terms of submitting appropriate names for reviewers, the fact that fewer than three reviews are obtained can in no way be held against the candidate by internal reviewers.

Once reviews have been chosen for inclusion, the department chair will add the reviews, together with a current curriculum vita of the reviewers, to the candidate's final review dossier after the candidate has submitted that dossier to the Department Chair and before the dossier is submitted to the Tenure and Promotion Committee during the candidate's final review year.

### **The Role of the External Reviews**

The external reviews of a candidate's scholarly accomplishments are intended to be just one facet of the candidate's dossier. They are intended to provide internal reviewers with some additional insight into the candidate's record, but are not to be viewed as more significant than the internal reviews, especially those at the department level, where faculty have a richer perspective of the candidate's overall performance in terms of the three areas of review: teaching, professional achievement, and service.

The templates for email invitations to external reviewers are provided at the end of this document.

## **Evaluation Criteria for Teaching, Professional Activity, and Service**

### *Teaching*

The department is committed to maintaining high standards of teaching both inside and outside the classroom. Teaching consists of direct involvement with student learning and includes classroom instruction, individual instruction, supervision of students in research and independent study, and supervision of clinical work or other applied work. Faculty members are expected to maintain a high level of knowledge and expertise in her or his discipline and areas of knowledge and to incorporate new knowledge into courses on a continuing basis.

A candidate for tenure and/or promotion must present a record that demonstrates successful teaching. A faculty member will normally not be granted tenure or promotion without demonstrating competence and willingness to teach at both the undergraduate and graduate levels of instruction. Evaluators must provide justification for recommending tenure and/or promotion to candidates who have not taught at both levels.

In demonstrating teaching effectiveness, it is recommended that the candidate use multiple approaches to present evidence of quality teaching as teaching performance shall be evaluated holistically. Examples of approaches include faculty peer observations of teaching, teaching evaluations, student learning assessments, student observer program reports, and mentoring students' successful completion of theses and other research projects. All promotion and tenure review reports sent to The University of Texas System must show evidence of peer evaluations of teaching. All tenure-track faculty shall undergo a peer observation of teaching once per academic year; all tenured faculty must undergo a peer observation of teaching at least once every three years.

While there are multiple pathways towards teaching success, the College of Liberal Arts has established a college-wide template to help evaluators quantify the determination of whether or not a faculty member has met or exceeded teaching expectations:

**Meets Expectations:** 80% or greater AVERAGE in the agree/strongly agree categories on student evaluations or 4.0 weighted AVERAGE or better PLUS required number of Peer Teaching Observations which indicate reflection and improvement attempts for teaching as judged by those reviewing the dossier.

**Exceeds Expectations:** 90% or greater AVERAGE in the agree/strongly agree categories on student evaluations or 4.5 weighted AVERAGE or better PLUS required number of Peer Teaching Observations which indicate reflection and improvement attempts for teaching as judged by those reviewing the dossier PLUS required AND additional evidence of commitment to teaching effectively (workshops, curriculum/course design, mentoring students in research, thesis, etc.).

It should be emphasized that the 80% or the 4.0 criterion is one of multiple factors suggesting that faculty meet expectations in the area of teaching, but all documented evidence of teaching performance should be considered. It is possible for a faculty member to meet expectations in the area of teaching with students evaluation scores lower than 80% but lower scores should be addressed and contextualized in the faculty narrative and the committee and chair reviews (e.g., small classes, graduate-level classes, particularly classes for coursework in the Ph.D. program, etc.)

Other evidence of teaching activities that can be included in the candidate's dossier includes, but are not limited to, the following:

- Student learning assessment statistics
- Peer observations of teaching
- Student observer program reports
- Teaching evaluations
- Attendance at professional development workshops, webinars, or other conferences on teaching
- Obtaining appropriate teaching licenses or certifications
- Teaching grants submitted, teaching grants funded
- Development and teaching of new courses
- Development of courses to be taught bilingually or in Spanish
- Development of new curriculum materials, teaching methods, and teaching formats
- Development of new degree programs
- Integration of service learning into courses
- Course syllabi and examples of other teaching materials
- Serving as advisor for students' theses and other research projects
- Serving on students' thesis committees
- Obtaining and maintaining licensure, or certification, for purposes of teaching
- Development of substantial course related activities that involve community engagement
- College or university awards that recognize teaching
- Non-peer reviewed published textbooks and educational material
- Career mentoring
- Evidence of rigor in teaching
- Presentations about teaching at professional meetings
- Evidence that faculty has facilitated student success (e.g., contributions to students who have won awards, published papers, etc.).

### *Professional Activity (Research and Scholarship)*

Research and scholarly activities lead to the development and dissemination of new knowledge. A faculty member must provide clear evidence that she or he has actively conducted programmatic research and that this program of research has had a significant impact on the faculty member's field of expertise. Moreover, a faculty member must demonstrate that she or he has significant potential for continued high quality research performance. Candidates should describe the significance of their work with regard to its impact on humanity in general.

Although quality of research is of utmost importance, quantity certainly also plays a role in establishing a body of professional activity. Tenure and promotion candidates are expected to publish in refereed academic journals with known impact factors or other refereed outlets at a rate that is appropriate to the candidate's field of expertise. Typically, this amounts to an average of at least 1 publication per year. A significant number of a faculty member's publications should be lead-authored and/or student-authored in order to establish the candidate's ability to develop, conduct and maintain an independent research program. It is recognized that the rate of publication may vary depending upon the candidate's discipline and the type of research that the candidate conducts. For example, the top journals in some disciplines may require more than 1 study per journal article and candidates conducting intensive, group-level longitudinal research may publish less frequently than candidates who collect cross-sectional data from convenience samples.

It is further recognized that some journals are considered high-quality journals that epitomize the highest levels of research whereas other journals are acceptable but may not exhibit the rigor or contribution to the field found in the top journals. It is up to the candidate to document the quality of particular journals in which the candidate has published. It is expected that the candidate routinely publishes in journals with adequate to exceptional impact factors (i.e., impact factors of 1 or greater). To provide a frame of reference to interpret impact factor strength, according to the 2015 impact factor data for psychology journals (Journal Citations Reports, Thompson Reuters, June 2016), 85% of journals had a 1-year impact factor  $\geq 0.5$ ; 66% had an impact factor  $\geq 1$ ; 31% had an impact factor  $\geq 2$ ; 13% had an impact factor  $\geq 3$ ; 6% had an impact factor  $\geq 4$ ; 4% had an impact factor  $\geq 5$ ; 2.6% had an impact factor  $\geq 6$ ; 1.9% had an impact factor  $\geq 7$ ; 1.2% had an impact factor  $\geq 8$ ; and less than 1% had an impact factor  $> 9$ . The publishing of high quality, high impact research (as evidenced by journal impact factors and number of citations of research articles) may help the candidate offset a relatively lower level of publication output. When a candidate reports impact factors in her or his dossier, the candidate should state whether she or he is reporting 1-year or 5-year impact factors.

In order for a candidate to demonstrate that her or his professional activity effort has made a significant contribution to a field of expertise, it should have been brought into a public forum by a process that includes peer review and that results in its appearance in recognized outlets appropriate for the field (e.g., publications). Research that is completed, but not published, and articles and books in draft form are not to be used for tenure and promotion evaluation as they are private works (not yet in the public domain) that have not made a demonstrable contribution to the field. In other words, research should be published or in press.

Professional activities that are limited to routine applications of already accepted knowledge or theory are not typically considered to be contributions to the advancement of knowledge. The distinction between what is, and what is not, a contribution to the advancement of knowledge may sometimes be subtle, but the burden of proof falls on the candidate.

Faculty are expected to engage in the process of seeking grant funds from external agencies. The preparation and submission of grant proposals from outside agencies shall be considered professional activity if the grant involves research. The candidate should document the importance of the grant activity to the candidate's field of expertise. Because the preparation of

research grant submissions are often labor-intensive and time-consuming, consistent efforts toward obtaining major external grant funding may help offset a relatively lower level of publication output (especially for those efforts with indicators of quality such as grants scored and/or funded). The definition of major external grants should be considered in terms of the competitiveness of the funding agency (e.g., NIH, NSF, SAMHSA) and the quality of the application (as positively reviewed, whether or not the grant is funded), and not strictly in terms of the dollar amount.

Although professional activities are also often identified with the formal presentation of research at meetings of national, international, and regional scholarly associations, conference presentations cannot compensate for the lack of peer-reviewed publications.

The candidate for tenure and/or promotion is responsible for thoroughly documenting her or his contribution to her or his field of expertise. The impact that the candidate's professional activities have had on the field can be documented in the candidate's dossier through evidence of research activities. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Peer reviewed articles published or accepted for publication
- Impact factor of journals in which the candidate has published
- Level of citations of candidate's publications
- Candidate's h-index and i10-index
- Research grants submitted, research grants scored, and research grants awarded
- Scholarly publications and presentations related to grants awarded
- Peer reviewed book chapters
- Peer reviewed textbooks
- Published reviews of books
- Conference presentations
- Technical reports
- Generation of intellectual property such as patents and copyright material
- Evidence of local recognition of professional activities by colleagues such as university or college research awards
- Evidence of national recognition of professional activities by colleagues such as invited presentations or keynote addresses at national or international conferences; invitations to serve on positions in national and international professional organizations; being named or elected as a fellow or a member of other honorary societies; research award from professional organizations
- Research that advances the mission and vision of UTRGV to become a premier Hispanic-serving institution.

### *Professional, Institutional, and Community Service Activities*

Service activities apply and disseminate knowledge and skills for the solution of problems and the improvement of the profession, university, or the community. Tenure and promotion candidates are expected to have provided quality professional, institutional, and community service. Although service activities of various types are expected of all faculty members, they are not alone justification for awarding tenure and promotion.

Because the department encourages assistant professors to devote much of their time to research and teaching, service expectations for assistant professors will be relatively lower in comparison to service expectations for tenured faculty. Although service activities of various types are expected of all faculty members, a greater level of national service may be expected as faculty become recognized for their work. While there are multiple pathways towards meeting expectations for service, one example is a faculty member who annually serves on 1 to 2 departmental, college, or university level committees and provides service to the profession in the form of journal reviews and providing services to professional organizations.

Candidates for tenure and promotion are responsible for thoroughly documenting their service activities and the effectiveness of these service activities. Service activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Department, college, or university committee chair
- Department, college, or university committee member
- Editor or editorial board member of professional journal
- Reviewer of journal articles, grant proposals, conference submissions, and/or book chapters
- Officer or board member of professional organization in the discipline
- Service delivery grants submitted, service delivery grants funded
- Membership in professional organization
- Fund raising activities for the department, college, or university
- Community presentations and other outreach provided while in the context of providing professional expertise
- Community-engaged activities provided bilingually or in Spanish while serving in the role of UTRGV faculty
- Leadership duties within UTRGV
- Leadership or other professional duties in regional organizations and agencies while serving in the role of UTRGV faculty
- Obtaining and maintaining licensure, or certification, for purposes of providing service while serving in the role of UTRGV faculty
- Advisor to student organization
- Official mentor to new faculty member
- Chair or member of conference organizing committee
- Chair or member of professional organization committee
- Department, college, or university administrative duties
- Consultant to regional or national organizations and agencies
- Officer or board member of regional professional, health or service organizations

### **Promotion from Associate Professor to Full Professor**

To be considered for full professorship, the candidate must have displayed sustained excellence as a faculty member since being appointed an associate professor and the candidate must demonstrate a higher level of scholarly impact on the candidate's field of expertise than is required for promotion to associate professor.



According to the UTRGV's HOP, the minimum time in the associate professor rank for promotion to professor is six years, although an associate professor may apply to promotion to full professor if the candidate believes that her or his performance exceeds the criteria for promotion. Thus, promotion to professor should normally follow a period of time that will sufficiently allow the candidate to demonstrate a record that is worthy of promotion.

The teaching, professional activity, and service criteria listed in this document will be used to evaluate a candidate's promotion to full professor. Associate professors who wish to apply for promotion to full professorship must inform the department chair by June 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar in which the review process will begin.

### **External Review Email Invitation Template**

Subject: Invitation for External Review of Tenure Candidate

Dear Dr. [insert potential reviewer's name]:

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is reviewing the dossier of Dr. [insert candidate's name] for potential promotion to the rank of Associate Professor and award of tenure [or Full Professor]. I am contacting you in my role as Department Chair because you have been identified by the candidate or the tenure and promotion committee as a potential external reviewer due to your expertise in [identify subfield or research area]. I ask that you serve as an external reviewer for Dr. [insert candidates name]'s scholarly achievements.

If you agree to this request, I will send you Dr. [insert candidate's name]'s CV, copies of [his/her] recent publications, background information about Dr. [insert candidate's name] position, along with a few questions for you to address in the review.

Our external review process stipulates that external review evaluations are not presented to the candidate with the reviewer's identifying information. It also states that external reviewers must not have personal ties or be collaborators or mentors of the candidate.

Please respond to this email at your earliest convenience to indicate if you are willing to serve as an external reviewer.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

[Department Chair's contact information]

### **External Reviewer 2nd Email (Sent after invitation to review is accepted)**

Dear Dr. [insert reviewers name]:

Thank you for agreeing to review [insert candidate's name]'s scholarly work. Dr. [insert candidate's name] is being considered for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor [or Professor] at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is a Hispanic-serving institution that seeks to employ faculty who pursue excellence in teaching, research, and service. Attached you will find a copy of the candidate's tenure and/or promotion criteria, CV, scholarly work, and the review forms that we ask you to complete.

Before you begin your review, I would like to provide some additional information about our Dr. [insert candidate's name]'s position. Please review the following information about the candidate's teaching load, service commitments, and research support.

Teaching load: [number of courses per semester; typical class sizes; number of new course preps].

Startup funding: [monetary value of startup funding]

Lab space: [approximate dimensions of lab space]

Funded research assistants: [level (undergraduate, master's and duration)]

Service contributions: [indicate extent of service commitments]

Student advising: [indicate number of students advised and duration of advising responsibilities]

Once again, I thank you for agreeing to review the candidate's scholarly work. In the interest of reaching a timely decision regarding the candidate's tenure and/or promotion, I ask that you complete and attach the external review forms by [insert deadline].

Sincerely,

[Department Chair's contact information]