



College of Sciences
Department/School of Mathematics & Statistical Sciences

Tenure and Promotion Guidelines for Tenure-Track Faculty

HOP ADM 06-503 (section D.3.g.) requires colleges, schools, and departments to use this template, "Tenure and Promotion Guidelines for Tenure-Track Faculty," if those academic units choose to draft unit-specific Evaluation Guidelines. This template helps those units achieve the required alignment between their specific Evaluation Guidelines and the principles and expectations found in HOP ADM 06-503.

Principles and Expectations

UTRGV is committed to serving society through the excellence of its faculty, students, and staff. To meet UTRGV's commitment to improving the quality of life of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond, faculty members are expected to perform at the highest levels in their respective disciplines and fields, continuously striving for distinction. Every UTRGV faculty member should present a distinguished record as a scholar, educator, and colleague. UTRGV faculty must attain a successful and high-quality record of research, scholarship, or creative work that projects a clear, coherent, and independent identity as a scholar. As educators, UTRGV faculty must establish a teaching profile that demonstrates growth, impact, and student success. With the awarding of tenure and promotion to the next rank, UTRGV expects that faculty members will continue providing intellectual leadership in their research and teaching and model professionalism in all their work, including service and shared governance activities. UTRGV strives to retain tenure-track faculty who, through the performance of their duties, achieve these high standards and values with sustained commitment to professionalism and to UTRGV's mission (see HOP ADM 06-503, section C.1.)

Tenure at UTRGV is a long-term commitment and thus should be awarded only when there is a clear case that doing so is in the best interest of UTRGV. Tenure and promotion is not solely a reward for performance during the probationary period; rather, it is a deliberate act taken after comprehensive evaluation of the faculty member's past performance and potential for continued contributions of UTRGV's mission and vision (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.1.e.)

This template instructs tenure-track faculty members to structure their work and careers to meet UTRGV's principles and high expectations, and to structure their dossiers in ways that allow for rigorous, qualitative judgment during the evaluation process.¹ The dossiers of tenure-track faculty must provide clear documentation of their effort and success in the categories of performance, which include teaching, research/scholarship/creative-works, service/shared-governance, and, if applicable, university-related patient care or university-related administration (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.).

In teaching, a successful profile that documents growth, impact, and student success will include evidence of ongoing development and improvement in teaching quality, which should result in both student success and a positive and professional reputation as an educator. In research, scholarship, or creative works, documenting this achievement requires more than enumerating a list of scholarly products. Tenure-track faculty must demonstrate their achievement in ways that allow for rigorous evaluation of the quality and impact of their work by professional peers both internal and external to UTRGV. In service and shared governance, tenure-track faculty must document the outputs and outcomes of their effort, and when participating in shared governance, they must document their role in the development of policies and decision-making that affect UTRGV. If applicable, tenure-track faculty need to provide documentation of their effort and success in the categories of patient care or administration (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.4.c.).

Expectations for Teaching

As educators, tenure-track faculty must establish a teaching profile that demonstrates growth, impact, and student success. UTRGV values and holds high expectations for the quality and impact of tenure-track faculty members' teaching on student success. To that end, the categories of performance in teaching are as follows: (i) pedagogy, (ii) continued development of teaching skills, (iii) use of peer feedback in teaching, which includes compliance with [UTRGV's Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation of Teaching](#) (iv) alignment of curricular practices to student needs, (v) engagement with student learning outside the classroom, and (vi) participation in development of curricula (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.b.ii.)

Pedagogy Statement: Tenure-track faculty should be able to articulate a philosophy of teaching that communicates their approach to teaching and describes their primary goals as a teacher, advisor and mentor. The body of evidence of teaching practices provided by the faculty member should align with this philosophy. This statement must include an annual reflection on how they are adapting their teaching practices to best meet student needs and an analysis of which practices lead to student success and which practices need to improve or change.

Continued Development of Teaching Skills: Tenure-track faculty are expected to stay current with and utilize best practices in teaching and student engagement. Tenure-track faculty are encouraged to contribute to the advancement of pedagogy within their respective fields. Efforts to develop teaching skills and to keep current on content in the field demonstrate dedication to high-quality teaching. Such efforts might include attending professional development sessions on best practices in teaching, utilizing resources to gather student feedback on teaching, and attending seminars that provide updates to current knowledge and trends in their respective discipline. Tenure-track faculty may create teaching and learning scholarship, develop peer-reviewed teaching resources, design and deliver professional development trainings on teaching, and/or create other materials that contribute to advancing pedagogy in higher education.

Use of Peer Feedback on Teaching: Tenure-track faculty must obtain the requisite number of peer observations of teaching in accordance with UTRGV's [Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observations of Teaching](#). Peer observations of teaching should provide constructive feedback oriented to supporting faculty members' continuous growth in teaching. Tenure-track faculty must reflect on what they learned in this process and how they used their peers' feedback to improve their pedagogical practices.

Alignment of Curricular Practices to Student Needs: Tenure-track faculty should analyze and reflect on student outcomes regularly. This analysis and reflection should involve exploring student evaluations and feedback for patterns and using those patterns to make changes to course design, pedagogical strategy, assessment mechanisms, and other aspects of the course that best meets the learning needs of students.²

Engagement with Student Learning Outside the Classroom: This engagement may take many different forms and includes but is not limited to involving students in research and creative activities, supporting students' participation in service learning and/or community engagement activities, supervising clinical or field experiences, and/or mentoring students in career exploration and development.

Participation in Development of Curricula: While these activities might not occur every year, tenure-track faculty are expected to participate in course and program development and/or redesign to ensure curricula are reflective of current knowledge in the discipline, aligned with relevant program learning outcomes, and best meet the needs of students. Tenure-track faculty must provide syllabi and their reflection on how their course aligns with the values and expectations established here.

Expectations for Research

UTRGV faculty must attain a successful and high-quality record of research, scholarship, or creative works that projects a clear, coherent, and independent identity as a scholar. The work of tenure-track faculty in this area should lead to the advancement of knowledge and demonstrate intellectual leadership. UTRGV values and holds high expectations for the quality and productivity of tenure-track faculty in research, scholarship, and creative work. To that end, the categories of performance in research, scholarship, or creative works are as follows: (i) significance and progress toward national reputation, (ii) consistent and increasing record of accomplishment, (iii) sustainability of agenda and trajectory, (iv) scholarly independence, and (v) quality and impact (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.c.ii.).

Significance and Progress toward National Reputation: Tenure-track faculty should demonstrate achievement in research, scholarship, and/or creative work that establishes the faculty as a significant contributor to the field or profession, with potential for continued success and distinction. Tenure-track faculty should explain their reasons for choosing the venues where they publish, perform, and/or display their work and should demonstrate how the significance of their work will yield (or has yielded already) a nationally recognized research program with a coherent and focused theme. Tenure-track faculty should articulate this theme, and peers should be able to recognize the importance of the faculty member's role in developing knowledge in this area.

Consistent and Increasing Record of Accomplishment: There should be a steady increase in scholarly productivity as tenure-track faculty learn to balance their time and duties. Scholarly productivity refers to writing peer-reviewed research materials (including but not limited to books, chapters, and journal articles), participating in supplementary scholarly activities (including but not limited to participation in community- engaged scholarship, conferences, edited volumes, substantial book reviews reaching a broad audience, encyclopedia entries, blogs, and public publications, etc.), creating intellectual contributions (including but not limited to patents, inventions, and other intellectual property), displaying and/or performing of creative work, and obtaining external grant funding. Tenure-track faculty must explain gaps in productivity when those gaps exist.

Sustainability of Agenda and Trajectory: Tenure-track faculty must demonstrate that their research, scholarship, and/or creative work productivity is sustainable by documenting their ability to secure external grant funding for their research/creative-work trajectory and/or by showing the systematic accumulation of a body of work that builds from their earlier research.

Scholarly Independence: Tenure-track faculty must establish their independence as a scholar. This independence should be documented by a publication and authorship record that is separate from earlier mentors (such as dissertation committee members), by the author ordering conventions in their respective disciplines, and by thorough explanations of their contributions to co-authored publications, or other collaborative endeavors such as external grant activity. Research, scholarship, and/or creative works conducted as teams are valuable and do not undermine scholarly independence, but tenure-track faculty must demonstrate their contribution to that work and how that work has greater impact than if it was completed individually.

Quality and Impact: Tenure-track faculty must explain the quality and impact of their research, scholarship, and/or creative works to both experts and non-experts alike who will evaluate their achievements relative to expectations. Peer review is a crucial indicator of quality work. Beyond peer review, many proxies (or metrics) exist that tenure-track faculty may use as an indication of quality and impact. These proxies include but are not limited to journal impact factors, journal indices, journal acceptance rates, author citation indices (e.g., h-index), downloads/views, location or venue of the display or performance of creative work, and source of grant funding.³ UTRGV supports the responsible use of these proxies, which means that assessment of quality and impact shall not rely on any one proxy and that proxies shall not be used in place of qualitative, expert judgment.⁴ To help ensure responsible use, tenure-track faculty must not rely on these proxies as being substitutes for detailed explanations of the steps they took to produce high-quality work. Tenure-track faculty must document and explain how the significance of their work leads to disciplinary and societal impact. The documentation of impact can include but is not limited to the application of knowledge in the community and/or the use of the work in decision-making, citations, awards, and/or the use of products by others in the community, academic or otherwise (e.g., datasets, products, inventions).⁵

Selection of External Reviewers for Research, Scholarship, and/or Creative Works: External review of tenure-track faculty in research, scholarship, and/or creative work is extremely important because these external reviewers provide input into the significance, reputation, trajectory, quality, and impact of this work. Guidelines and selection procedures can be found in the [UTRGV Guidelines for the Selection of External Reviewers for Faculty Promotion and Tenure](#).

Expectations for Service and Shared Governance

UTRGV expects tenure-track faculty members to model professionalism in all their work, including service and shared governance activities. These activities are essential to the life of the university and an important component of faculty profiles. While tenure-track faculty members should make meaningful contributions in this area and should reflect on the type of service profile that they want to develop at UTRGV, this area is not a major emphasis of their duties. Tenure-track faculty members should work with their Tenure Evaluation and Advisory Committee (TEAC) and their department chairs to ensure a balance in service activities that correspond with the high expectations in the teaching and research categories. To that end, the categories of performance in service and shared governance are as follows: (i) service and student success, (ii) service to university operations and shared governance, and (iii) service to the profession and the community (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.d.ii.).

Service and Student Success: Tenure-track faculty should contribute as members, advisors, or leaders in student organizations, international experiences, and recruitment events for the university, college and/or department.

Service to University Operations and Shared Governance: Tenure-track faculty should contribute to the life of their university, college, and department by serving on committees and taskforces in a membership or leadership role, which may include curriculum, assessment, awards, hiring, and many other areas of university, college, and department operations.

Service to the Profession and the Community: Tenure-track faculty should contribute to their profession and community. They may contribute by reviewing manuscripts and/or grant proposals, writing book reviews, and/or serving in the following: professional organizations (for example, committee work and/or conference planning), agencies, non-profit community organizations, and/or advisory boards that reflect their professional expertise.

Minimum Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

Colleges, schools, and departments may draft and distribute Evaluation Guidelines articulating criteria for promotion and tenure. Criteria should address all faculty performance categories (including university-related patient care and/or university-related administration, if applicable), draw on national practices in the discipline, and align with the categories of performance described in this template and in HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3. (also see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.g.). Criteria must not be expressed in lists of requirements, but in the form of general principles or multiple comprehensive scenarios of successful cases, either actual (with the faculty member's name removed) or hypothetical. Such statements will be drafted by the dean or department chair in consultation with appropriate faculty (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.h.). Criteria are for the purpose of advising and mentoring faculty and do not substitute for or take precedent over the individualized review and decision of evaluators designated in Pathways (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.i.).

The purpose of HOP ADM 06-503, this template, and any unit-specific minimum criteria, is to make tenure recommendations with more substantial analysis than using quantitative minimums as mere thresholds for guaranteeing tenure. Minimum criteria only offer guidance to tenure-track faculty and do so without setting a threshold for achievement that guarantees tenure and promotion. As tenure-track faculty members develop, definitions of excellence and expectations for tenure and promotion should change. If a tenure-track faculty member's accomplishments do not keep pace with evolving standards of performance for tenure and promotion, then that individual may not be awarded tenure or promotion (see HOP ADM 06-503, section D.3.j.).

Any criteria referenced by HOP ADM 06-503, the [UTRGV External Reviewer Guidelines](#), or the [Peer Observation of Teaching Guidelines](#) should not be included in the Department/School/College guidelines as they are applicable as institutional requirements. The following minimum criteria are discipline-specific and uphold the institutional standards articulated in this template and in HOP ADM 06-503. Tenure-track faculty members and their evaluators should use the following minimum criteria as a guide without setting a specific (enumerated) threshold or checklist for achievement.

Endnotes

¹ These guidelines and expectations have been drafted to establish clarity and consistency in the qualitative judgments that are required in tenure decision-making. On this point, please see the report *Good Practice in Tenure Evaluation* published in 2000 by The American Council on Education, the American Association of University Professors, and the United Educators Insurance Risk Retention Group. These guidelines and expectations avoid describing the tenure decision in quantitative terms because “efforts to quantify scholarly productivity or teaching quality are problematic” and “quality must be the major criterion.” For these quotes and a general introduction to the tenure decision, please see Samuel L. Becker, et al., “Making Good Tenure Decisions,” *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration* 30 (2001), 95-103.

² Research on student evaluations of teaching is extensive and tends to confirm the bias and limited usefulness of student evaluations. For example, please see Troy Heffernan, “Sexism, Racism, Prejudice, and Bias: A Literature Review and Synthesis of Research Surrounding Student Evaluations of Courses and Teaching,” *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 47, no. 1 (2022), 144-154; and, Kerry Chávez and Kristina M.W. Mitchell, “Exploring Bias in Student Evaluations: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 53, no. 2 (2020), 270-274.

³ Research documenting the limitations of using any one of these proxies/metrics is extensive. Some proxies are not amendable to all disciplines, research, and/or publication types (e.g., journal articles versus books), and some proxies are subject to manipulation and inflation (as found with journal impact factors). For example, please see Kyle Siler and Vincent Larivière, “Who Games Metrics and Rankings? Institutional Niches and Journal Impact Factor Inflation,” *Research Policy* 51 (2022), 104608; Peter Andras, “Research: Metrics, Quality, and Management Implications,” *Research Evaluation* 20, no. 2 (2011), 90-106; Björn Hammarfelt and Alexander D. Rushforth, “Indicators as Judgment Devices: An Empirical Study of Citizen Bibliometrics in Research Evaluation,” *Research Evaluation* 26, no. 3 (2017), 169-180. Using proxies as the dominant method for evaluation may lead to perverse incentives that undermine the goals that tenure and promotion guidelines seek to achieve, such as creativity, intellectual breakthroughs, and excellence. For example, please see Usha C.V. Haley, “Triviality and the Search for Scholarly Impact,” *Organizational Studies* 44, no. 9 (2023), 1547-1550; Kevin Ryan, “Academic Freedom and the Eye of Power: The Politics and Poetics of Open Enclosures,” *Journal of Political Power* 9, no. 2 (2016), 249-268.

⁴ For documentation of how proxies have been inappropriately substituted for expert decision-making and the slow adoption of responsible use in the United States, please see Alexander Rushforth and Sarah De Rijcke, “Practicing Responsible Research Assessment: Qualitative Study of Faculty Hiring, Promotion, and Tenure Assessments in the United States,” *Research Evaluation* 00, preprint (2024), 1-11.

⁵ Documentation of impact, whether artistic, scientific, social, or political is not uniform across disciplines and takes careful consideration. Tenure-track faculty should consider how impact is conceived in their field. For an overview of these issues, please see Emanuela Reale, et al., “A Review of Literature on Evaluating the Scientific, Social and Political Impact of Social Sciences and Humanities Research,” *Research Evaluation* 27, no. 4 (2018), 298-308; Ziyad Marar, “On Measuring Social Science Impact,” *Organizational Studies* 43, no. 5 (2022), 821-824; Teresa Penfield, et al., “Assessment, Evaluations, and Definitions of Research Impact: A Review,” *Research Evaluation* 23 (2014), 21-32. The diversity of proxies/metrics supported here, and the demand for qualitative explanations of how tenure-track faculty achieve quality and impact is in-line with the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which calls for the expansion of research quality assessment beyond “journal-based metrics” like Journal Impact Factor. For a brief review of DORA and DORA-approved assessments in the field of biomedical research (with applications for research assessment in other disciplines), please see Anna R. Gagliardi, et al, “DORA-Compliant Measures of Research Quality...” *PLoS ONE* 18, no. 5 (2023): e0270616.

Minimum Criteria in Teaching

The following minimum criteria are values that help guide TT faculty to understanding their progress toward attaining the principles and standards in Teaching delineated above. The minimum criteria pertain to their development of pedagogy, development of teaching skills, use of peer feedback on teaching, alignment of curricular practices to student needs, engagement with student learning outside the classroom, and their participation in the development of curricula.

Criterion 1: Faculty must demonstrate an alignment of curricular practices to student needs.

Guideline: Reviewers value documentation of the impact of efforts to facilitate student learning and engagement and activities that demonstrate a sustained commitment to student success. Candidates should describe the outcome of efforts to identify and ameliorate barriers to student learning and engagement.

Criterion 2: Faculty should demonstrate an effective use of feedback on teaching.

Guideline: Candidates must include an annual reflection on suggestions for improvement in response to the annual required peer observation of teaching. The peer evaluation process is meant to be constructive. The candidate must show satisfactory feedback from peer observation of the candidate's teaching and evidence of reflection and/or incorporation.

Criterion 3: Faculty must demonstrate a continued development of teaching skills.

Guideline: Successful candidates should have a narrative of teaching strategies that demonstrate a continuous progression toward increased support of student learning. This includes the incorporation of technology in teaching and use of computational software when appropriate.

Criterion 4: If given an opportunity, has taught and contributed to advanced undergraduate, master's or doctoral level courses.

Guideline: Narratives should include a description of a faculty member's consistent contribution to the development and improvement of courses they are assigned, particularly advanced undergraduate, master's or doctoral level courses.

Criterion 5: Faculty must engage with student learning outside the classroom.

Guideline: The SMSS prizes efforts to effectively advise high school, undergraduate, masters, and/or doctoral students in research. Faculty should document active efforts to mentor students and tailor their support to student goals, including cultivation of opportunities for research & internships.

Minimum Criteria in Research, Scholarship, and/or Creative Works

The following minimum criteria are values that help guide TT faculty to understanding their progress toward attaining the principles and standards in Research, Scholarship, and/or Creative Works delineated above. The minimum criteria pertain to the significance of their work and progress toward a national reputation, their consistent and increasing record of accomplishment, the sustainability and trajectory of their research/creative agenda, their scholarly independence, and the quality and impact of their work.

Criterion 1: Significance and Progress toward national reputation

Guideline: Faculty should demonstrate involvement in research-related activities such as research presentations at external seminars and colloquia, external research visits, and collaborations both within and outside of UTRGV. Dissemination of research and documentation of progress toward national prominence in their field should include at least one (1) outside research presentation per year at a prestigious state, national or international venue, during the evaluation period. Invited presentations at prestigious venues are valued.

Criterion 2: Faculty should demonstrate a consistent record of accomplishment and research independence.

Guideline: Research in the SMSS includes pure mathematics, applied mathematics, statistics, mathematics education, and interdisciplinary applications of these fields. Evaluation of research achievements will be based on the disciplinary expectations appropriate to each area.

The SMSS values quality of research over quantity. The candidate's work must appear in reputable peer-reviewed venues whose quality and standing are appropriate to the candidate's field. Candidates must document their contributions and research leadership, particularly in multi-author works.

There is no strict minimum number of publications to be considered. However, in the research fields represented at SMSS, disciplinary norms are consistent with a body of work that includes approximately five to ten publications over the tenure-track probationary period. Expectations regarding the scope and volume of scholarly output may vary depending on the quality and impact of the candidate's work and its venues, level of contribution, and assigned research workload. A smaller number of high-quality, impactful publications may provide stronger evidence of research accomplishment and leadership than a larger number of publications with more limited impact.

Journal publications, particularly in nationally and internationally recognized venues, are highly valued, though significant peer-reviewed conference proceedings and book chapters are also recognized as appropriate within each discipline. Candidates should explain how their publications form a cohesive research program and how the quality, significance, and impact of their work demonstrate a consistent and advancing record of accomplishment and research leadership.

Criterion 3: The quality, relevance, and impact of candidates' scholarship must be evident.

Guideline: The evaluation of research will be in alignment with the research agenda set by the candidate shall prioritize the *quality of publications over their quantity*, where evidence of exceptional quality of publications may override numerical guidelines within the evaluation criteria. The assessment of publication quality shall be conducted in a holistic manner, considering the evidence presented by the candidate. The primary factor shall be the ranking and/or reputation of the venue (journal, conference proceedings, monograph) in which the publication appears (e.g., SCImago Journal Rank: Quartile and SJR (SCImago Journal Rank) metric, journal's impact factor, etc.). Additional factors that may be considered include, but are not limited to, referee reports, length and/or substantiality of the publication, demonstrated impact of the publication (such as citations), authorship (single author or level of contribution to multi-authored papers where applicable).

Criterion 4: Faculty will demonstrate sustainability of their scholarly agenda and research trajectory.

Guideline: It is expected that faculty during the probationary period demonstrate a sustainable research trajectory. This may be done in a number of ways, including by meeting one of the following criteria within their evaluation period:

a) Actively and consistently seek external funding. The applications for funding should be competitive, which can be justified, for example, by favorable reviews of external project proposals, indicating the competitiveness or fundability of the candidate's project or other feedback provided by the funding agency.

b) Sustainability can be demonstrated in a number of other ways. An argument will be made as to the sustainability of the candidate's research. This may include a record of high productivity and/or justification of the potential for previous work to lead to future work; an expansion of the scope of research; building capacity and infrastructure for further long-term scholarly work; service as Senior Personnel or Evaluator on major external grants.

Minimum Criteria in Service and Shared Governance

The following minimum criteria are values that help guide TT faculty to understanding their progress toward attaining the principles and standards in Service and Shared Governance delineated above. The minimum criteria pertain to their service to student success, to university operations and shared governance, and to their profession and community.

Criterion 1: Candidates should demonstrate service that may include service to the profession, service to student success, and contributions to university operations and shared governance.

Guideline:

Candidates' service contributions may include participation in one or more active committees, service as faculty advisor for student organizations, or active service to the community or profession, among other possible service contributions. For the service contributions, faculty are encouraged to describe their role, the objectives of the service, and the outputs and outcomes of their service effort. Where it is possible, faculty may provide evidence of their service contributions and its significance and impact to institutional goals and/or faculty professional trajectory that leverages the specific expertise of faculty.