

College of Sciences
Department of Physics
Faculty Tenure and Promotion Review Criteria,
Policies and Procedures

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of tenure is to retain the best qualified faculty to help develop and execute the department's (and UTRGV's) academic and research missions. All faculty members are evaluated annually during their probationary period and are subjected to a comprehensive pre-tenure review in their 4th year and a comprehensive tenure and promotion review in their **6th year** as per UTRGV rules. This schedule may be adjusted if a time-credit was granted towards tenure at the time of hire. Tenured Associate Professors may be eligible for promotion to Full Professor **6 years** after their last promotion. Faculty may request consideration for early promotion but this is limited to consistent exceptional performance.

2. PROCEDURES

Following the UTRGV Pathways for Review Deadlines available on the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA)'s website, full-time tenure-track and tenured faculty members submit their Faculty Review Dossiers (FRD) for consideration of tenure and/or promotion in accordance with guidelines at: <https://www.utrgv.edu/academicaffairs/faculty-resources/faculty-reviews/index.htm> [faculty-review-dossier.pdf](#). Faculty members may also include additional material in support of their application. The material to be included and the organization of the FRD should conform to the Instructions for Preparation of Faculty Review Dossiers as outlined by the university web documents.

Each faculty member is required to submit their completed FRD to the department chair no later than the due date of each year. Faculty holding joint appointments shall submit their FRDs to the chair/director of the department/school in which they hold a majority (>50%) appointment as per departmental/school and college policies. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the chair/director of the department/school in which the faculty member holds a majority (>50%) appointment to obtain input on the faculty member's performance from the minority appointment department/school and include it in his/her FRD.

In accordance with University policies and UT System Regent's Rules, each FRD for tenure and promotion will be independently reviewed by the departmental Tenure and Promotion Review Committee (TPRC), the Department Chair and, if applicable, also the college TPRC, the Dean, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA). The departmental TPRC must be composed of *all* tenured faculty above the rank being reviewed in the department. The chair of the departmental TPRC is elected by the committee members, and must be a full professor. The Department Chair will submit an independent review to the college TPRC and Dean and does not serve on the departmental TPRC. Depending on the

year of review, the college committee will also conduct an independent review. Each review level must include a written narrative highlighting strengths and weaknesses, as well as recommendations for tenure and/or promotion (as applicable). Depending on the year of review, after the college committee and Dean have completed their reviews, all reviews are forwarded to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA) for his/her own independent review and an independent review by the university- level TPRC.

1. CRITERIA

According to the UT System Regent's Rules, the granting of tenure is not solely a reward for performance during the probationary period, rather it is a deliberate act that takes into consideration both the past and potential for future performance of the faculty member. In addition to a consistent record of research and scholarly productivity, including grant funding and successful mentoring of graduate students, successful applicants for both tenure and promotion must demonstrate a high potential for continued excellence and commitment to the profession and to UTRGV's mission. National and international recognition of a faculty member's scholarly contributions, citations of publications, and impact on the profession are important considerations for both tenure and promotion to full professor.

Faculty tenure and promotion criteria includes three basic competency areas – *teaching, research & scholarship*, and *service* – which are evaluated in accordance with the faculty member's annual workload assignments in each competency area and responsibilities within the department/school, the college, and the university during the entire review period. Tenure and promotion of assistant professors is based on the basic faculty appointment: 18 LHE teaching and a combination of research & scholarship and service as outlined in section 4. Promotion to full professor may be based on workload assignments different from above. To be recommended for tenure and/or promotion, the candidate is required to meet the departmental expectations outlined in the next section.

3. DOCUMENT REVISION

The current criteria can be revised as necessitated by submitting a request to the Dean. The Dean will review and forward the revised document for consideration of the upper administration. The departmental bylaws may also be consulted with as appropriate.

4.1. TENURE AND PROMOTION OF ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

4.1.1. Teaching

Evaluation criteria for *teaching* effectiveness should include, but are not limited to, student evaluations of teaching, peer-review of teaching, teaching awards and honors, curriculum and course development (including online, hybrid, and distance education classes), activities that promote student success, advising and mentoring activities and student/teacher training grant funding.

To *meet expectations* in teaching, a faculty member with the 18 LHE load per academic year is typically expected to have achieved *all* of the following:

- Y Taught assigned teaching load.
- Y Received satisfactory peer review of teaching.
- Y Obtained satisfactory student evaluation averaged over all classes taught.

4.1.2. Research & Scholarship

The following section provides guidelines for evaluation in the form of criteria that may be used for judging faculty performance. The department recognizes that the qualitative nature of these criteria and the objectivity of evaluation are not mutually exclusive. While quantification sets a goal to achieve the department's mission and vision, categorically pre-set numbers may disincentivize self-driven achievement and hinder recognition of true excellence. To this end, the document provides typical expectations for each level of performance. The department chair and the departmental tenure and promotion committee will make a judicious decision of the overall productivity by taking variations around these typical expectations into account on a case-by-case basis while ensuring that these variations are never below the standards expected across the department.

Evaluation criteria for *research & scholarship* effectiveness include, but are not limited to, peer reviewed research publications (including pedagogy research) in quality journals in the field and other acceptable forms of scholarly output such as book chapters and books, patents, invited and contributed presentations at professional meetings/conferences and seminars, research grant proposals submitted and funded, number and performance of high school, undergraduate, and graduate students mentored in research, and relevant awards and honors.

4.1.2A. Nature and quality of publications: The committee members will reflect upon quality of papers published, impact of research, and submitted grants in their review. In case of large collaborations, individual contributions may be supported by indicators such as MOU review reports, corresponding author status, etc.

4.1.2 B. Scholarship recognition: Publication(s) in exceptional top tier journals (e.g. Nature, Science, Physical Review Letters or other high impact journals), obtaining patents, receiving significant grants as PI or co-PI, publication of a book and equivalent achievements will be recognized by the departmental tenure and promotion committee and the Department Chair by possible waiver of other evaluation criteria.

To *meet expectations* in research & scholarship, a faculty member with 18 LHE per academic year teaching load is typically expected to have achieved *all* of the following *over the 5-year review period*:

- Y Five peer-reviewed research papers published in quality journals with UTRGV affiliation.
- Y Evidence of seeking externally funded research grants as PI or co-PI/senior person with a separate research budget for the faculty member.
- Y Five scholarly presentations made by the faculty member or by high-school, undergraduate, and/or graduate students mentored by the faculty member at national and international conferences or invited talks at major institutions. (Faculty members may request substitution of scholarly presentations with additional publications and/or conference proceedings.)
- Y Mentored one or more graduate students successfully through completion of a Master's or Ph.D. thesis or undergraduate students through the completion of an Honors thesis or demonstrated evidence of strong research mentoring through one or more publications with student co-authors.

4.1.3 Service

Evaluation criteria for service effectiveness should include, but are not limited to, both the quantitative and qualitative assessments of the faculty member's contributions to student, staff, faculty, department, college, university, profession, and community success.

Quantitative metrics of service activities may include numbers of committees, student recruitment events, judging events, community outreach and engagement events, journal articles reviewed, grants reviewed, editorships of journals, etc. Qualitative metrics of service effectiveness should describe the faculty member's initiatives and contributions, leadership roles, mentorships and development of junior faculty, impact, and relevant recognitions and awards received.

To *meet expectation* in service, a faculty member with the basic service commitment is typically expected to have achieved *all* of the following:

- Y Compliance with all departmental, college, university, and UT System policies.
- Y Positive contribution to one committee at any level, including approved ad hoc ones, in the university per year and positive contribution to at least one professional or community service activity per year

Or

Positive contribution to more than one committee at any level, including approved ad hoc ones, in the university per year

Overall, faculty members at the basic service appointment are expected to have positive contributions to at least two service activities per year

4.1.4. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONSIDERATION OF TENURE AND PROMOTION OF ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

To be recommended for tenure and promotion consideration at any review level, an Assistant Professor must have met the departmental *expectations* in all three competency areas on the final comprehensive review.

At least five external letters are required. The candidate must send to the department chair 5-8 names of external experts who can evaluate the candidate's scholarship contributions. The department chair will select 3-4 names from the list and request review letters from them. The candidate can name up to 3 referees *not* to contact. In addition, the Department Chair will contact several external experts not solicited by the candidate to ask for review letters. The external review letters will be taken into full consideration in evaluating a candidate's research and scholarship.

4.2. PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE TO FULL PROFESSOR

Varying workload choice: In case of different levels of workload choices over the period of evaluation, a weighted sum of the expected outcome consistent with the workload level will be used.

4.2.1. Teaching

Evaluation criteria for teaching effectiveness should include, but are not limited to, student evaluations of teaching, peer-review of teaching, teaching awards and honors, curriculum and course development (including online, hybrid, and distance education classes), activities that promote student success, advising and mentoring activities and student/teacher training grant funding.

To *meet expectations* in teaching, a faculty member will typically achieve *all* of the following:

- Y Taught assigned workload consistent with workload commitment.
- Y Obtained satisfactory student evaluation averaged over all classes taught.
- Y Developed innovative teaching and other significant pedagogy or received external grant funding for student/teacher training (this is only if the faculty member has a 21-24 teaching load per academic year)
- Y Received satisfactory peer review of teaching.

4.2.2. Research & Scholarship

The following section provides guidelines for evaluation in the form of criteria that may be used for judging faculty performance. The department recognizes that the qualitative nature of these criteria and the objectivity of evaluation are not mutually exclusive. While quantification sets a goal to achieve the department's mission and vision, categorically pre-set numbers may disincentivize self-driven achievement and hinder recognition of true excellence. To this end, the document provides typical expectations for each level of performance. The department chair and the departmental tenure and promotion

committee will make a judicious decision of the overall productivity by taking variations around these typical expectations into account on a case-by-case basis while ensuring that these variations are never below the standards expected across the department.

Evaluation criteria for *research & scholarship* effectiveness include, but are not limited to, peer reviewed research publications (including pedagogy research) in quality journals in the field and other acceptable forms of scholarly output such as book chapters and books, patents, invited and contributed presentations at professional meetings/conferences and seminars, research grant proposals submitted and funded, number and performance of high school, undergraduate, and graduate students mentored in research, and relevant awards and honors.

4.2.1.A. Nature and quality of publications: The committee members will reflect upon quality of papers published, impact of research, and submitted grants in their review. In case of large collaborations, individual contributions may be supported by indicators such as MOU review reports, corresponding author status, etc.

To *meet expectations* in research & scholarship, a faculty member will typically achieve the following, with specific numbers depending upon the faculty member's workload commitment:

- Y X peer-reviewed research publications in quality journals in the field.
- Y Y externally-funded research grant proposals submitted or already a PI or co-PI on an existing externally funded grant or a senior person with a definite budget on an existing significant externally funded research grant.
- Y Z scholarly presentations made by the faculty member or by high-school, undergraduate, and/or graduate students mentored by the faculty member at conferences or invited talks at major institutions. (Faculty members may request substitution of scholarly presentations with additional publications and/or conference proceedings.)
- Y Mentored W or more graduate students successfully through completion of a Master's or Ph.D. thesis or undergraduate students through the completion of an Honors thesis or demonstrated evidence of strong research mentoring through W or more publications with student co-authors.

The X, Y, Z, W numbers are given below for each level of research commitment.

24 LHE per academic year, any two of X=2, Y=1, Z=2, W=1.

21 LHE per academic year, any *two* of X=3, Y=1, Z=3, W=1.

18 LHE per academic year, *any three* of (or some reasonable combination thereof as per the departmental committee's and the department chair's judgement call) X=5, Y=1, Z=5, W=2.

15 LHE per academic year, *any three* of (or some reasonable combination thereof as per the departmental committee's and the department chair's judgement call) X=7, Y=1, Z=6, W=2.

12 LHE per academic year, *any three* of (or some reasonable combination thereof as per the departmental committee's and the department chair's judgement call) X=10, Y=1, Z=8, W=2.

9 LHE per academic year, *any three* of (or some reasonable combination thereof as per the departmental committee's and the department chair's judgement call) X=12, Y=1, Z=10, W=3.

6 LHE per academic year, *any three* of (or some reasonable combination thereof as per the departmental committee's and the department chair's judgement call) X=14, Y=1, Z=12, W=4.

4.2.2.A. Scholarship recognition: Publication(s) in exceptional top tier journals (e.g. Nature, Science, Physical Review Letters or other high impact journals), obtaining patents, receiving significant grants as PI or co-PI, publication of a book and equivalent achievements will be recognized by the departmental tenure and promotion committee and the Department Chair by possible waiver of other evaluation criteria.

4.2.3. Service

Metrics for service effectiveness should include, but not limited to, both the quantitative and qualitative assessments of the faculty member's contributions to student, staff, faculty, department, college, university, profession, and community success. Quantitative metrics of service activities may include numbers of committees, student recruitment events, judging events, community outreach and engagement events, journal articles reviewed, grants reviewed, editorships of journals, etc. Qualitative metrics of service effectiveness should describe the faculty member's initiatives and contributions, leadership roles, mentorships and development of junior faculty, impact, and relevant recognitions and awards received.

Faculty members will be evaluated based on their Service commitment.

To *meet expectations* in service with basic service appointment faculty member will typically achieve *all* the following:

- Y Compliance with all departmental, college, university, and UT System policies
 - Y Positive contribution to one committee at any level, including approved ad hoc ones, in the university per year and positive contribution to at least one professional or community service activity per year
- Or
- Y Positive contribution to more than one committee at any level, including approved ad hoc ones, in the university per year

Overall, faculty members at the basic service appointment are expected to have positive contributions to at least two service activities per year

The departmental tenure and promotion committee will decide about the impact and significance of these activities. Moreover, the evaluation committee may place a faculty member in the area of 'exceeds expectations' in Service if the faculty has a positive contribution to a number of University committees and/or professional service activities and/or community service activities, which clearly exceeds the basic service commitment.

Service appointments that are in excess of the basic level as defined above (with a corresponding decrease in teaching load) must be approved by the Department Chair and the Dean. Such appointments include service as Associate Department Chair, Undergraduate or Graduate Coordinator, Director of a formally recognized center, etc. Such service appointees receive a maximum of one course release per semester depending upon the scope of the work. These faculty members also maintain a basic service commitment, with a 12 LHE per academic year teaching commitment, and a research and scholarship commitment corresponding to 9-hour workload per academic year. Annual expectations for the additional *service* commitment must be clearly defined and communicated to the appointee prior to making such an appointment and to the departmental Annual Review Committee (ARC), Tenure & Promotion Review Committee (TPRC), and Post-Tenure Review Committee (PTRC).

Administrative appointments are also considered service appointments. Appointments including Associate Deans, Department Chairs and School Directors are given two course releases per semester. These faculty members also maintain a basic service commitment, with a 6 LHE per academic year teaching commitment, and a research and scholarship commitment corresponding to 9-hour workload per academic year.

The relative percentage of teaching and research appointment may be negotiated at the time of acceptance of these well-recognized administrative appointments. Faculty members holding these extra service/administrative appointments are evaluated by the department committees and the Department Chair, and by the Dean. Faculty holding college or university level administrative/service appointments are evaluated by the Dean and/or faculty member's immediate supervisor with respect to their service.

To *meet expectations* in service commitment above the basic, a faculty member should produce *all* the following:

- Y Satisfactory accomplishment of all the tasks of the appointment
- Y Timeliness of responses and reporting
- Y Positive impact of the activities on the students, faculty, department/school, college, university and/or the community

4.2.4. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONSIDERATION OF PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE TO FULL PROFESSOR

To be recommended for consideration of promotion to full professor at any review level, an Associate Professor must have met the departmental *expectations* in all three competency areas on the final comprehensive review.

At least five external review letters are required. The candidate must send the department chair 5-8 names of external experts who can evaluate the candidate's scholarship contributions. The department chair will select 3-4 names from the list and request review letters from them. The candidate can name up to 3 referees *not* to contact. In addition, the chair will contact several external experts not solicited by the candidate to ask for review letters. The external review letters will be taken into full consideration in evaluating a candidate's research and scholarship.

5. APPEALS

All faculty have the right to appeal decisions involving tenure and promotion recommendations at any level by filing a written request for reconsideration within ten (10) working days of receiving a written copy of the evaluation at that level.

6. APPENDIX

LHE=3 for 3 credit undergraduate classes with ≥ 10 students

LHE=4.5 for 3 credit graduate classes with ≥ 5 students

LHE=2 for a 1 credit 3 contact hour lab

LHE= 3 for a 2 credit 3 contact hour lab

LHE=0.6 per graduate student supervision or independent study

LHE=0.3 per 3-credit undergraduate student research or independent study

LHE= 0.5 per 3 credit graduate thesis class

LHE=1.0 per 3 credit doctoral thesis class