

## **University of South Florida**

# **GUIDELINES FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION**

This document presents University of South Florida<sup>1</sup> guidelines for the tenure and promotion process consistent with the Board of Trustees regulations USF10.105 and USF10.106, USF System policy 10.116, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and with the intent of furthering the mission of the University. Criteria for tenure and promotion, specifying documented and measurable performance outcomes, must be developed by individual colleges and departments.

### **I. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA CRITERIA**

Tenure and promotion in the professorial ranks will be granted only to persons who demonstrate excellence in scholarly and academic achievement. Performance is evaluated specifically in the areas of teaching and learning, research/ creative/scholarly activity, and service.

The academic units of the University will define criteria for tenure and promotion according to the standards of their respective fields and disciplines, with specific expectations for types and levels of achievement and how they will be measured and documented. Tenure and promotion guidelines at all levels are expected to recognize and value contributions that support USF's prevailing strategic priorities. Academic units may specify more stringent standards than those articulated herein but may not specify less stringent standards. However, deans may apply to the Provost or Senior Vice President / USF Health for variance in exceptional cases.

#### **A. Tenure**

##### **1. Expectations of tenured faculty.**

In order for the University to perform its functions effectively, it is essential that faculty members be free to express new ideas and divergent viewpoints in their teaching and research. In the process of teaching and research, there must be freedom to question and challenge accepted "truths." A university must create an atmosphere that encourages faculty members to develop and share different ideas and divergent views and to make inquiries unbounded by present norms. Tenure contributes significantly to the creation of such an atmosphere.

At the same time, in providing for "annual reappointment until voluntary resignation, retirement, or removal for 'just cause' or layoff" (USF System Regulation USF10.105), tenure is not an unconditional guarantee of lifelong employment. The granting of tenure is a privilege that carries enormous responsibility within the academic unit, the college, the University, and broader academic community. This responsibility includes maintenance of the highest academic standards, continued scholarly productivity, sustained teaching excellence, and ongoing beneficial service carried out in the spirit of collegial citizenship.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes the colleges on the Tampa campus, in both Academic Affairs and USF Health, as well as the College of Marine Science located in St. Petersburg.

## 2. Evaluation for Tenure

Evaluation for tenure involves three components appropriate to the unit:

- a) teaching or comparable activity (including advising and mentoring);
- b) research/creative/scholarly work;
- c) service to the University, the profession, and the community.

In addition, collegiality and participation as a citizen of the University are integral parts of faculty performance. Because the decision projects lifetime performance from the first few years of a faculty member's career, tenure must be awarded only as a result of rigorous assessment over a period of time sufficient to judge the faculty member's documented accomplishments, ability, and probability of sustained future productivity. A judgment must be made that the faculty member's record represents a pattern indicative of a lifetime of continued accomplishment and productivity with potential for high impact on the field or society. Each recommendation for tenure should be accompanied by a statement of the mission, goals and educational needs of the department and college and the importance of the contributions the candidate has made and is expected to make in the future toward achieving the mission and goals and meeting the educational needs of the unit and university. Careful consideration must be given to the candidate's ability and willingness to work cooperatively within the department, college, and/or campus.

**a. Teaching.** The first component in the tenure decision process is an evaluation of effectiveness in teaching or comparable activity appropriate for the unit. As discussed in these guidelines, teaching effectiveness is understood to be fundamentally grounded in demonstrable learning outcomes. Each candidate must present a record of effectiveness in teaching as specified by the relevant academic unit and reflected in field-appropriate learning outcomes. The record of activities leading to tenure and promotion must provide evidence of excellence in teaching. It is therefore vital that substantial and diverse evidence of teaching effectiveness be presented as part of the tenure application.

Effective teaching – i.e., teaching that results in learning for those taught – requires a thorough knowledge of the subject; the ability to communicate that knowledge clearly through media appropriate to the subject, discipline, and the needs of students; and the ability to work with, motivate, and serve as a positive role model for students. Teaching performance is best judged by a comprehensive review of the teaching dossier, and it is essential that the chair and dean also conduct an appropriate and independent evaluative review.

In addition to course syllabi and student evaluations, a candidate may present the following kinds of documentation of teaching effectiveness: instructional materials (such as case studies, labs, discussion prompts, group projects), assessment activities and products (such as papers, tests, performances, problem sets), and other material used in connection with courses; new course development, course redesign, and adaptation to new formats and media through incorporation of emerging technologies; professional development activities and efforts at improvement; peer observations and evaluations; student performance on pre- and post-instruction measures; exemplary student work and outcomes; records of advising and mentoring; supervision of teaching and research assistants; thesis direction; and teaching awards. Approaches to teaching

and concomitant sources of evidence of teaching effectiveness may vary across fields, units, and candidates; consequently, variance in candidate portfolios may also be expected.

Evaluation of teaching must take into consideration an academic unit's instructional mission; an instructor's assignment of duties within unit; class size, scope, and sequence within the curriculum; as well as format of delivery and the types of instructional media utilized. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness should consider the wide range of factors that impact student learning and success. Moreover, effective teaching and its impact on learning can take place in a variety of contexts: in campus classrooms; team teaching; online; in the field; in clinical settings; workshops; panels; through service learning activities, community engagement and internships; in laboratories; within on- and off-campus communities, in organizations, in education abroad settings, such as field schools, and through mentoring of students, including undergraduate and graduate student research. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness in formats and settings outside the classroom should include consideration of the impact of student learning on practice, application, and policy.

**b. Research/Creative/Scholarly Work.** Scholarship takes many forms, including independently conducted research and/or creative works and collaboratively generated contributions to the knowledge base, community improvement or the arts. These activities in various disciplines across the University of South Florida units range from research (creation and attainment of new knowledge, whether basic or applied) to creation of artistic products. The purpose of research and creative scholarship is the substantive advancement of a field of inquiry or practice, whether by generation of new knowledge or production of new creative works and technologies. The record of activities leading to tenure and promotion must provide evidence of excellence in one or more of these forms. In order to attain tenure, a faculty member is expected to have established an original, coherent and meaningful program of research and/or creative scholarship and to have demonstrated and clearly documented a continuous and progressive record of research and creative scholarship indicative of potential for sustained contribution throughout his or her career.

The peer review process is the best means of judging quality and impact of the candidate's research and creative scholarship. Evaluation at the unit level should include an assessment of the quality of the candidate's work and consider discipline-appropriate evidence of the significance of research and creative activity, as well as the candidate's assignment of duties within unit. A candidate may present the following kinds of documentation of a significant research program: reviews of books and articles; records of competitive honors and awards, grants, and fellowships; criticism and reviews of creative work; reviews of grant applications; citations of the candidate's work; evidence of impact on policy and practice; the quality and significance of journals, series, and presses by which the candidate's work is published or of other venues in which it appears; invited, refereed, or non-refereed status of publications; research awards and acknowledgements; and invitations and commissions. Like teaching portfolios, the kinds of documentation will vary among fields, units, and individuals, and candidates should not be expected to provide forms of documentation that are not typical in their disciplines. Where appropriate, consideration will be given to external peer recognition, as demonstrated by a record of funded research, and to the demonstrable impact of research through inventions, development and commercialization of intellectual property, and technology transfer. Objective peer review of the candidate's work by scholars/experts external to the University is

required. In addition, the candidate's chair or director and dean must conduct independent evaluative reviews.

It is noted that in some areas of scholarship, publications or other products may appear only after lengthy or extensive effort and may appear in a wider range of venues, both of which can be particularly true of community-engaged and/or interdisciplinary work at the local, national and/or international levels. Community-engaged scholarship may be demonstrated by high-profile products such as reports to local, national, or international agencies and formal presentations, or by other products as designated by the unit, as well as by peer review. For collaborative and coauthored scholarship, the evaluation should include consideration of the candidate's role and contribution to the work, consistent with disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary scholarly practice. The body of work of a candidate for tenure must be judged against the appropriate standards within the area of research and creative scholarship, balancing the significance and quality of the contribution with the quantity of publications and other scholarly products. Recommendations for tenure should present a clear and compelling case for the merit of an application in the context of the kind of scholarship in which the candidate's work has been conducted, leading to high confidence in the candidate's prospects for continuing and meaningful contributions.

**c. Service.** The third component to be evaluated includes the categories of service to the University, the professional field or discipline, and engagement with the community. Candidates for tenure must have made substantive contributions in one or more of these areas. Evaluation of administrative and other professional services to the University, including service on the USF Faculty Senate and Councils, should go beyond a simple enumeration to include an evaluation of the extent and quality of the services rendered. Public service may include work for professional organizations and local, state, federal or international agencies and institutions. It must relate to the basic mission of the University and capitalize on the faculty member's special professional expertise; the normal service activities associated with good citizenship are not usually evaluated as part of the tenure and promotion process. Because of the diverse missions of different units and variations in the extent and character of their interaction with external groups, general standards of public and professional service will vary across units. Evaluation of service will include an examination of the nature and degree of engagement within the University and in the local, regional, national and global communities.

Service as such is differentiated from engagement with communities and external organizations that is undertaken in support of teaching or of research/creative/scholarly work, the latter generally termed community-engaged scholarship. As defined by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, [international,] global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."<sup>2</sup> Any of the three categories of faculty activity could entail community engagement, and any could in some way "address critical societal issues and contribute to the public good." But community engagement that is undertaken by faculty to "enhance curriculum, teaching and learning and prepare educated, engaged citizens" may be included and evaluated as part of teaching, and community engagement undertaken to "enrich

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<sup>2</sup> [http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community\\_engagement.php](http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community_engagement.php)

scholarship, research, and creative activity” may be included and evaluated as part of a research/creative/scholarly faculty assignment.

## **B. Promotion**

### **1. Evaluation for promotion.**

This section applies to ranked faculty, whether tenured or non-tenured. As in the case of tenure, the judgment of readiness for promotion to higher academic rank is based upon a careful evaluation of a candidate's contributions in teaching (or comparable activity appropriate to the unit), research/creative/scholarly work, and service; the sections pertinent to evaluation of these factors for the tenure decision apply as well to promotion. The evaluation refers to written department- and college-level criteria for promotion that have been made available to candidates. Promotion also requires collegiality and participation as a productive citizen of the University, as this is an integral part of faculty performance, and this area is also evaluated with reference to written criteria.

General standards for consideration of appointment to the ranks of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor (or their equivalents) are as follows. In each category, a candidate's achievements are evaluated in relation to criteria specified by the unit for the rank sought as well as the candidate's assignment of duties within the unit.

#### **a. Assistant Professor (or Assistant University Librarian)**

- i. Promise of continued growth as a teacher, or in comparable activity appropriate for the unit.
- ii. Promise of independent and/or collaborative research/creative/scholarly work, supported by publications or other appropriate evidence.
- iii. Promise of substantive contributions in the area of service to the University, profession and/or public.
- iv. The doctorate or the highest degree appropriate to the field (or, where appropriate, the equivalent based on professional experience consistent with accreditation standards).

#### **b. Associate Professor (or Associate University Librarian)**

- i. A record of excellence in teaching or other comparable activity appropriate for the unit, including a record of such activities as participation on thesis and/or dissertation committees, and successful direction of the work of master's and doctoral candidates, where applicable.
- ii. A record of excellence in independent and/or collaborative research/creative/scholarly work, supported by substantial, high impact and sustained publications or their equivalent. Categories, criteria, and types of evidence for research/creative/scholarly work may vary across colleges and departments. Thus, original or creative work of a professional nature may be considered as equivalent to publications. Evaluation of applied research should consider potential or actual impact on policies and practices. The record should be sufficient to predict, with a high degree of confidence, continuing productivity in research/creative/scholarly work throughout the individual's career, as defined in the individual's field.

- iii. A record of substantive contribution of service to the University, profession and/or public.
- iv. For faculty on tenure-track appointments, advancement to the Associate level is made simultaneously with granting of tenure.

**c. Professor (or University Librarian)**

- i. A record of excellence in teaching or other comparable activity appropriate for the unit, including, where applicable, a record of participation on thesis and/or dissertation committees, and as major professor for undergraduate research/theses and/or master's and doctoral candidates.
- ii. A record of excellence in research/creative/scholarly work of at least national visibility, of demonstrated quality supported by a record of substantial publications or their equivalent. Categories, criteria, and types of evidence for research/creative/scholarly work may vary across colleges and departments. Thus, original or creative work may be considered as equivalent to publications. Evaluation of applied research should consider potential or actual impact on policies and practices. The record should predict continuing high productivity in research/creative/scholarly work throughout the individual's career, as defined in the individual's field.
- iii. A record of substantial contribution of service to the university and to the field, profession or community as appropriate to the mission and goals of the department, college and/or university. Expectations about the level of meaningful service contributions for candidates for professor are significantly higher than those for attaining the Associate rank.
- iv. Compelling evidence of significant achievement among peers in one's discipline or professional field at the national or international level. Any recommendation for promotion to the rank of Professor (or University Librarian) must contain evidence that such distinction has been identified.

**2. Alternative promotional pathways**

Subject to higher-level administrative approval, individual units may establish alternative faculty pathways that are not tenure-earning but that allow for promotion through faculty ranks based on specified criteria appropriate to the unit (e.g. with varying emphasis on research, teaching, practice or performance) and the candidate's assignment of duties. Faculty on these pathways are expected to contribute within any or all of these areas, though in the ways and distribution of emphasis as specified by the unit.

**II. TIMING**

**A. Probationary period**

Application for tenure has traditionally been initiated early in the sixth year (or equivalent, when adjustments or exceptions to the standard have been made), reflecting effectively a five-year record of teaching, research/scholarship/creative productivity, and service. However, in consideration of generally rising expectations for achievement by faculty, contemporary levels and types of demand on faculty effort, constraints in internal and external resources available to

faculty to support scholarly productivity<sup>3</sup>, and a changing national landscape, colleges may, with the approval of the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health, choose to define longer probationary periods in order to ensure the University's opportunity to realize the benefit of significant investment in new faculty. Regardless of the length of the probationary period, candidates for tenure will be expected to demonstrate steady productivity and progress. Expectations of progress within normal time frames will be reflected in established annual and comprehensive review processes.

## **B. Timing of applications**

Following an initial period in rank, normally at least two years, a candidate may apply for tenure earlier than the last year of the probationary period or, for promotion, earlier than the normal point in the post-tenure period, when there is clear evidence that he or she has fully met the applicable criteria and has received endorsement at both department and college levels; additional merit beyond normal criteria for advancement, specified clearly in unit tenure and promotion documents, should not be required.

## **C. Exceptions to the standard probationary period**

Ordinarily, a faculty member in a tenure-earning position will either be awarded tenure at the end of the probationary period or be given one-year notice that further employment will not be offered. However, exceptions to the tenure clock may be considered, such as medical exigencies or parental situations covered by FMLA or ADA legislation or other extenuating circumstances approved by the University or as specified in the collective bargaining agreement. A tenure-earning faculty member under such circumstances may request an extension of his or her probationary period. The request must be made in writing and must be approved by the chair of the department, dean, and Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health. Ordinarily, extensions of more than two years beyond the college's designated probationary period will not be permitted.

## **D. Tenure upon initial appointment**

In rare circumstances, tenure may be awarded upon initial appointment. In determining such an award, the guiding principle will be to follow department and college procedures in an expedited process that will not inordinately delay hiring decisions. Specifically, there must be review of tenure eligibility at all levels with a recommendation forwarded to the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health. Approval must be obtained from the Office of the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health prior to making an offer that includes tenure without a probationary period. In support of recommendations for tenure upon initial appointment, the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health will receive the following information:

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<sup>3</sup> [American Council on Education report: An Agenda for Excellence: Creating Flexibility in Tenure-Track Faculty Careers; <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Agenda-for-Excellence.pdf>]

- Written statement(s) of review of tenure eligibility at all levels (dean, chair, department faculty); rigorous reviews must occur prior to a request to the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health to make such an offer;
- Candidate's vita;
- Official starting date for the position, a draft of the letter of offer, which has explicit mention of the tenure offer, pending Board of Trustees approval;
- Compelling statement on the unique achievements of the faculty member that support the basis for tenure.

Upon approval the University President will forward the tenure recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval at the earliest meeting at which tenure upon appointment is considered.

Persons being considered for administrative appointments accompanied by academic appointments with tenure will interview with the academic unit in which tenure would be considered; and the appropriate dean, the appropriate faculty bodies, and administrators will make recommendations on tenure to the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health.

### **III. REVIEWS**

#### **A. Review of progress toward tenure**

It is the responsibility of the department chair or other appropriate administrator and department peer committee, where constituted, to include a progress toward tenure review as part of the annual evaluation for all faculty in the probationary period for tenure. A more rigorous and extensive pre-tenure review will be conducted at the approximate mid-point of the probationary period. The review will refer to written department- and college-level criteria for tenure that have been made available to candidates. The mid-point review will be conducted by the department's tenure and promotion (or appointment, promotion, and tenure) committee, the department chairperson or other appropriate administrator, the college tenure and promotion committee, and the college dean. A summary review of progress toward tenure will be forwarded to the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health.

All mid-point reviews shall address the performance of annual assignments including teaching, research/creative/scholarly activity, and service occurring during the preceding tenure-earning years of employment. In addition, all reviews should critically assess overall performance and contributions in light of mid-point expectations. The mid-point review will be based on documentation of performance, including: a current vita; annual evaluations; student/peer evaluation of teaching; selected examples of teaching materials; products of research/scholarship/creative activity; service commitments and accomplishments; and a brief self-evaluation by the faculty member.

The mid-point review is intended to be informative and encouraging to faculty who are making solid progress toward tenure; instructional to faculty who may need to improve in selected areas of performance; or, where progress is significantly lacking and apparently unlikely, bluntly cautionary about the potential for dismissal.



## **B. Review of progress toward promotion**

The annual performance review for a faculty member holding a rank below that of full Professor will normally include an evaluation of progress toward promotion. At approximately the mid-point of the typical interval between appointment to the Associate Professor level and promotion to full Professor for faculty in the unit, faculty members will ordinarily be given a more comprehensive review of progress toward promotion, to include participation by the relevant tenure and promotion committees. A review at this stage is intended to be informative: to be encouraging to faculty who are making solid progress toward promotion, and instructional to faculty who may need to improve in selected areas of performance.

## **C. External letters for tenure and promotion applications**

The department chair ordinarily will include in the tenure and promotion packet a minimum of three letters (but not exceeding six) from external reviewers who are recognized experts in the individual's field or a related scholarly field inside or outside of academe; ideally, some of these will hold senior tenured appointments at aspirational peer institutions. The candidate and the department chair will suggest external reviewers. The department Tenure and Promotion Committee may also suggest external reviewers. These reviewers should have no significant relationship to the candidate (e.g., major professor or co-author), unless there are mitigating circumstances that would indicate otherwise (e.g., to review scholarship so specialized that few expert reviewers exist). The chair and the candidate will jointly select the reviewers. In the event of disagreement each party will select one-half the number of qualified reviewers to be utilized. The content of all solicited letters that are received from external reviewers should be in the candidate's file prior to the final recommendations by the department Tenure and Promotion Committee.

In the interest of improving the level of candor in external reviews, units may adopt procedures to protect reviewers' privacy while at the same time ensuring candidates' access to the substance of judgments of their work by third parties. Thus, reviewers may be advised that their names and other identifying information will be held confidentially and that candidates will have access only to the narrative content of their review letters.

## **IV. COMMITTEES**

### **A. Number & type of committees**

At the department level, full-time faculty will determine the role of the department review committee in developing recommendations for tenure and promotion. Procedures will be specified in department and college governance documents.

The number and types of review prior to submission to the Provost or Senior Vice President for USF Health will be similar throughout the University and should occur at the following levels or their equivalent: department review committee; department faculty; chair; college review committee; dean.

## **B. Tenure and promotion committee membership**

When establishing Tenure and Promotion Committees, departments, schools, and colleges, whenever possible and practical, should adhere to the following criteria:

1. Membership on committees is limited to faculty who have been appointed within the unit for at least two years;
2. Committees considering candidates for promotion to Professor will comprise individuals holding the rank of Professor. If the unit lacks a sufficient number, the department chair, director and/or dean may appoint one or more qualified Professors from other units;
3. Only those members who have received tenure at the University of South Florida will be eligible to review and make recommendations on tenure applications;
4. Non-tenure-track faculty may serve on committees evaluating applications of non-tenure-track faculty at lower ranks;
5. Review of applications from faculty with joint appointments should reflect appropriate participation by the units to which faculty have been appointed. Thus, chairs/deans from secondary units should have proportional input on review and recommendations, and committees reviewing applications from faculty with joint appointments should have equitable representation from respective units based on the distribution of assignment;
6. Chairs, directors and deans should neither vote nor participate on any tenure and promotion committee; this exclusion applies to assistant or associate chairs, directors, or deans when they participate in the tenure and promotion process in support of, or as delegated by chairs, directors or deans;
7. Terms of committee members should be staggered and ordinarily should not exceed three years;
8. Turnover of committee membership should be encouraged through restrictions on consecutive terms, if feasible;
9. Individuals serving on more than one advisory committee (e.g., department, school, or college) should vote at the department/school level on candidates from their home unit but not on these candidates at other committee levels;
10. All members of tenure and promotion committees are expected to review the application files prior to discussion, or voting. Procedures to ensure participation by all committee members (or, as needed, alternates) in the process are established and followed at all levels of review. Following a vote by secret ballot, the ballots are counted immediately in the presence of committee members, and the tally is recorded. Written narratives from majority and dissenting minorities, if any, may be included with the record.

## **C. Executive Advisory Committees**

In consultation with deans and the Faculty Senate, the Provost and Senior Vice President for USF Health will each appoint an Executive Tenure and Promotion Advisory Committee to

provide selective review and consultation in preparation of their recommendations to be made to the President. These committees will not constitute an additional level of review but will function only as advisory within the existing review process at the vice-presidential level. The committees will comprise a broadly representative group of full Professors with acknowledged distinction. Terms, scope, and internal working procedures will be determined collaboratively among the committees and the appointing vice presidents.