

BIOLOGY Department

Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

Revisions approved by the faculty May 2016

A. Overview:

Promotion and tenure applications are submitted when time in rank is achieved (Faculty Handbook Section III.E.6) and are evaluated on Teaching, Professional Service and Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications as described in the JMU Faculty Handbook Section III.E. (and see below). To advance from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor the applicant must obtain an "Excellent" rating in either Teaching or Scholarship and "Satisfactory" in the others. To advance from Associate Professor to Professor, the applicant must obtain an "Excellent" rating in two categories (Teaching, and normally, Scholarship), and "Satisfactory" in the other.

Per faculty Handbook:

III.E.6.b.(1) The faculty member may apply for promotion, or the AUPAC or AUH may nominate a faculty member for promotion. Written nomination must be made by September 1. The faculty member shall be informed if the AUPAC or AUH has nominated the faculty member, and shall have the option to accept or decline the nomination without prejudice. The faculty member who wishes to be considered for promotion shall submit a summary of activities and accomplishments in the areas of teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service to the AUH and AUPAC by October 1. Failure by the faculty member to submit a summary of activities and accomplishments by the October 1 deadline shall constitute a refusal of a nomination or withdrawal of an application, and no consideration of promotion is required.

B. Promotion and tenure guidelines:

For candidates applying for the award of tenure or promotion, the fundamental judgment of promise of future accomplishment will be coupled with a candidate's accumulated record. The expectation is that activities that lead to a positive tenure and/or promotion result will at least continue if not increase in the future. Tenure/promotion should not be the goal but rather something earned for a continuum of contributions during the period in rank. The candidate is not measured against a checklist. Rather the evaluators try to assess the qualities of mind and performance, which are deemed appropriate to support a recommendation for the award of tenure or promotion.

As PAC membership changes over a period of years, the PAC members cannot be familiar with the accumulated, multi-year progress and accomplishments of a

candidate for promotion and/or tenure. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the candidate to submit a comprehensive summary of all materials to be considered. These should be organized according to the three areas of evaluation: Teaching, Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualification and Professional Service. The broad criteria, as specified in the Faculty Handbook Section III.E.6 and E.III.7., will be applied by the PAC according to the rank for which promotion is sought, and evaluation will be indicated as Excellent, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory in each area. It is also recognized that some activities may overlap and contribute to more than one of the areas evaluated.

I. Teaching

Faculty members should place a very high priority on teaching excellence and should demonstrate a commitment to working with students at either or both undergraduate and graduate levels. Our concept of teaching is a holistic one. Not only does it include activities that occur in lecture and laboratory settings but it also includes activities that occur outside of the above more formal interactions with students. While this student interaction may take many forms, one activity that is expected is for faculty to extend their teaching to include mentoring students in research projects.

Examples of information to be reviewed in evaluating teaching effectiveness include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Formal student evaluations from a broad spectrum of courses offered should be presented. Evaluation forms approved by the departmental faculty should be used.
- B. Formal (written) teaching evaluations from selected former students and fellow instructors, either on campus or elsewhere.
- C. Curriculum development as evidenced by such things as course re-design, embedding research into teaching, new course development etc.
- D. Evidence submitted should indicate that new/or better methods to improve teaching are being sought or have been implemented or are used on a continuing basis. An example would be CFI sponsored and other workshops. In all instances, the way in which the materials and/or methods have been integrated into courses should be explained and self-evaluated.
- E. Research is an important endeavor and plays a significant role in supporting the teaching process. It is an invaluable experience for the student. Mentoring students in research, including dissemination of the research by students through external presentations should be part of the faculty member's teaching efforts.

F. Academic advising is an integrated and complex process designed to facilitate student growth and development. All faculty in the Department are expected to participate in the advising process as directed.

II. Scholarly Activity

The Department expects its faculty members to have a research program and to demonstrate a continuing involvement in these activities. For a research program to be supportive of the goals of the department, it will include undergraduate and frequently graduate student participation. Submission of external grant proposals is expected and complete award information provided.

Faculty members must present evidence of an active research program and ongoing publication of their research activities. This research must reflect activities performed at JMU. Publication should be in peer-reviewed scientific journals, which are recognized as standard for their particular discipline. Books, book chapters in edited volumes, and textbooks are included in this category. Presentations of research results as posters and talks at scientific meetings are also expected. Student participation in external presentations and publications is expected.

Collaborative research with other scientists in biology or other disciplines is valued and encouraged, but such activities should complement, not replace leadership of their own independent program.

Membership and participation in professional organizations is expected. Editing or reviewing papers, manuscripts or grant proposals, service on review panels etc. or receipt of honors or fellowships is considered additional evidence of acceptance by peers.

III. Service

The term "service," is the application of a faculty member's scholarly and professional expertise, both on and off campus, to the enhancement of the mission of the University, the faculty member's profession, and the community, both locally and beyond. In considering the definition of service, it should be noted that, with some exceptions, service to religious, political or civic organizations holds little true value in the overall evaluation of faculty members. Such service should not routinely be considered in the evaluation process for tenure and promotion.

Examples of activities included under service are:

1. service carried out as a member or chairman of a committee appointed or elected at the department, college, or university level
2. representative of the college or JMU for an external organization
3. reviewer of manuscripts, books, and grants
4. service as a member of an accrediting agency
5. advice solicited by the public regarding some biological problem
6. participation in or holding office in professional biological or other scientific organizations
7. community engagement activities such as organizing workshops, training sessions, science fairs and forays
8. civic engagement as a member of an advisory committee or board
9. professional presentations to public school groups, civic organizations radio/TV appearances which call upon expertise in the biological sciences
10. advisor to student organizations
11. special assignments such as maintaining departmental or university collections
12. writing letters of recommendation for students

To meet satisfactory in service faculty must demonstrate department/university citizenship, professional activity and engagement with the community.

The PAC recognizes that certain services are more demanding than others, and the applicant should indicate the extent of effort devoted to service especially if an activity was exceptionally demanding.

IV. Collegiality / Departmental Citizen

Faculty are expected to exhibit collegiality and to be good citizens of the department. Examples include responsible membership on committees, volunteering for additional service in unusual situations if needed, sharing resources.

V. References

At least six names of external evaluators who can speak to teaching, research or service must be provided to the Department Head by August 15.

Recommendations from fellow scientists in the applicant's field of expertise provide important evidence of scholarly activity. At a minimum, the list should include current or former students, as well as external colleagues familiar with the applicant's specific contributions in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and professional service.

C. Conclusions:

Faculty members, during their period in rank, may, in any given year, vary their emphasis between teaching, research, and professional service. This might typically occur if one were given a special responsibility or if the individual had a special project to focus on. This is based on the idea that it is difficult to maintain significant contributions in all three areas of evaluation all the time. Plans must be discussed with the Department Head beforehand in order to determine if adjustments in departmental programs are required to accommodate these changes and if the request requires higher administrative approval. However, a person recommended for tenure or promotion will have shown, during their time in rank, a substantive commitment to all three areas: teaching excellence, research productivity and professional service.

D. Early Promotion to Associate Professor and Tenure or Early Promotion to Full Professor

Proposals for early promotion and tenure are considered extraordinary actions. It is not in the best interest of a candidate or of the institution to propose candidates for tenure or promotion ahead of schedule unless the case is very well justified. (Faculty Handbook Section III.E.6.)

No candidate shall be considered for early tenure or promotion before two years prior to the end of his/her contractually agreed upon probationary period.

To present a compelling case for early tenure and promotion, a faculty member must be evaluated by the Department Head and PAC as "Excellent" in teaching and scholarship. The faculty member must also be esteemed in the discipline, as attested by at least three letters of recommendation from prominent people in the discipline.

Faculty members who wish to apply for early promotion must consult with the Department Head about their candidacy by March 1 of the academic year preceding their application. The Department Head will consult with the Dean and will advise the faculty member on the efficacy of that application by April 1.

The Department Head will choose the above mentioned "prominent people in the discipline" from lists submitted by the faculty member and her/his colleagues in the department; the Department Head will then solicit those recommendations.

External letter writers must be asked to comment specifically on the special grounds for an early decision. The Department Head and the PAC must also specifically address this issue in their letters accompanying the application. Outside reviews will not be shared with the faculty member.

E. Promotion of Renewable Term Appointment faculty

Promotion guidelines will follow those for tenure/tenure track faculty, taking into consideration the greater teaching loads assigned for these faculty when evaluating scholarship and service.