



Office of the Provost

Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Promotion and Tenure Evaluation Guidelines

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Personnel Advisory Committee
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
General Evaluation and Promotion Guidelines
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1 Background

The primary duty of the Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) is to evaluate faculty performance in the three areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, providing recognition for their efforts and offering recommendations. This is done on a yearly basis for junior faculty—and for tenured faculty who request it—based on the contents of their yearly Faculty Activity Reports. The PAC also performs mid-tenure reviews, and evaluates tenure and promotion applications. A guiding principle of the PAC is to provide honest, professional, confidential, and candid evaluations that reflect departmental values.

The PAC is a peer-elected body, subject to the following departmental requirements: (1) The chair of the PAC is chosen by and selected from the previous year's PAC. (2) At least two of the remaining four PAC members must have previous PAC experience. (3) A PAC member can hold the chair position for at most two consecutive years. This method of selection preserves continuity while reflecting the current culture of the department.

One purpose of this document is to provide insight into departmental values that the PAC utilizes in evaluating teaching, scholarship, and service. A strength of our department is that there are diverse paths to excellence in each of the three areas, and the PAC strives for a balance of flexibility and accountability in its evaluations.

2 Yearly Evaluation

Yearly performance ratings of excellent, more than satisfactory, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory in each of the three areas are based on the contents of the Faculty Activity Report. Activities that overlap multiple areas can be included in the area of the faculty member's choice and referenced in other appropriate areas. This section provides an overview of departmental philosophy that guides faculty evaluation. In all cases, the listed contributions are nonexhaustive.

2.1 Teaching

This is the most difficult and subjective of the three areas to evaluate. The general criterion that the PAC uses in the evaluation of teaching is *effective effort*. Any teaching style that results in students working hard, learning, and receiving an appropriate amount of feedback is recognized and appreciated.

When the PAC evaluates teaching, it considers a variety of evidence, including: creative practices, efforts to enhance teaching, the variety of courses taught, taking on difficult teaching assignments, self-reflection of methods, supervising independent study courses, academic advising, overall involvement with students, student evaluations, curriculum development,

professional development, types and frequency of student assessment, and mentoring expository undergraduate research projects. The PAC also considers other teaching contributions that support the mission of the department.

2.2 Scholarship

Scholarly activity involves scholarly exploration in an aspect of mathematics, statistics, or mathematics education, including interdisciplinary work. This exploration can take many forms, but its hallmark is *increasing content knowledge for the discipline or the individual*. Strong scholarship, in whatever form it takes, should impact more than just the scholar. Thus it is necessary that some aspects of the activities receive peer-review and validation.

When the PAC evaluates scholarship, it considers a variety of evidence, including: peer-reviewed research publications (which could be interdisciplinary in nature), scholarly presentations, mentoring undergraduate research projects that generate original results, peer-reviewed pedagogical publications, discipline-related books, peer-reviewed presentations or proceedings, scholarly-related grant activity, and innovative consulting projects. The PAC also considers other scholarly contributions that support the mission of the department.

2.3 Service

Service activities encompass the various tasks necessary to support the department, the college, the university, the profession, and the community; all faculty are expected to contribute. In addition, there are exceptional service undertakings above and beyond the standard service tasks that elevate the stature of the department; these are given special recognition. The general criterion that the PAC uses in the evaluation of service is the level of *initiative and involvement as a good departmental citizen*. As with the other two categories, the most time-intensive tasks receive the most credit. But unlike the other two categories, each individual's service contribution directly impacts the entire department and service expectations generally increase with time.

When the PAC evaluates service, it considers a variety of evidence, including: committee work at all levels, leadership roles, involvement in professional societies, journal refereeing and editing, grant reviewing, service-based consulting, conference and session organizing, club advising, and outreach activities. The PAC also considers other service contributions, including volunteer efforts and initiatives, that support the mission of the department, the college, the university, and the profession.

3 Promotion

Performance ratings of excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory in each of the three areas are based on the contents of promotion applications. The same types of evidence are considered as for yearly evaluations. Activities that overlap multiple areas can be included in the area of the faculty member's choice and referenced in other appropriate areas. This section provides university and departmental expectations for promotion.

The JMU Faculty Handbook, section III.E.6, states,

The promotion of an instructional faculty member shall be determined by merit regardless of the distribution of faculty by academic rank within the academic unit. Normally, a faculty member should have completed five years in academic rank before being reviewed for promotion. Though length of service may be given consideration, it is not a sufficient basis for recommendation for promotion. If a faculty member applies for promotion before completing five years in academic rank, he or she must present compelling evidence of accomplishment to be awarded promotion.

In the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, promotion applications are evaluated based on the cumulative record supplied by the applicant. In particular, ratings in each of the three areas are not necessarily the average of those of the yearly evaluations. While the PAC recognizes a wide variety of scholarly activities, peer-reviewed publication in mathematics, statistics, or mathematics education should anchor the scholarship section of a successful promotion application.

It is customary in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics that tenure coincides with promotion to Associate Professor.

3.1 Expectations for promotion to Associate Professor

The JMU Faculty Handbook states, *An excellent rating in one area and at least satisfactory ratings in the others are required for promotion to associate professor.* Furthermore, in our department, a rating of excellent in either Teaching or Scholarly Activity is necessary.

The PAC considers the faculty member's documented contributions in each of the three areas over their career and their time at JMU. While the PAC interprets scholarly activity broadly, peer-reviewed scholarship and dissemination is necessary for promotion and tenure.

During the probationary period, the faculty member's focus should be on scholarship and teaching development. Service responsibilities should be relatively light in the beginning, increasing toward the end of the probationary period.

3.2 Expectations for promotion to Professor

The JMU Faculty Handbook states, *Excellent ratings in two areas and at least a satisfactory rating in the third area are required for promotion to professor.* In the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, applications submitted early in the eligibility period should be particularly strong in all areas.

The PAC considers the faculty member's documented contributions in each of the three areas over their career, their entire time at JMU, and since promotion to Associate Professor. While the PAC interprets scholarly activity broadly and recognizes that research may change direction and/or production after tenure, peer-reviewed post-tenure scholarly activity and dissemination are expected prior to application. When the evidence supplied in an application is not yet sufficient to support promotion, the PAC will recommend withdrawal of the application and provide specific feedback regarding areas to strengthen prior to reapplying.

After promotion to Associate Professor, the faculty member should continue to develop his/her teaching and scholarly activities while assuming broader and deeper service responsibilities. Promotion to Professor differs from promotion to Associate Professor in that the timeline is flexible, rather than fixed. Promotion to Professor is a recognition of cumulative, sustained contributions. Delaying application to Professor in order to build a strong application is not uncommon. While there are $\binom{3}{2} + 1$ possible paths to promotion, the most expedient paths generally have excellent rankings in both Teaching and Scholarly Activity. It is advisable to request formal PAC feedback at least a year ahead of time if there is a question about any aspect of the application.

3.3 Expectations for Renewable Term Appointments (RTAs)

The JMU Faculty Handbook (III.D.4) states *RTA's in the rank of lecturer are not eligible for promotion* and that *RTA's in other ranks have the same performance expectations for advancement in rank as tenure-track and tenured faculty members in the same rank.*

The PAC evaluates RTA faculty at least once every three years. For those RTA appointments at the Instructor level, the expectations for both teaching and service are similar to those of tenure-track appointments. As with other positions, service expectations increase over time. However, the expectations for scholarly activity are significantly different. In particular, peer-reviewed, published research is not expected. Disciplinary conference and workshop participation as well as other professional development activities are expected.