

Department of Physics and Astronomy

Promotion and Tenure Evaluation Guidelines

Approved: 2011

Policy 1003

Department of Physics and Astronomy

Criteria and Standards for Annual Evaluation, Promotion and Tenure

Purpose

To describe the criteria and standards for annual evaluation, promotion and tenure for the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The original version of this document was originally approved by the faculty on May 4, 2001. Minor changes were approved on September 3, 2003. Additional revisions were made on February 11, 2011.

Definitions

The Faculty Handbook referenced in this document is found [at the Faculty Senate web site](#).

Applicability

These criteria and standards apply to all RTA, tenured and tenure-track faculty in the department.

Policy

Introduction:

The Physics Department considers evaluation to be an ongoing process designed to support professional development and encourage performance at the highest levels. Evaluations are used in making personnel decisions, including allocation of merit pay increases, continuation of employment, and promotion. All evaluations shall consider a faculty member's performance in the areas of 1) teaching, 2) scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and 3) professional service. In addition, contributions that are of such a general nature that they do not easily fall into one or more of the above categories may be considered. These could include significant contributions to students' overall development, commitment to the discipline, the department, the college, the university, and the community. Because there are numerous methods of achieving excellence, the standards for evaluation should not be interpreted as inflexible and absolute.

The reward system at James Madison University, and specifically within the Physics and Astronomy Department, should be sufficiently flexible that all members of the faculty will be able to concentrate on their strongest areas within teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service. Each faculty member will set the approximate level of effort in each category in

consultation with the Department Head. As stated in the Faculty Handbook, there are three types of evaluations:

- a. The Initial Evaluation
- b. Annual Evaluations
- c. Comprehensive Evaluations

Faculty should consult the Faculty Handbook for detailed descriptions of each type of evaluation. "Copies of all evaluations shall be maintained in a faculty member's personnel file. A faculty member may examine his or her personnel files wherever they are kept."¹

The Department of Physics and Astronomy Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC):

The Department of Physics and Astronomy Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) advises the Department Head and makes recommendations on personnel matters within the Department including appeals. In making their evaluations and recommendations, PAC and the Department Head will follow the procedures set forth in the James Madison University Faculty Handbook.

The PAC shall consist of all faculty in the Department holding the rank of associate professor or (full) professor, excluding the Department Head. For tenure decisions, a subcommittee of PAC that consists of all tenured faculty on PAC will make the evaluation and recommendations for tenure.

Procedures

Evaluations:

Initial Evaluation and Conference

The Department Head shall provide a new faculty member with a copy of the Physics Departments evaluation procedures ***Criteria and Standards*** (this document) and a written set of expectations, ***Requirements and Expectations of Tenure Track Faculty***, ([Faculty Expectations.pdf](#)). The initial evaluation will be conducted at the beginning of the second full semester of full-time employment at James Madison University. All policies and procedures set forth in the Faculty Handbook (Faculty Handbook, Section III.E.3) will be followed.

At the start of a new faculty member's second full semester, the Department Head shall schedule an evaluation conference with the faculty member. The conference provides an opportunity to discuss the faculty member's first semester performance and professional needs as perceived by both the faculty member and the Department

Head. The Department Head will provide to the faculty member a written initial evaluation within 14 days of the evaluation conference. As stated in the Faculty Handbook, "The evaluation shall state whether the faculty member's overall performance has been satisfactory or unsatisfactory."

Annual Evaluations

The Annual Report of Professional Activities will be used as primary data for evaluation but a faculty member may submit additional materials for the evaluation if he or she chooses. Each faculty member's Annual Report of Professional Activities should include material for the year reporting period as defined by the University and normally will be due to the Department Head within two weeks of the end of that period.

The annual evaluation shall consider the performance of the faculty member in the areas of teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service. In each of the areas, a faculty member shall be evaluated as excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. In addition to an evaluation in each of the three areas of performance, the faculty member's overall performance must be evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The annual evaluation of an RTA faculty member also must include a recommendation on extending the faculty member's appointment (Faculty Handbook, Section III.E.4.)

Each PAC member will evaluate every physics department member (including the Department Head) in each of the three areas of performance. An evaluation of excellent or unsatisfactory by the PAC will require a justification, whereas an evaluation of satisfactory will not. PAC will report the overall evaluation of each department member in the three areas and report an overall evaluation of each faculty member that will be either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. A dissenting opinion may be given if desired.

The PAC will not provide a rank ordering of faculty within any of the categories, nor overall.

Promotion:

The promotion of a faculty member shall be determined by merit regardless of the distribution of faculty by rank within the Department. Normally, a faculty member should have completed five years in rank in the Department before being reviewed for promotion. (PAC suggests, but does not require, that physics faculty members have their supporting materials reviewed by the PAC one year in advance of any

anticipated comprehensive evaluation for promotion.) The candidate for promotion must inform the Department Head of their intention to apply for promotion by September 1. All supporting materials for promotion are due to the Department Head and PAC by October 1.

The following criteria and standards will be used in determining the eligibility and recommendations for promotion of a faculty member of the Department:

- Assistant Professor
Satisfactory ratings in all areas are required for promotion to Assistant Professor.
- Associate Professor
An excellent rating in one area and satisfactory ratings in the others are required for promotion to Associate Professor.
- Professor
Excellent ratings in two areas and a satisfactory rating in the other are required for promotion to Professor.

PAC Recommendations A simple plurality of those eligible to vote will suffice for recommending excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory in the three areas of achievement (teaching, scholar achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service.) Although consultation among PAC, the Department Head, and the Dean is encouraged, the Department Head and PAC shall make independent evaluations and independent recommendations. PAC's recommendation regarding promotion will be determined by a secret ballot of the PAC.

Tenure Guidelines:

Mid-Probationary Review

If a non-tenured faculty member requests, a mid-probationary review will be conducted by PAC. The intent of the review is to inform the candidate of his or her progress at the mid-point of the probationary period, and to provide guidance for the candidate.

Tenure Recommendations

To be awarded tenure, the faculty member must meet performance standards required for promotion to associate professor and should enhance the academic environment of the academic unit and the university.

Renewable Term Appointments:

Faculty holding Renewable Term Appointments (RTA) will be evaluated using the same criteria and procedures as those outlined in the JMU Faculty Handbook and the Physics Department Criteria and

Standards for Annual Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure for tenure/tenure-track faculty. Promotion of an Assistant Professor employed on an RTA contract to the Associate Professor rank is normally expected to occur within seven years.

Evaluation Criteria:

The reward system in the Physics Department is sufficiently flexible that all members of the faculty will be able to concentrate on their strongest areas within teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service. Each faculty member will set the approximate level of effort in each category in consultation with the Department Head. The level of effort of a faculty member in each category may change by mutual agreement of the faculty member and Department Head during the year.

Examples, but not requirements, of considerations that will be used in determining the eligibility for annual salary adjustments, promotion or tenure of a faculty member in the Physics Department are listed below. Order in the list does not indicate rank or importance.

- Teaching
 - *Excellent*
 - Presentations at national or regional meetings by students of supervised research or projects.
 - Receiving a teaching award from the University or external professional organization.
 - Teaching a variety of levels and subject areas in physics.
 - Developing new courses and/or workshops.
 - Consistent long-term above average ratings on student evaluations. An excellent rating on student evaluations is not required for obtaining an excellent rating in teaching by PAC or the Department Head.
 - Demonstrated instructional accomplishments that PAC deems excellent.
 - *Satisfactory*
 - Supervising independent study and honors projects.
 - Coordinating a laboratory or other instructional program.
 - Acceptable ratings on student evaluations.
 - Participating in regional and national pedagogical organizations.
 - Participating in workshops and meetings concerning teaching.
- Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications

- *Excellent*
 - Publication of ongoing research and other scholarly activity in refereed professional journals.
 - Presentation of papers at national professional meetings.
 - Initiating a successful grant proposal for external funding and/or directing the resulting project.
 - Consulting activity that brings recognition or resources to the department.
 - Authoring textbooks
 - Other scholarly achievement, recognition, or professional development that PAC deems excellent.
- *Satisfactory*
 - Supervising student research projects, independent study and honors projects.
 - Active participation in grant proposals for support of research or other scholarly activities.
 - Presenting papers at regional meetings and publishing in non-refereed journals.
 - Development of instructional or education materials.
 - Ongoing personal professional development (NSF short courses, attending national meetings, etc.) or an organized program of self-study in a new area of research.
 - Acting as a professional consultant.
 - Memberships and participation in professional organizations.
 - Presentation of faculty seminars and colloquia.
 - Current professional activity at other academic institutions and in non-academic settings.
- Professional Service
 - *Excellent*
 - Serving in an organization in an office that brings positive recognition to the University.
 - Initiating and carrying out a program that leads to a significant increase in the resources of the University or in its ability to perform its mission.
 - A major contribution which applies the resources of the University to solving a problem of local, regional, state, or national concern.
 - A major service or office at the college,

- university, or state level.
- A major effort as a staff member of a professional journal.
- A major effort conducting workshops, symposia, and training sessions in one's professional area.
- Other professional service that PAC deems excellent.
- *Satisfactory*
 - Serving on departmental and university committees.
 - Participating in public relations events and student recruiting.
 - Participating in grant proposals for external funding for teaching and equipment support.
 - Serving as a faculty advisor to a student organization.
 - Serving as a satisfactory student curriculum advisor.
 - Serving as a referee or reviewer of scholarly articles or textbooks.

Early Promotion and Tenure:

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 and promotion ahead of schedule unless the case is very well justified. Proposing early consideration should only be a result of extraordinary accomplishment readily distinguished from a strong case submitted on a normal schedule. Even if the case is sufficiently strong to consider early tenure and promotion, the candidate should keep in mind that the reviewers will not recommend early tenure and promotion unless they are confident that the high level of achievement in scholarship, teaching and service already exhibited will continue once it is granted. The following list serves as a guideline for consideration for early tenure and promotion:

1. 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.
2. The criteria for consideration must exceed all department criteria in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service. This means that the candidate
 - has established a clear track record of publication of ongoing research or other scholarly activity in refereed professional journals and that it is of demonstrably higher quality than is normally expected for tenure and

- promotion.
- has established a sustained program of research or scholarship including having procured external funding to support the program.
 - has successfully developed a course or has been recognized for novel teaching techniques.
 - is capable of teaching at multiple levels and in a variety of subject areas across the physics curriculum.
 - has demonstrated clear instructional prowess.
 - has engaged willingly, competently and energetically in service on departmental, university or other committees in appointive or elective positions, in public relations events and through student recruiting.
3. The department head must receive a preliminary dossier including the CV and any other supporting documents before consideration by the PAC or external letter writers. He/she will then discuss the case with the dean and reach an agreement that the case is sufficiently compelling for early consideration.
 4. External letters 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 that accompany the application.

Criteria and Standards Updates:

The criteria and standards for annual evaluation, promotion and tenure may need to be modified on occasion and updates will be undertaken at the discretion of the Department.

Responsibilities

Each newly hired faculty member review the [Requirements and Expectations of Tenure Track Faculty](#). A copy of this document is to be printed, signed by both the faculty member and the Department Head, and kept on file in the department.

Sanctions

None.

Exclusions

None.

¹[Faculty Handbook](#), III.E., Evaluation, Promotion and Tenure.

²[Faculty Handbook](#), III.E 6a, Tenure Standards.