

**GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

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Because decisions of promotion and tenure are so important, they should be guided by accepted criteria to ensure uniformity and encourage fairness. This document provides guidelines for faculty performance appraisal in the Department of Geography and Planning. The guidelines supplement the standards outlined in the [*Appalachian State University Faculty Handbook*](#).

As stated in the UNC System Mission Statement, of which Appalachian State University is a part,

The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people. It encompasses the 17 diverse constituent institutions and other educational, research, and public service organizations. Each shares in the overall mission of the University. That mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. This mission is accomplished through instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives; through research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process; and through public service, which contributes to the solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State. In the fulfillment of this mission, the University shall seek an efficient use of available resources to ensure the highest quality in its service to the citizens of the State. Teaching and learning constitute the primary service that the University renders to society. Teaching, or instruction, is the primary responsibility of each of the constituent institutions. The relative importance of research and public service, which enhance teaching and learning, varies among the constituent institutions, depending on their overall missions.

Any system for evaluation should be based upon an individual's total contribution to the Department and the University's mission. Evaluations should reflect the fact that everyone is expected to contribute in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Every member of the department has an obligation to provide quality instruction for our students. The major purpose of research/scholarly/service activities is to expand the frontiers of knowledge. It is important that individuals maintain an on-going research agenda to remain current in their chosen fields and contribute to the understanding of important issues in geography and/or planning. Service to the department, college, university, and discipline is expected of each faculty member.

Professional conduct is important for effective teaching, scholarship, and service. The effective exchange of ideas and information can take place only in an atmosphere free of abuse or harassment and characterized by courtesy and respect. Treating students, staff, and other faculty in a courteous and respectful manner contributes to individual professional development and the establishment of an appropriate learning environment. All faculty members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a learning environment that is free from discriminatory practices and harassment.

Annual reviews of faculty performance include evaluations and goal-setting conferences. The

Department Chair will document *in writing* the strengths and shortcomings of each faculty member during these conferences. Such documentation must be part of each faculty member's file in support of applications for tenure and/or promotion and made available to the Departmental Personnel Committee for consideration of such applications, as well as in retention/non-retention decisions. Continuing evidence of faculty performance below the expected norm may result in denial of tenure and/or promotion or in non-retention.

DIMENSIONS OF PERFORMANCE

The three major dimensions of performance are: 1) teaching; 2) research; and 3) service. The sections below outline the minimum expectations for performance in teaching, research, and service with examples of faculty contributions in each dimension. Indicators of excellence across these dimensions are also provided.

1. Teaching

All faculty members are expected to contribute to the teaching mission of the department. Faculty members should strive to implement the [College of Arts & Sciences Teaching Excellence Policy](#) by exhibiting professional expertise, using sound instructional strategies, and promoting inclusive student-centered learning environments. Satisfactory performance in the instructional environment must be documented (e.g., student evaluations, peer review, teaching workshops). Faculty should continuously strive to improve their teaching performance and to contribute to the development of the curriculum. Sustained, quality instruction is a key element in promotion and tenure decisions. Excellence in teaching is an important, but not solely sufficient, component in promotion and tenure decisions.

Evaluation Procedure:

All faculty members will have their teaching performance evaluated annually by the Department Chair. Faculty are required to submit evidence of satisfactory performance in the instructional environment at the time of consideration for promotion and/or tenure. At a minimum, faculty should maintain a teaching portfolio, summaries of student course evaluations, and peer evaluations. We recognize that student evaluations are an imperfect and often biased measure of teaching performance. Any deficiencies in teaching performance will be discussed and summarized via written documentation in the annual review. Failure to address deficiencies (via performance in subsequent years) may result in the denial of tenure and/or promotion.

Minimum Expectations:

- Active participation in the undergraduate and/or graduate programs of instruction. Active participation in student advising that is equitable based on pre-tenured/tenured expectations.
- Periodic updating/improvement of existing courses and labs (at a minimum of promotion or post-tenure review periods (e.g., not every 5-10 years).
- Satisfactory evaluation of teaching performance (both quantitative and qualitative) from student and peer reviews.
- Create an inclusive environment in the classroom where all students' are valued.

Faculty contributions to teaching may include (but are not limited to) some combination of the following:

- Development of new courses.

- Completion of programs/workshops intended to improve teaching methods.
- Contributing to new instructional program development.
- Development of innovative pedagogical methodologies and materials applied to their courses.
- Direction of independent student research and independent studies.
- Direction (chairperson) of thesis work (Master's and Honors).
- Interdisciplinary course development.
- Membership on departmental or university committees focused on instruction.
- Development and implementation of non-commercially published instructional materials (e.g., laboratory manuals, readings, computer programs).
- Seeking external and internal funding to support student experiences.
- Service on Ph.D., Master's, or Honors committees (thesis, dissertation, internship, comprehensive examination).
- Supervision of student internships.
- Create an inclusive environment in the classroom where all students are regularly reminded about Department and University resources related to resources, Title IX, food insecurity, and scholarships.

Excellence in teaching may be indicated by (but is not limited to) the following:

- Chair of an award-winning master's thesis.
- Excellent evaluations (quantitative and qualitative) of teaching performance as indicated by student and/or peer reviews.
- Publication of widely adopted or well-received instructional materials (e.g., books, manuals, videos, computer programs).
- Receipt of external funding to improve teaching.
- Receipt of an award (college, University-wide, regional, national) for teaching excellence.
- Recognition (via awards, letters from University Officials, etc.) for development of innovative pedagogical methodologies and materials.
- Mentoring of student-authored publications.
- Develop an inclusive environment in the classroom and Department where the faculty member actively builds curriculum or resources for the Department and University to aid Title IX connections, food insecurity, and scholarships resources.

2. Research

All faculty members are expected to contribute in the areas of research, which includes scholarship, publications, and grant activity. We recognize that signifiers of excellence for these three areas vary widely across the discipline and are unique to each sub-discipline. (For example, in the physical and biological sciences, external funding is an important part of the research case, and a mark of excellence. In the social sciences and humanities, such funding is not always an important part of the research case and not always available.) Satisfactory performance must be documented on a faculty member's CV and through the annual review process. A record of sustained, quality performance in research is an important element of promotion and tenure decisions. Research activity is an important, but not solely sufficient, component in promotion and tenure decisions.

Faculty who engage in scholarship and conduct research contribute to the understanding of important problems, processes, and phenomena in geography and planning. Maintaining an on-going research program also helps faculty remain current in their chosen disciplines. Research is an integral and necessary part of university education; it is an important activity which keeps the content of classroom instruction current, pertinent, and challenging to students and faculty. It is difficult for faculty to remain abreast of new developments and to be effective in the teaching and supervision of student theses unless they pursue research in their fields of interest.

Evaluation Procedure:

All faculty members will have their research performance evaluated annually by the Department Chair. Any deficiencies in scholarship will be discussed and summarized (via written documentation) in the annual review. Failure to address deficiencies (via performance in subsequent years) may result in the denial of tenure and/or promotion.

Minimum Expectations:

Faculty will maintain an on-going program of research and will disseminate their work through publications and presentations in appropriate professional outlets. In line with university-wide standards to receive release time for research activity, the minimum expectations are the publication of two significant products over each (rolling) three-year period. Receiving internal funding is expected by the Department and by the College. Additionally, the tangible pursuit of external funding via submission of proposals is expected, as available depending on speciality. The determination of what represents a “significant product” will be made by the Department Chair, with an understanding that products published in some outlets may not be deemed “significant products” for promotion and tenure decisions and that what constitutes a significant product varies across subdisciplines. Each year of their probationary status, candidates will submit written documentation of their efforts. As part of the annual review process the Department Chair will evaluate all scholarly products submitted by the candidate, make a decision regarding the acceptability of the product, and inform the candidate in writing of those decisions. While nothing precludes an individual from publishing in any outlet of his/her choosing, faculty should strive to place their final products in the best outlets possible.

Faculty contributions to research should include (but are not limited to) some combination of the following (italicized items may meet the criteria for a “significant product”; non-italicized items do not). First-authored or solo-authored publications are typically seen as more significant contributions than second- or third- authored publications, though this rule will vary across subdisciplines.

- Receipt of external funding for research/scholarship.
- Publications in refereed journals.
- Publications cited by scholars.
- Publication of book, textbook, or chapter in books/textbooks (not self-published).
- Submission of grant proposals for external funding that are subsequently highly rated by the funding agency and will be revised and resubmitted.

- Publication of technical reports, monographs, or comprehensive plans.
- Editorship of journal/symposium volume/book.
- Publication of laboratory manuals or other instructional materials.
- Presentation of papers at international, national, regional, or state-level meetings.
- Presentation of research at invited colloquia or other professional forums.
- Publication of articles in the popular press, newsletters, and web pages.
- Products or methods granted U.S. patents or commercial licenses.

Excellence in scholarship may be indicated by (but is not limited to) the following:

- Receipt of external funding for research.
- Including co-PIs, co-authors, and students from underrepresented groups.
- Publication in highly ranked (i.e., high ISI impact factors or an equivalent measurement of international/national prominence) refereed journals.
- Publication of frequently cited book(s), book chapters and/or articles. Publication of a widely adopted scholarly book(s).
- Receipt of an award (college, university-wide, state, regional, national, international) for excellence in research/scholarship.

3. Service

All faculty members are expected to contribute in the area of service. Faculty members must serve the department, college, the university, and the academic profession. Satisfactory service performance must be documented. Service is an important, but not solely sufficient, component in promotion and tenure decisions. The Department recognizes that women and minority faculty members typically have a disproportionate burden of “invisible service” that is essential in making the academy more inclusive and in caring for students.

Evaluation Procedure:

All faculty will have their service contributions evaluated annually by the Department Chair. Any deficiencies in service performance will be discussed and summarized (via written documentation) in the annual review. Failure to address deficiencies (via performance in subsequent years) may result in the denial of tenure and/or promotion.

Minimum Expectations:

- Attend departmental meetings and take an active role in the operation of the department.
- Serve on multiple departmental committees.
- Service to the college, university and/or professional organizations (e.g., Faculty Senate, AP&P, General Education Committee, University Research Council).

Faculty contributions to service should include (but are not limited to) some combination of the following:

- Committee member or chair of international, national, regional, or state professional organizations or meetings.
- Presentations at public service programs.
- Leadership roles in civic and/or community organizations related to one's academic discipline. Presentations for external organizations.
- Service on university and/or college task forces and committees.
- Grant or manuscript reviewer for state, regional, national, or international organizations or for a refereed journal.
- Member of editorial board of refereed journal.
- Providing professional community and/or regional service. Serving in an advisory role with student organizations.
- Development and outreach efforts leading to scholarships, endowed chairs, facilities, honoraria.
- Active promotion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts.

Excellence in service may be indicated by (but is not limited to) the following:

- Committee chair of international, national, regional, or state professional organizations or meetings.
- Attracting significant external development support related to service activities.
- Chairing college and/or university committees and/or task forces.
- Receipt of an award (college, University-wide, local, regional, national) for service excellence. Serving on a government commission, committee, task force, or board.
- Serving as an officer or program coordinator for an international, national, regional, or state professional organization.
- Serving as program chair of an international, national, regional, or state meeting.

PROMOTION, TENURE, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

While the nature of a faculty member's contribution may vary as a function of skills, interests, and stage of career development, there are expectations for significant faculty performance at every level of advancement. Promotion and tenure decisions will factor in the faculty member's record of accomplishments throughout their career, with emphasis on performance in the years preceding the next level of professional rank (i.e., the years between the attainment of the rank of Associate Professor and consideration for Full Professor), as well as expectations of continued growth and the potential for future performance. Faculty members seeking promotion and/or tenure will present the Promotion and Tenure Committee with appropriate documented evidence of their activities in teaching, research, and service, following the guidelines in the [Faculty Handbook](#). The Department recognizes that extenuating circumstances may result in a modification of the typical promotion and tenure timeline.

1. Promotion

Assistant Professor

Assistant Professors must have an earned Doctorate from an accredited institution. Individuals appointed to the rank of Assistant Professor should place emphasis on quality instruction, on establishing a productive and quality record of scholarship, research, and publication, and on service contributions that generally focus on departmental and/or college academic affairs, until scholarly and instructional competencies are well established. Promotion to Associate Professor will be based on assessment of performance on the quality of instruction, the quality and quantity of tangible scholarly products, and a level of service activity appropriate for non-tenured faculty.

Associate Professor

Associate Professors must have an earned Doctorate from an accredited institution. Individuals appointed or promoted to the rank of Associate Professor must have a sustained record of quality instruction, as evidenced by peer reviews, student evaluations, and other tangible methods of assessment. An important consideration for promotion to Associate Professor will be on the quality and quantity of scholarship, research, and publications. The minimum expectations for research are the completion of the equivalent of two significant peer-reviewed products per each (rolling) three-year period of employment. Thus, in-line with university-wide standards, the *minimum* expectations for consideration of promotion to the rank of Associate Professor are four significant products during the standard six-year period prior to application for promotion, more if the period extends beyond five years. Additionally, the tangible pursuit of internal funding is required according to College of Arts & Sciences expectations. Pursuit of external funding via submission of proposals is strongly encouraged and considered a vital component to departmental research and scholarly productivity.

The record of research must clearly demonstrate continuing development and represent a significant contribution to the field as judged by the Departmental Personnel Committee, Department Chair, and Dean. A sustained record of service to the Department also must be demonstrated for promotion to Associate Professor. Associate Professors, relative to Assistant Professors, will be expected to provide sustained and meaningful contributions in the areas of

teaching, research, and service. Further, the tenure candidate's professionalism with students, faculty, university, and the discipline community is a factor that the Promotion and Tenure Committee will consider in its deliberations.

Professor

Professors must have an earned Doctorate from an accredited institution. Promotion to the rank of Professor is the highest academic honor bestowed in the academic community. Professors must demonstrate leadership, the continuation of a record of engagement in teaching, scholarship, and service, and have achieved at a minimum a regional prominence in their discipline with an expectation that they are recognized nationally and/or internationally. Individuals promoted to the rank of Professor must be judged as effective in each area of performance, and in addition, must be judged as having a sustained record of excellence in teaching by the Department Chair.

2. Tenure

The confirmation of tenure is a milestone in one's academic career and is the highest vote of confidence from one's peers that a faculty member receives in his/her academic career. By confirming tenure, faculty peers believe that a faculty member must have demonstrated professional excellence and potential for future academic contributions.

A candidate for tenure must have earned a doctorate from an approved institution and demonstrate professional excellence in and commitment to: teaching, research and/or scholarship, and service to his/her discipline and/or the institution and/or the region, as described in the guidelines. All of the criteria outlined in this document related to promotion from the rank of Assistant to Associate Professor are criteria for the confirmation of tenure. Further, the tenure candidate's professionalism with students, faculty, university, and the discipline community is a factor that the Promotion and Tenure Committee will consider in its deliberations.