

**The University of Southern Mississippi**  
**School of Polymers and High Performance Materials**  
*Policy on Promotion and Tenure (approved by the faculty 1/25/08)*

**Requirements and Expectations for Promotion and Tenure**

The policies stated herein were originally developed and approved by the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials Personnel Committee based on recommendations of the tenured faculty of the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials as well as the CoST and USM policies on tenure and promotion from assistant to associate and from associate to professor. These policies have been reviewed and approved by the tenured faculty of the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials. The policies are intended to provide additional guidance to those guidelines already supplied by CoST and the university.

**TENURE:**

In keeping with the policies presented in Chapter 9 of the USM Faculty Handbook, tenure and promotion are separate issues that are evaluated by the same process. That is, tenure and promotion evaluations and decisions are made separately, but are based upon the information submitted to the committee in the tenure/promotion dossier (volumes I and II) and on letters solicited from external reviewers. Successful candidates for tenure must have demonstrated sustained quality performance in each of the three university missions of teaching, research or creative activities, and service. In the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials, a typical weighting of effort for performance evaluation in each of the three areas would be teaching, 25%; research, 60%; and service, 15%. These percentages may be adjusted in individual cases through consultations between the faculty member and Director and with the approval of the Dean of the College of Science and Technology.

Candidates can apply for tenure during their sixth complete academic year in residence at USM. For those candidates given some amount of prior credit toward tenure, application for tenure can be made during the year in which USM service and prior credit is equal to six years. In accordance with USM policies, a candidate may request that evaluation for tenure be delayed for a maximum of one year. USM policies do not allow for early application for tenure.

Promotion in academic rank does not necessarily imply that one merits academic tenure. However, in most cases requirements for tenure and those for promotion from assistant to associate professor are essentially the same. That is, successful assistant professor candidates for tenure are generally promoted to associate professor concurrently. The guidelines for promotion to associate professor are detailed below.

**PROMOTION FROM ASSISTANT TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR:**

As stated in the Faculty Handbook, "In cases involving promotions from assistant professor to associate professor or associate professor to professor, candidates must serve

at least five (5) years in the lower rank, thereby making a recommendation for promotion permissible during the fifth year of service in the lower rank and an approved promotion effective at the beginning of the following academic year.” The successful candidate for promotion will have maintained sustained quality performance in all three of the categories of the university mission: teaching, research/creative activities, and service. High levels of performance must be achieved in at least two of these categories. Performance guidelines for each of the categories are provided below.

Applications for tenure and promotion to associate professor are generally considered at the same time (e.g. during the sixth full academic year in residence at USM). It should be noted that the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials considers each issue separately. Candidates with exceptional records in all three of the university mission categories, may elect to apply for promotion during their fifth full academic year in residence at USM. Such candidates should consult the university guidelines for this prior to submitting an application. Also, under certain circumstances, a candidate may request that evaluation for promotion to associate professor be delayed for a maximum of one academic year. Such candidates should consult the university guidelines for this prior to submitting a request for a one-year delay.

*Teaching* Teaching is the effective presentation of current knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom. In the classroom, effective teaching includes setting and maintaining reasonable academic goals and standards and objectively evaluating the students' success at meeting these goals and standards. Outside the classroom, effective teaching includes successful guidance and direction leading to the completion of student research and projects, publication of teaching materials that influence the academic community beyond USM and the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials, and other professional activities including the development of courses and participation in curriculum development. The School is currently both a graduate and undergraduate level teaching unit focused on research and because of this, teaching loads have generally been less than those for faculty in other departments at USM. As such in the case of research-oriented faculty (i.e., faculty maintaining an active, externally-funded research program), the successful candidate will be expected to have taught 6-9 credit hours of formal classroom courses each academic year, to have developed at least one course in his/her area of specialization, and to have maintained satisfactory ratings from student and/or peer evaluations of classroom performance conducted each semester. In addition, it is expected that each candidate will actively participate in advising graduate students and will have served as major professor for one or more students who have completed their MS or Ph.D. degree programs.

*Research* The School of Polymers and High Performance Materials is a research focused academic department. Thus, the successful candidate is expected to have actively participated in research and/or creative activities and have a strong record in these areas. A vigorous independent and collaborative research program is expected of tenure candidates. Research is the generation of new knowledge and thus, it is an integral aspect of the education and graduate student training processes. Because research transcends the boundaries of the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials and USM,

research performance must be evaluated with respect to the usual standards of the national/international scientific community. Research performance is primarily evaluated from the candidate's record in the generation of external funds to support research and in publication of results in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. Specifically, we expect the successful candidate to have developed an on-going research program in his/her area of expertise with opportunities and support for graduate and undergraduate student research, to have obtained extramural funding by the second or third year of service at USM and to have authored or co-authored an average of at least 2 papers per year in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. In the case of co-authorship, there should be evidence of a substantial intellectual contribution to the science and/or writing. It is also expected that the successful candidate will present his/her research before scientific audiences on a regular basis. These expectations should be viewed as guidelines. Research quality is an important consideration which will be taken into account during the evaluation process through examination of the candidate's publication and patent citations, among others.

*Service* There are several areas of service in which a successful candidate is expected to participate. These include service to the school, college/university, scientific community and to the public. Examples of service activities include service and leadership on School, College, and University committees. Service to the School is mandatory and includes participation on departmental and student committees, student recruitment, and representing the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials at official functions. Other areas of service are voluntary, but it is expected that the successful candidate will have taken advantage of a significant number of opportunities to serve as an ambassador for the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials, particularly in professional organizations. The area of service to the scientific community is one in which the successful candidate is expected to have participated regularly. This may take the form of reviews of research proposals and/or manuscripts submitted to the scientific literature, participation in scientific societies and/or seminar series, and participation in workshops and conferences.

Collegiality is an important criteria when being considered for tenure and promotion, and is evidenced in each of the three categories above. Examples of collegiality include but are not limited to service on committees at all levels, collaborative research efforts, development of external relationships beyond individual funding, participation in departmental activities, involvement in the School seminar series, and team development and teaching of courses. The above examples are not all necessarily requirements for promotion and tenure. In addition, the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials requires a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation from external reviewers for tenure and promotion consideration. The candidate will provide a list of at least six names for letters of reference, out of which the Tenure & Promotion committee will select three. The Director or committee may select up to three additional reviewers.

#### **PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR:**

Candidates for the rank of professor are teacher-scholars with a well established national/international standing in their field of expertise and a strong record of

contribution to the university and polymer science and engineering community. Successful candidates will have a record of sustained high level performance in each of the three areas of the university mission discussed above. The criteria for evaluation for promotion to professor are similar to those for promotion to associate professor with the following exceptions. Candidates will be expected to have graduated at least 4 students with graduate degrees, primarily at the doctoral level, in their area of expertise. In addition, candidates must be recognized by their peers as having made a major contribution to their specific field of expertise, as indicated by explicit evaluation by at least 3 external reviewers, and should have demonstrated ability to continually fund their research by generating sufficient external funding.

The School of Polymers and High Performance Materials also requires the candidates being reviewed during their pre-tenure review and applicants for tenure and for promotion to associate professor to present a short half-hour discussion of their future plans to interested tenured faculty. The discussion is not to be a detailed scientific lecture. The topics in the discussion are expected to focus on sustainable long term research plans but may also include future plans for teaching and service. The discussion is not meant to be an oral interview or exam, but rather an opportunity for the candidate to clearly define their goals and ambitions for their career, and for tenured faculty to provide guidance to the candidate.

Candidates for promotion and tenure should be prepared to develop their materials according to the School guidelines, beginning during the academic year prior to that in which the tenure/promotion evaluation will occur. Consult the College calendar for specific dates each year. School guidelines are available from the School Director or office personnel.