

The University of Southern Mississippi Department of Physics and Astronomy

Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

Introduction

The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Handbook includes statements regarding (1) Evaluation Standards, (2) Eligibility for Promotion, (3) Credit for Prior Accomplishment, (4) Early Promotion, and (5) Denial of Promotion. The processes for submitting applications for tenure and promotion are also described. According to the Faculty Handbook, tenure and promotion are two separate issues evaluated by the same process.

University policy requires that academic units formulate standards reflecting any considerations specific to their disciplines, provided that they do not conflict with university standards. Promotion in academic rank requires demonstrable merit, on a continuing basis, in the stated categories of evaluation.

Assessment for Tenure and Promotion in the Department of Physics and Astronomy

Candidates for tenure and promotion will be judged based upon the quality, effectiveness and scope of their research, teaching and service. The typical successful candidate is expected to demonstrate “satisfactory” achievement in all three areas according to annual evaluations.

The expectations of the department for the third-year review, tenure and promotion to each rank are described below.

Third Year Review

A non-tenured faculty member holding a tenure-track position will be evaluated for progress toward tenure during the third year following the initial appointment. This review will employ annual evaluations and a dossier provided by the faculty member. Upon submission of the dossier, the Departmental Personnel Committee (see the Faculty Handbook) will assess these materials and make its recommendation. A positive review will reflect the fact that the faculty member is making satisfactory progress towards tenure. If the faculty member is not making satisfactory progress towards tenure, the Committee will describe the deficiencies and advise the faculty member on improvements in these areas. The Chair of the department will write a separate letter of recommendation and these departmental recommendations will be submitted to the College Advisory Council (CAC).

Tenure

A faculty member who holds a tenure track position and who does not have tenure can apply for tenure with or without promotion. The Departmental Personnel Committee, the Chair and CAC will make separate recommendations for tenure and promotion utilizing annual evaluations and a tenure and promotion dossier submitted by the candidate. Tenure criteria generally conform to those for promotion to Associate Professor, as discussed below. Recommendation for tenure, in addition, reflects a positive assessment of the candidate's collegiality and potential for ongoing achievement in the areas of research, teaching and service.

Promotion to Associate Professor

The Departmental Personnel Committee and the Chair will consider the following criteria in formulating recommendations regarding promotion to Associate Professor. The candidate's dossier and annual evaluations will be employed in this process.

Except as noted, no single criterion should be regarded as an absolutely necessary condition. The evaluation may involve additional relevant factors as warranted.

Research and Scholarship

- (1) Quality, quantity and chronology of publications in refereed journals
- (2) Presentations in state, regional, national and international conferences and workshops, seminars and publications in conference proceedings
- (3) Submission of proposals for research and/or student support

Publication in refereed journals is essential. The typical successful candidate will publish at least one paper per year on the average.

Submission for external funding is essential. This proves that the candidate is trying to establish a research effort independent of initial support from the university. While receiving external funding strengthens the candidate's case, it is not essential in order to achieve promotion.

Teaching

- (1) Teaching of service courses (such as PHY 111/112, AST 111/112 and PHY 201/202)
- (2) Teaching of upper-division undergraduate physics courses
- (3) Teaching of graduate courses
- (4) Development of undergraduate or graduate courses (including laboratory courses)
- (5) Mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students in research
- (6) Quality and effectiveness of teaching

Evidence of teaching effectiveness can include (i) satisfactory student evaluations of classroom teaching, (ii) satisfactory in-class observation, (iii) outcome of student research such as student presentations in conferences and publications with students, (iv) letters of recommendation from former students (if available) who are not currently taking classes or working under the supervision of the candidate, and/or (v) a teaching portfolio submitted as part of the candidate's dossier. The typical successful candidate will have received "satisfactory" or higher rankings on annual evaluations.

Service

- (1) Serving on departmental, college and university committees
- (2) Professional outreach such as presentations to the general public, including K-12
- (3) Participation in state, regional, national and international organizations in his/her area of expertise (by, for example, serving as a referee for articles or grant proposals) and/or related student societies

Letters of Recommendation

While there is no requirement for external letters of recommendation when applying for promotion to Associate Professor, it will strengthen the case of the candidate if such letters are available (especially from persons other than former Ph.D./postdoctoral advisors). Letters from former students or postdoctoral fellows are acceptable as testament to the teaching and mentoring ability of the candidate, but not as assessments of the candidate's research.

Early Promotion

It is possible for a candidate to apply for an early promotion to Associate Professor, as described in the Faculty Handbook. In this case the candidate is expected to have an exceptionally strong record of refereed publication and a substantial amount of external research funding.

Promotion to Professor

The Departmental Personnel Committee and the Chair will consider the following criteria in formulating recommendations regarding promotion to Full Professor. The candidate's dossier and annual evaluations will be employed in this process.

Except as noted, no single criterion should be regarded as an absolutely necessary condition. The evaluation may involve additional relevant factors as warranted.

Research and Scholarship

- (1) Sustained publication record in refereed national and international journals
- (2) Sustained record of presentations in state, regional, national and international conferences and workshops, seminars and publication in conference proceedings
- (3) Evidence that the candidate's research is nationally and internationally recognized and has made an impact in his/her field of research
- (4) Sustained record of submission of proposals to external funding agencies and receipt of external funding
- (5) Letters of recommendation from peers who are recognized as leaders in the candidate's field of research

The department will not set a minimal required number for refereed publications. The department will consider an average of two refereed national and/or international journal papers per year as a good record of publication.

The candidate will request three letters of recommendation from recognized authorities in his/her field of research. The candidate will also submit six additional names of recognized authorities in his/her field of research to the Departmental Personnel Committee. The Committee will choose three people from this list and will request three more letters of recommendation from them. The level of recognition of the candidate's research will be assessed utilizing the submissions of the reviewers. The candidate's Ph.D. advisor, postdoctoral advisor, and current or former students and postdoctoral fellows cannot serve as reviewers.

Teaching

- (1) Teaching of undergraduate and graduate courses
- (2) Development of undergraduate and graduate courses
- (3) Sustained record of effectiveness in teaching
- (4) Sustained record of mentoring undergraduate and graduate students in research
- (5) Graduating M.S. students

Evidence of teaching effectiveness can include (i) satisfactory student evaluations of classroom teaching, (ii) satisfactory in-class observation, (iii) outcome of student research such as student presentations in conferences and publications with students, (iv) letters of recommendation from former students (if available) who are not currently taking classes or working under the supervision of the candidate, and/or (v) a teaching portfolio submitted as part of the candidate's dossier. The typical successful candidate will have received "satisfactory" or higher rankings on annual evaluations.

Since the department does not have a stand-alone Ph.D. program, the candidate is not required to graduate Ph.D. students. The candidate must have graduated at least two M.S. students (Thesis or Project option) and/or Ph.D. students at the time of application for a full professorship.

Service

- (1) Serving on college and university committees, in addition to departmental service
- (2) Professional outreach such as presentations to the general public, including K-12
- (3) Participation in state, regional, national and international organizations in his/her area of expertise
- (4) Serving in a leadership role in state, regional, national and international organizations in his/her area of expertise
- (5) Serving as reviewer of articles in refereed journals and proposals for funding agencies

Serving in a leadership role can involve student-oriented societies such as the Society of Physics Students, professional societies such as American Institute of Physics, organizing committees and/or international advisory committees of regional, national and international meetings, conferences and workshops.

Promotion Guidelines for Instructor/Lecturer/Senior Lecturer and Assistant/Associate/Full Teaching Professor

Introduction

The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Handbook includes statements regarding (1) Evaluation Standards, (2) Eligibility for Promotion, (3) Credit for Prior Accomplishment, (4) Early Promotion, and (5) Denial of Promotion. The processes for submitting applications for promotion are also described. University policy requires that academic units formulate standards reflecting any considerations specific to their disciplines, provided that they do not conflict with university standards. Promotion in academic rank requires demonstrable merit, on a continuing basis, in the stated categories of evaluation.

Standards for promotion in non-tenure track positions are described in the following guidelines. There are two such tracks, from Instructor to Lecturer to Senior Lecturer and from Assistant to Associate to Full Teaching Professor. It is expected that candidates in the latter track will possess the terminal degree in Physics or a closely-related discipline. Additionally, a candidate who holds the position of Instructor/Lecturer/Senior Lecturer and subsequently acquires the terminal degree may apply for promotion to Assistant Teaching Professor.

The standards for each possible promotion are outlined below. Under the categories of Teaching, Scholarship and Curriculum Development, and Service, there are both basic expectations and possible additional areas of contribution. In order to secure promotion, a candidate should both meet all required expectations and provide evidence of substantial additional endeavors in one or more of the three categories. Additionally, all of the listed promotions require that the candidate participate in an effective working relationship with students and colleagues.

Promotion from Instructor to Lecturer

The departmental personnel committee and the chair will consider the following criteria in formulating their recommendations regarding promotion to Lecturer. In addition to the candidate's dossier, annual evaluations can be employed in this process. In order to secure promotion, the candidate should provide evidence of meeting all expectations and contributing notably in one or more additional areas.

Teaching

Expectations:

The candidate should demonstrate effective teaching practices. Relevant evidence can include student evaluations, peer evaluations, assessment metrics and recommendation letters from other faculty and/or former students.

Additional:

- Particularly strong teaching may be demonstrated by the submission of a teaching portfolio indicating effective implementation of pedagogical practices.
- The candidate may provide evidence of teaching a broad range of courses across the curriculum.

Scholarship and Curriculum Development

Expectations:

- The candidate should demonstrate active refinement of the material used in courses as necessary.
- The candidate should actively participate in departmental efforts regarding the curriculum, including discussions regarding course materials and assessment efforts.

Additional:

- An additional contribution at this level could involve the design of a new course, a substantial redesign of a course or the implementation of a different delivery mechanism (such as an online course).
- The candidate may provide evidence of additional scholarship efforts including grant proposals, publications, and presentations.

Service

Expectations:

The candidate should participate in service activities including department meetings and departmental committees.

Additional:

- An additional contribution at this level could include participation in University or College level committees.
- The candidate may contribute by advising a student organization, serving in professional societies or participation in University outreach and recruitment.

Promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer

The departmental personnel committee and the chair will consider the following criteria in formulating their recommendations regarding promotion to Senior Lecturer. In addition to the candidate's dossier, annual evaluations can be employed in this process. In order to secure promotion, the candidate should provide evidence of meeting all expectations and contributing notably in one or more additional areas.

Teaching

Expectations:

The candidate should demonstrate a consistent history of effective teaching practices. Relevant evidence can include student evaluations, peer evaluations, assessment metrics and recommendation letters from other faculty and/or former students.

Additional:

- Particularly strong teaching may be demonstrated by the submission of a teaching portfolio indicating effective implementation of pedagogical practices.
- The candidate may provide evidence of teaching a broad range of courses across the curriculum.

Scholarship and Curriculum Development

Expectations:

- The candidate should demonstrate active refinement of the material used in courses as necessary.
- The candidate should actively participate in departmental efforts regarding the curriculum, including discussions regarding course materials and assessment efforts.
- The candidate should participate in the design of a new course, substantially redesign an existing course or implement a different delivery mechanism (such as an online course).
- The candidate should provide evidence of proposal submission that is relevant to educational efforts (including, for example, internal Improvement of Instruction grants or external Open Educational Resources grants).

Additional:

The candidate may provide evidence of additional scholarship efforts including other types of grant proposals, publications, and presentations.

Service

Expectations:

- The candidate should participate in service activities at the departmental level including meetings and committees.
- The candidate should make additional service contributions which could include participation in University or College level committees, advising a student organization, serving in professional societies or participation in University outreach and recruitment.

Promotion from Instructor/Lecturer/Senior Lecturer to Assistant Teaching Professor

The departmental personnel committee and the chair will consider the same criteria for promotion listed above (in the case of an Instructor or Lecturer) or continued satisfaction of the criteria listed for promotion to Senior Lecturer (in the case of a Senior Lecturer) in formulating their recommendations regarding promotion to Assistant Teaching Professor. In addition to the candidate's dossier, annual evaluations can be employed in this process. In order to secure promotion, the candidate should provide evidence of meeting all expectations and contributing notably in one or more additional areas. Candidates for this promotion are also expected to have attained the terminal degree.

Promotion from Assistant to Associate Teaching Professor

The departmental personnel committee and the chair will consider the following criteria in formulating their recommendations regarding promotion to Associate Teaching Professor. In addition to the candidate's dossier, annual evaluations can be employed in this process. In order to secure promotion, the candidate should provide evidence of meeting all expectations and contributing notably in one or more additional areas.

Teaching

Expectations:

The candidate should demonstrate effective teaching practices. Relevant evidence can include student evaluations, peer evaluations, assessment metrics and recommendation letters from other faculty and/or former students.

Additional:

- Particularly strong teaching may be demonstrated by the submission of a teaching portfolio indicating effective implementation of pedagogical practices.
- The candidate may provide evidence of teaching a broad range of courses across the curriculum.

Scholarship and Curriculum Development

Expectations:

- The candidate should demonstrate active refinement of the material used in courses as necessary.
- The candidate should actively participate in departmental efforts regarding the curriculum, including discussions regarding course materials and assessment efforts.
- The candidate should participate in the design of a new course, substantially redesign an existing course or implement a different delivery mechanism (such as an online course).

Additional:

- The candidate could contribute by proposal submission that is relevant to educational efforts (including, for example, internal Improvement of Instruction grants or external Open Educational Resources grants).
- The candidate may provide evidence of additional scholarship efforts including other types of grant proposals, publications, and presentations.

Service

Expectations:

- The candidate should participate in service activities at the departmental level including meetings and committees.
- The candidate should make additional service contributions which could include participation in University or College level committees, advising a student organization, serving in professional societies or participation in University outreach and recruitment.

Promotion from Associate to Full Teaching Professor

The departmental personnel committee and the chair will consider the following criteria in formulating their recommendations regarding promotion to Full Teaching Professor. In addition to the candidate's dossier, annual evaluations can be employed in this process. In order to secure promotion, the candidate should provide evidence of meeting all expectations and contributing notably in one or more additional areas.

Teaching

Expectations:

- The candidate should demonstrate a consistent history of effective teaching practices. Relevant evidence can include student evaluations, peer evaluations, assessment metrics and recommendation letters from other faculty and/or former students.
- The candidate should provide evidence of teaching a broad range of courses across the curriculum.

Additional:

- Particularly strong teaching may be demonstrated by the submission of a teaching portfolio indicating effective implementation of pedagogical practices.

Scholarship and Curriculum Development

Expectations:

- The candidate should demonstrate active refinement of the material used in courses as necessary.
- The candidate should actively participate in departmental efforts regarding the curriculum, including discussions regarding course materials and assessment efforts.
- The candidate should participate in the design of a new course, substantially redesign an existing course or implement a different delivery mechanism (such as an online course).
- The candidate should provide evidence of proposal submission that is relevant to educational efforts (including, for example, internal Improvement of Instruction grants or external Open Educational Resources grants).

Additional:

- The candidate may provide evidence of additional scholarship efforts including other types of grant proposals, publications and presentations.
- The candidate may play a leadership role in departmental curriculum efforts.

Service

Expectations:

- The candidate should participate in service activities at the departmental level including meetings and committees.
- The candidate should make additional service contributions which could include participation in University or College level committees, advising a student organization, serving in professional societies or participation in University outreach and recruitment.