

Promotion and Tenure Policy
Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences

This document indicates the procedures and criteria to be followed for promotion and the granting of tenure in the Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences. It is supplemental to and does not supersede any University-wide policies concerning promotion and tenure. All faculty and potential candidates for tenure and/or promotion are urged to consult the University of Delaware's policy on promotion and tenure as reflected in the Faculty Handbook. Amendments and alterations to this document can be made in accordance with Section 6 of the Bylaws of the Department of Geography & Spatial Sciences.

1 Procedure

Any faculty member (including the Chair of the Department) has the right to apply for promotion (subject to the provisions described in Section 4.4 of the Faculty Handbook) and they (hereafter referred to as the 'Candidate') have the exclusive right to withdraw the dossier from the promotion process at any time. The request to apply for promotion must be made in writing to the Chair of the Department by April 30 who must then announce this request to the faculty and activate the Department Promotion and Tenure committee (PTC) by May 15. A timetable for the completion of the various steps in the promotion and/or tenure process is given in the Faculty Handbook.

The PTC will consist of three faculty members at the rank of Associate or Full Professor. In the event that there are fewer than three faculty members of qualifying rank, the committee will appoint a faculty member from another department at the rank of Associate or Full. The members of the PTC will be elected at the beginning of each academic year and serve throughout the promotion and tenure process for any faculty member who initiates a candidacy for promotion and tenure. Election will be made by a majority of voting-eligible faculty. For in-rank reviews ad hoc committees could be chosen at the preference of the faculty member to ensure coverage of their own topical areas of expertise.

The Chair will ask for faculty suggestions, gain the approval of kindred faculty participation, and then obtain the approval of the majority of voting faculty. Under unusual circumstances, the term of a given PTC may extend beyond one academic year if cases of promotion under its purview also extend beyond its normal one-year term, but in no instance will the same PTC consider new cases unless elected to a second or subsequent term. One of the committee members shall be elected by the Department faculty as Chair of the PTC. Once its membership is constituted, the PTC shall institute evaluation procedures based on the specifications outlined in this document and according to the timetable given in the Faculty Handbook. While the dates listed represent deadlines, items should be completed at an earlier date whenever possible.

The PTC acts for the Department in an organizing role. It is the responsibility of the PTC to provide assistance (when asked) to the candidate in the assembly of the dossier, assemble the external letters, draft preliminary reports on teaching, research, and service, and prepare a presentation of the dossier to the faculty, with the Candidate, Chair of the Department, and any faculty serving on subsequent review committees (e.g. Faculty Senate P&T) in absentia. The selection of external reviewers will follow the process outlined in the faculty handbook Section 4.4.12. .

The Candidate will have the opportunity to suggest potential external reviewers and indicate who may have possible biases or conflicts. The PTC will take the Candidate's comments under advisement, but is the ultimate arbiter for reviewer invitation. The PTC will determine the final list of evaluators who are recognized scholars in the Candidate's field and solicit external reviews of the Candidate's scholarly work. In the solicitation of external reviews, the PTC must include for reviewers the Candidate's curriculum vitae, a description of the Candidate's workload with instructions for how to review it, and the Department's Promotion and Tenure Policy, and statements and materials (as appropriate to the review for the particular faculty member's classification). A minimum of five external review letters are necessary for inclusion in the Candidate's dossier.

The dossier (excluding external reviewer letters) will be made available to the department faculty prior to the vote on a Candidate's application for promotion and/or tenure. The faculty present at this meeting will include all continuing-track, tenure-track, research, and tenured voting faculty members with Geography & Spatial Sciences as a departmental home. At this meeting, all faculty members (i.e., continuing-track, tenure-track, and research faculty) at or above the rank that the candidate is seeking

shall then vote on the promotion and/or tenure of the Candidate. After this meeting, the Chair of the PTC, with the advice of the PTC and the feedback from the meeting of the faculty, shall finalize the written report on teaching, research, and service and record the vote taken by the faculty at that meeting, including the number of absentees and abstentions. These reports require approval from the PTC before being forwarded to the Chair of the Department and placed in the dossier. It must be understood that the Chair of the Department formulates their own evaluation of the nomination independently of the PTC.

The Candidate must receive a copy of the full, written summary letter that the PTC, representing the decision of the Department faculty as well as the Department Chair's recommendation letter. The Candidate has the option to appeal either of these reports in writing to the PTC and/or the Chair on or before the deadlines specified in the Faculty Handbook. The PTC and/or the Chair must respond in writing to any written appeal, notifying the Candidate of any changes that have been made in the recommendation as a result of the appeal and again, according to the schedule given in the Faculty Handbook.

2 Criteria

Considerations for promotion from one rank to another and the granting of tenure should result from excellence in scholarship, high quality teaching, and service, consistent with the Candidate's individual workload and faculty role (e.g. CT, TT, Research). For all faculty types, tenure-track, continuing-track and research, the same criteria for each category will be assessed but in the context of workload percentage and concomitant expectations for each category of teaching, scholarship, and service. Criteria for evaluation in each of these areas at each rank are enumerated in Section 4.4 of the Faculty Handbook. Unit level criteria to demonstrate excellence are described below.

2.1 Rank promotion

2.1.1 To Assistant Professor

Considerations for promotion from one rank to another and the granting of tenure should result from excellence in scholarship, and high quality teaching, and service, consistent with the Candidate's individual workload. University service and contribution to the professional discipline also add to the Candidate's level of achievement. The workload policy document and merit metrics outline how each of these areas will be evaluated. For all faculty types, tenure-track, continuing-track and research, the same criteria for each category will be assessed but in the context of workload percentage and concomitant expectations for each category of teaching, scholarship, and service. Criteria for evaluation in each of these areas and at each rank are outlined below:

2.1.2 To Associate Professor

For promotion to Associate Professor, the University Promotion and Tenure policy requires excellence in scholarship and/or teaching relative to the candidate's primary workload and high-quality in all areas. Two- and four-year reviews will be conducted for faculty seeking promotion to Associate Professor. Candidates will submit dossiers to the department promotion & tenure committee and chair for evaluation. The results of these reviews should be included in the dossier for promotion and tenure. Guidelines for the minimum standards for promotion are provided in Section 4.4 of the Faculty Handbook.

2.1.3 To Full Professor

This rank is reserved for individuals who have established reputations in the profession and whose contributions to the University's mission are unquestioned. There must be unmistakable evidence of significant achievement in teaching, scholarship, and service since the last promotion and consistent with the Candidate's workload. It should be stressed that the longevity of appointment at the associate professor rank alone shall not qualify an individual for promotion to full professor. All the criteria for promotion to Associate Professor shall be applied with the following additions:

To teaching: The Candidate shall demonstrate that content in their courses is continually updated to reflect general developments in the discipline and the Candidate's research is translated into their teaching activities. For tenured faculty and research faculty, the Candidate shall also have supervised a significant number of graduate students as chair of their committee as appropriate to workload and subdiscipline.

To scholarship: Unequivocal evidence of a consistent publication record which represents a significant impact in the field recognized at the national and international level, as judged by outside referees, citations in other published work, and invited papers at other institutions or conferences shall be expected. It is therefore encouraged but not required that at least two outside reviewers of the Candidate's scholarly work should be from outside the United States.

To service: Substantive service to both the university (at multiple levels) as well as the discipline and/or community engagement beyond that conducted for promotion to Associate Professor. The extramural service would typically (though not necessarily) involve service at national or international levels. The point here is that the magnitude and gravity of service to obtain full professor is categorically and inherently more significant and impactful than at the Associate Professor level.

2.2 Excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service

2.2.1 Teaching

To document excellence in teaching, candidates should provide evidence of Teaching Effectiveness (defined as excellence in teaching in the classroom), as well as advising and mentoring success, and may also provide evidence of Teaching Leadership (defined as scholarly or service contributions to the teaching community outside of the classroom) and contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through teaching related activities. The Teaching Quality Framework that was approved by the university administration in September 2024 will be used to guide our teaching evaluation.

Evidence of teaching effectiveness

a. Course Materials

- A narrative statement that contains a description of their primary teaching activities and primary teaching and learning goals, and any changes to teaching that address 2- and 4-year review recommendations.
- A sample of syllabi, examinations, and/or other teaching materials (e.g., activities, assignments, assessments, workflow, slide presentations) that demonstrate the rigor and appropriateness of their teaching.
- Quantitative or qualitative evidence that courses are designed to meet and assess significant stated learning goals.

b. Peer evaluations

- Observations by peers who have visited the candidate's classrooms and prepared letters describing their teaching. At minimum, the department faculty at rank or higher, will provide at least 1 peer evaluation prior to the 2- and 4-year reviews for each candidate prior to promotion to Associate Professor if classroom teaching constitutes a percentage of their workload.

c. Student reactions to the candidate's classroom teaching (if part of designated workload):

- Student course evaluations (qualitative and quantitative results) developed and administered by the Department
- Candidates may also include:
 - Personally-created course evaluations
 - Explanation of lower than average course evaluations in terms of course difficulty, teaching style, or other contextual factors.

d. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in teaching

In alignment with the University's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) candidates are encouraged to provide evidence of efforts to incorporate DEI principles in their teaching (e.g., including DEI related topics and/or scholars from under-represented backgrounds in course syllabi, participating in professional development opportunities related to inclusive teaching practices, mentoring students from underrepresented groups).

2.2.2 Scholarship

The candidate must have established a quality program of scholarship and must show an ability to independently organize, carry out, and sustain a research agenda equivalent to their stated workload. Quality is demonstrated by original research of significance to geography and its collaborating disciplines and by its broader impact. All scholarly work conducted at rank will be considered.

The research program may be related to previous doctoral or postdoctoral research but must show independence and growth. Within collaborative research efforts, it must be shown that the candidate has made a substantial contribution in an innovative way.

Peer-reviewed publication of research results is required for tenure-track and research faculty. Publication in refereed journals, peer-reviewed book chapters, and/or refereed books with academic presses are expected outlets. Any other scholarly output, such as editorially reviewed book chapters, review articles, commentaries, and monographs with popular presses, can be included as evidence of quality scholarship. The candidate's work should also be presented at professional meetings.

In addition to typical scholarly publication, output in other media and community engaged research may be offered as evidence of research quality. Published maps, publicly available Candidate generated datasets, and contributions to international reports should be recorded as evidence towards excellence. Other formats of evidence can include: patents and other product development, software, digital GIS, or multimedia output, distributed as physical media or as online resources. If such nontraditional media are a significant part of a case for promotion, it is especially incumbent upon the candidate to provide sufficient evidence of the type of review, nature of dissemination, breadth of usage, and external scholarly impact of such items. It is additionally incumbent upon the PTC to seek external reviewers who can evaluate the quality and impact of nontraditional output.

Both the quantity and quality of scholarship will be considered. Quality is evidenced by the evaluation of published works by the external reviewers and may also include consideration of the quality of the journals or presses in which published work appears. Because research in some areas produces fewer publications for a given effort, the quantity of publication per se is less important than quality and will be considered in light of the subfield, overall workload, and the number of research coworkers involved in research outputs (e.g.: postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduates). Mentoring and successful graduation of students engaged in research (undergraduate and graduate) will also be expected as a mark of scholarship impact.

It is expected that the candidate will actively seek and obtain funding (internal and/or external) to support their research program; evidence must be shown of continuing efforts to obtain funding. External funding is optimal, and the extent of external funding will be considered with regard to the availability of funds in the research area and the needs requisite to sustain independent support of their research enterprise. Collaborative funded research with other Departmental colleagues, especially between faculty members in human and physical geography, should be considered particularly noteworthy.

Other evidence of the quality of the research may include the following: invited papers and lectures, and other forms of intellectual property, awards, reputation in the field among peers (such as nominated honors and accolades), and potential for national reputation in their research specialty. The potential for continued growth of their research program is expected.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Scholarship

In alignment with the University's mission, Candidates are also invited to highlight how their research activities advance DEI. This could include 1) research that addresses issues related to DEI within a faculty member's area of expertise; 2) development of data sets, methodology, or theories that advance DEI; 3) evidence of collaboration with underrepresented and historically excluded communities; and 4) efforts to make research findings accessible to underrepresented audiences.

2.2.3 Service

Service at its most basic, includes service to the Department and to the programs within it, service to the University, and service to the academic and professional community as appropriate to designated workload and appropriately assessed vis-à-vis teaching and scholarship workload designations. Service additionally extends into community engaged work: as a Sea Grant, Land Grant, Space Grant institution, work that encompasses the target audience for extension programming falls under this purview. Additionally, work within the broader community as recognized by the status as a Carnegie Endowed Engaged institution shall be considered likewise.

3 The Dossier

A dossier is to be prepared by the Candidate and submitted to the PTC and the Department Chair by the deadline specified in the Faculty Handbook. The contents and organization of the dossier must follow the guidelines presented in Section 4.4 of the Faculty Handbook. In addition to evidentiary materials provided in the dossier, the Candidate should provide the PTC with sufficient copies of their written works, or provide them in digital form, so that each outside reviewer can have access to a complete set.

4 Appeals

The Candidate may appeal decisions at all levels of the Promotion and Tenure process, following the guidelines and deadlines indicated in the University Faculty Handbook.

Legislative History

- Geography Department discussion and revisions – March through October 2011
- Approved by Geography Faculty – November 2011
- CEOE Academic Council discussion and revisions – December 2013
 - Geography Department discussion and revisions suggested by CEOE – September through November 2014
- Approved by CEOE Academic Council – February 2015
- Approved by CEOE Dean – March 2015
- Revised and Approved by Geography Faculty- September 2016
- Submitted to CEOE for approval- November 2016
- Revised and Approved by Geography & Spatial Sciences Faculty May 13, 2024