

Revised and Approved: November 30, 1995  
Approved by UCTP: January 17, 1996  
Revised March 24, 2003  
Revised April, 2004  
Revised April 14, 2005  
Revised October 31, 2005  
Approved by UCTP: April 5, 2006  
Revised [February 25, 2013]  
UCTP Workgroup Comments: November 17, 2017  
Revised: April 30, 2018

## **DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**

*Approved UCTP September 2018*

### **Criteria and Standards for Promotion and Tenure**

The purpose of this Criteria and Standards for Promotion and Tenure document is to communicate to faculty members the Department of Geography's expectations concerning scholarly productivity, including the nature and quality of scholarly activities necessary to attain tenure and promotion. These criteria and procedures are consistent with the Faculty Manual and the guidelines established by the University Committee on Tenure and Promotions (UCTP) at the time of approval.

#### **I. PROMOTION**

According to the *Faculty Manual*, "the university is committed to achievement in research (including scholarship, visual arts, or performing arts), teaching and service. This commitment extends to interdisciplinary research, teaching, and service. Collectively, the faculty profile of the university and of any academic unit should reflect performance consistent with that of major research universities." These promotion and tenure criteria are adopted by the tenured faculty of the Department of Geography to fit its particular needs, while recognizing the disciplinary diversity of this Department. The criteria are not intended to prescribe a uniform pattern of accomplishments that must be achieved by all candidates for tenure and promotion. Rather, they identify ways of evaluating accomplishments in the three areas of research/scholarship, teaching, and service, while permitting the flexibility necessary to accommodate individual talents and interests within the general guidelines set by the College and the University in the Faculty Manual. In accordance with the Faculty Manual, candidates applying for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor appointed after January 1, 1995 have a choice whether to use the unit criteria and university standards in effect at the time of their hire, or the unit criteria and University standards in effect at the time of the application for tenure. Candidates who apply for promotion to Full Professor must use the criteria and standards in effect at the time of their application.

In the remainder of this document, it is understood that the following evaluative terms are defined as:

Outstanding: The candidate's performance is far above the minimally effective level. With regard to research and scholarship, output is of very high quality, and a national/international reputation is evident.

Excellent: The candidate significantly exceeds the minimally effective level of performance. With regard to research and scholarship, output is already of high quality, and a national/international reputation is clearly possible, if not likely.

Good: The candidate's performance is clearly above the minimally effective level. With regard to research and scholarship, he or she shows promise of high quality in the future.

Fair: The candidate meets the minimally effective level of performance.

Unacceptable: The candidate has accomplished less than the minimally effective level of performance.

#### A. Promotion to Associate Professor

To be eligible for promotion to Associate Professor, faculty members must possess a record of scholarly achievement in both teaching and research that constitutes evidence for consistent and continued professional development. Candidates for promotion to Associate Professor must demonstrate, at a minimum, an "Excellent" level of performance in either research/scholarship or teaching, and a "Good" level of performance in the remaining two categories. As well, candidates must demonstrate evidence of progress toward establishing a national or international reputation in their field.

##### 1. Research/Scholarship

Candidates for promotion to Associate Professor must have a recognized regional or national reputation as productive scholars, demonstrated by publications in peer-reviewed outlets and, where appropriate, extramural (i.e., from outside the university) grant activity. Activities indicating a "Good" level of performance must show evidence of an emerging professional program with one or more identifiable foci. The major publications must go substantially beyond research based on the doctoral dissertation. The assessment of research accomplishments is based on the existing published research record (including those items accepted for publication, but not any items under review). Publications normally include articles in geography and specialty journals. The candidate will specify his or her contributions in the case of multiple authored works. Because of variation from one sub-field to another, exact quantification of required published output is not possible; but as a general guide, candidates are expected to have produced approximately two refereed publications per year, or their equivalent. A mix of refereed publications and an original, peer-reviewed, research book published by a reputable press of national and international stature may also be considered to meet expectations for promotion. The scholarly record must include research presentations at regional, national, and/or international meetings of professional societies and organizations.

The widest possible array of evidence will be used to determine whether the candidate's record of research/scholarship exceeds these "Good" standards for promotion and qualifies as "Excellent." The body of evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Published reviews of the candidate's book(s), book chapters, and other scholarly outputs.
- b. Awards (Research honors, book prizes, professional society awards).
- c. Selection of work for republication, such as a chapter in a book, in a reprint series.
- d. Citation indices.
- e. Competitive fellowships (e.g., Guggenheim, Fulbright).
- f. Letters from outside Tenure and Promotion referees.
- g. Invitations to serve on editorial boards.
- h. Invitations to serve on scientific review panels.
- i. Invitations to present research (e.g. colloquia) at prominent national or international scholarly institutions.

## 2. Teaching

A candidate for promotion to Associate Professor must have an established record of quality and effectiveness as a teacher of both graduate and undergraduate students. A "Good" level of performance requires that the candidate's syllabi and course materials reflect course design and execution that substantially exceeds basic standards of acceptability. Average student ratings should be at least 3.5 on a 5.0 scale using approved evaluative methods. The candidate should have introduced new courses and/or revisions to existing courses that substantially improve course offerings. Finally, it is expected that the candidate has participated on graduate committees in the Department and/or in other departments.

The widest possible array of evidence will be used to determine whether the candidate's record of teaching exceeds these "Good" criteria for promotion and qualifies as "Excellent." The body of evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Consistent average student ratings scores above 4.0 on a 5.0 scale using approved evaluative methods.
- b. Positive evaluations from peer reviews of teaching, with emphasis placed on the most recent reviews.
- c. Thoughtful and creative course-related products and project materials (e.g. posters, story maps, photo-journals, or GIS models) produced by students.
- d. Successful implementation of innovative or experimental teaching techniques.
- e. Successful direction of undergraduate theses and/or research projects.
- f. Successful direction of graduate student research as main advisor.
- g. Integration of field experiences or service-learning with course work.
- h. Receipt of a teaching award.
- i. Peer reviewed publications in geographic education journals.

## 3. Service

Variation in the intensity and level of service activity necessitates flexible criteria. A “Good” record of service involves demonstration of consistent engagement in service activities in the Department, the University, the professional community, and the wider community. Normally this involves at least one specific area of responsibility, and service on several permanent and ad hoc committees, at the Department and/or University level. At the professional level, candidates are expected to show evidence of active participation in regional and/or national associations (e.g. by holding a leadership positions in professional associations or by organizing conference sessions) and service as a proposal or manuscript reviewer. Community service may include, but is not limited to, outreach and K-12 educational activities on behalf of the Department or professional organizations, public lectures, community advocacy work, media interviews, and contributions to blogs, popular journals, or other journalistic outlets.

## B. Promotion to Professor

To be eligible for appointment at the rank of Full Professor, a faculty member must have a record of superior performance and evidence of national or international stature in the field. The faculty member normally is expected to hold the earned doctor's degree and to have at least nine years of effective, relevant experience. Promotion to Full Professor requires, at a minimum, an “Outstanding” level of performance in the categories of research/scholarship or teaching, and an “Excellent” level of performance in the remaining two categories. The record should include evidence of a coherent professional program that includes one or more foci, and that connects research, teaching, and service contributions.

### 1. Research/Scholarship

“Excellent” performance in this area is required, with the major criterion being the national or international recognition of the quality of the candidate’s scholarship. The candidate is expected to demonstrate a sustained and consistent record of research accomplishments including publications in refereed outlets and, where appropriate, extramural grant activity (i.e. from outside the university). Publication must normally include articles in geography and specialty journals (including those items accepted for publication, but not including those items under review). Because of variation from one sub-field to another, exact quantification of required published output is not possible, but as a general guide, candidates are expected to produce approximately two refereed publications per year or their equivalent. In cases of multiple authorship, candidates will specify their contributions. A mix of refereed publications and an original, peer-reviewed, research book published by a reputable press of national and international stature may also be considered to meet expectations for promotion to Full Professor. The candidate should have published at least one “capstone” piece such as a major refereed article, book chapter, or book that draws together a defining statement of the candidate’s scholarly contribution. The scholarly record must include research presentations at regional, national, and/or international meetings of professional societies and organizations. The entire professional career of the candidate will be assessed in the promotion decision although more emphasis is placed on the candidate's accomplishments since last promotion.

The widest possible array of evidence will be used to determine whether the candidate's record of research/scholarship exceeds these "Excellent" criteria for promotion and qualifies as "Outstanding." The body of evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Published reviews of the candidate's book(s), book chapters, and other scholarly outputs.
- b. Awards (Research honors, book prizes, professional society awards).
- c. Selection of work for republication, such as a chapter in a book, in a reprint series.
- d. Citation indices.
- e. Competitive fellowships (i.e., Guggenheim, Fulbright).
- f. Letters from outside Tenure and Promotion referees.
- g. Invitations to serve on editorial boards or to edit journals.
- h. Invitations to serve on scientific review panels.
- i. Invitations to present research (in the form of colloquia, keynote addresses, named lectures, plenary lectures, or other invited presentations) at prominent national or international scholarly institutions, meetings, or symposia.

## 2. Teaching

The candidate must have a continuing record of commitment to quality undergraduate teaching and graduate training. An "Excellent" level of teaching performance is required. The candidate's syllabi and course materials must reflect course design and execution that exceeds a "Good" standard in terms of innovation, creativity, and rigor. Average student ratings should be consistently at or above 4.0 on a 5.0 scale using approved evaluative methods. The candidate should have introduced new courses and/or revisions to existing courses that substantially improve course offerings. Finally, it is expected that the candidate has successfully directed graduate student research as the main advisor and has participated on graduate committees in the Department and/or in other departments.

The widest possible array of evidence will be used to determine whether the candidate's record of teaching exceeds these "Excellent" criteria for promotion and qualifies as "Outstanding." The body of evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Consistent average student ratings scores above 4.5 on a 5.0 scale using approved evaluative methods.
- b. Positive evaluations from peer reviews of teaching, with emphasis placed on the most recent reviews.
- c. Creative course-related products and project materials (e.g. posters, story maps, photo-journals, conference papers, or GIS models) produced by students.
- d. Integration of field experiences or service-learning with course work.
- e. Receipt of a teaching award.
- f. Successful direction of undergraduate theses and/or research projects.
- g. Peer reviewed publications in geographic education journals.

## 3. Service

An “Excellent” record of service for candidates for promotion to Full Professor involves demonstration of consistent engagement in service activities in the Department, the University, the professional community, and the wider community. Within the Department, the candidate must have a record of a leadership role in shaping the academic program of the Department (e.g. by chairing departmental committees and/or directing departmental programs or centers). It is also expected that the candidate demonstrate an active role in collegiate and university governance structures indicative of the status of a senior scholar in the University. Service beyond the university in national and/or international settings is expected. Candidates for promotion to Full Professor are expected to show evidence of active participation in national and/or international professional associations (e.g. by holding leadership positions in professional associations) and/or service on the editorial boards of academic journals. Community service would include (but is not limited to) outreach and K-12 educational activities on behalf of the department or professional organizations, public lectures, community advocacy work, media interviews, and contributions to blogs, popular journals, or other journalistic outlets.

## II. TENURE

To be eligible for tenure, faculty members must possess a record of scholarly achievement that reflects a strong national reputation in their field. Teaching effectiveness and research accomplishments are the primary criteria for tenure, with professional service of secondary importance. Consistency and durability of overall performance during the probationary years are important considerations in the tenure decision. The specific requirements for tenure are the same as promotion to the rank of Associate Professor.

Faculty may be recommended for tenure upon appointment as associate or full professor. If hired from another institution, there is no set minimum time of service at USC before promotion to associate professor with tenure can be considered. The candidate’s total record will be considered for promotion and tenure. An extension of the probationary period for tenure and third year review is automatic for some circumstances, and upon request for other circumstances, in accordance with specifications in the Faculty Manual.

## III. PROCEDURES

### A. Notification of Eligibility

The Department Chair will notify all eligible candidates per the procedures outlined in the Faculty Manual and following the schedule released by the Provost’s Office Tenure and Promotion calendar. All tenure-track faculty who have completed the minimum years of service as specified in the Faculty Manual are considered for tenure, and all faculty members below the rank of professor, are considered for promotion each year. The Department Chair will discuss questions of eligibility with each candidate, as necessary and appropriate.

### B. Candidate Responsibilities

It is the candidate's responsibility to construct the file and to submit documentary evidence that will be used by the department in deciding on the candidate's application. The file will include a copy of the Departmental Tenure & Promotion Criteria, signed by the candidate. It will also include all memoranda of understanding (MOU) pertaining to the appointment of the candidate. The candidate should include a personal narrative describing accomplishment in each area of review. Supplemental files may include: a summary of teaching performance and load; reprints of publications; and other pertinent letters or documents relating to special awards, service activities, etc. The candidate must provide a list of all supplemental materials in the primary file.

### C. External Letters

In consultation with tenured faculty members of the Department, the Chair will obtain at least five evaluations of the candidate's research and scholarship from impartial scholars at peer or aspirant institutions within the field, outside the University of South Carolina. If a person can be shown to be one of the leading scholars in a particular field, that person may be used as an outside evaluator even if that person's institution is not peer or aspirant. Persons who have co-authored publications, collaborated on research, supervised the candidate's master's thesis, dissertation, or postdoctoral research, or served as a colleague or advisor of the applicant normally should be excluded from consideration as outside evaluators. All evaluators must be asked to disclose any relationship or interaction with the applicant. The candidate may not provide the names of potential referees. Referees will be supplied with copies of Departmental Tenure and Promotion criteria, the candidate's vita, representative publications selected by the candidate, and, if submitted by the candidate, a personal narrative. A vita or summary of the professional qualifications of each outside evaluator must be included in the candidate's file, along with a copy of the letter of request sent to each evaluator. Confidentiality of the peer review letters will be respected to the extent allowed by law.

### D. Joint Appointments

For joint appointments, the department will follow the guidelines established in the College of Arts and Sciences Procedures for Joint Appointments and the terms specified in memoranda of understanding (MOU). The department will work with the secondary unit to obtain a suitable and representative group of evaluators. The secondary unit will be given an opportunity to propose outside evaluators and to comment on evaluators proposed by the primary unit. An evaluation must be solicited from at least one evaluator nominated or approved by the secondary unit. The candidate's complete file will be made available to the secondary unit at least ten working days prior to the scheduled vote on the application by the Department of Geography's Tenure and Promotion Committee. The Chair of the secondary unit will solicit a review of the candidate by the appropriate faculty in the secondary unit and will provide a letter to the Chair of Geography summarizing the review. This letter must be placed in the candidate's file at least five working days prior to the department's vote on the application. "Appropriate" faculty in the secondary unit will include those of higher rank than the candidate. Faculty who are members of both the primary and secondary unit can only vote in the primary unit. The chair of the secondary unit will also provide to the Chair of Geography a written statement, to be included in the candidate's file, explaining the procedures by which the views of all faculty in the secondary unit eligible to

participate in the evaluation were solicited. In cases in which the secondary unit does not achieve consensus regarding a file, the secondary unit may submit two letters for inclusion in the candidate's file: a majority and a minority report. If there is a conflict between the specifications of the MOU and the tenure and promotion criteria of the Department of Geography, the criteria of the Department of Geography will have priority. If there is a conflict between the specifications of the MOU and the Faculty Manual, the Faculty Manual will have priority.

#### E. T&P Committee

The T&P Committee consists of all tenured faculty at the rank of Associate Professor or higher within the Department. The chair of the T&P committee is selected by the Department Chair each year. Only full professors are eligible to serve as the chair. The chair of the T&P committee will conduct the meeting during which the qualifications of the candidate are discussed.

Unit committees for candidacies for tenure and/or promotion must include at least five (5) members. In the event that the Department Committee on Tenure and Promotion does not contain a sufficient number of qualified members to constitute a unit committee, the Committee must recruit additional members from the tenured faculty of related disciplines at the University of South Carolina.

#### F. Voting Procedures

All tenured faculty members at the rank of Associate or Full Professor are eligible to vote on promotion to Associate Professor and tenure. Only tenured Professors are eligible to vote on promotion to Professor or tenure at the Professor rank. All tenured members should have reviewed the candidate's file to be eligible to vote. Any otherwise eligible faculty member who has a conflict of interest or a family or other close personal relationship with the candidate that could affect objectivity shall not vote or otherwise participate in the process. A faculty member on leave may vote only upon written notification to the Chair of the Department or Dean of a desire to do so before beginning the leave. The Department Chair may choose to vote on tenure and promotion cases as a member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, but the Chair may not then make further recommendations on cases at other points in the process. Voting will be by secret ballot, and the votes tallied by the chair of the T&P Committee. A positive vote by a majority of those voting is necessary to recommend tenure or promotion. Abstention votes will not count towards the total votes for the candidate in determining the existence of a majority vote. Written justification of all votes at the unit level, including abstentions, is mandatory and must state specifically how the candidate meets or does not meet the unit's criteria. Voting faculty members must submit their ballots with justifications within three days of the T&P meeting. Ballots and justifications may be signed or unsigned. All justifications become part of the official file transmitted to the Dean.

#### G. Chair's Responsibilities

In addition to notifying faculty members of eligibility for tenure and promotion, the Department Chair will be responsible for calling meetings of the tenured faculty to discuss tenure and



promotion cases. Recommendations from the unit Tenure and Promotions Committee, including the recording of votes and all written comments, are forwarded to the Department Chair. If the Chair has not voted with the T&P committee, he/she will at this point vote “yes” or “no” or “abstain” and will forward his/her vote with written justification. The Chair’s vote (if appropriate) along with all other recommendations, statements, and endorsements are then forwarded to the Dean for review.

#### H. Appeal Process

Candidates will be informed of the appeals process as specified in the Faculty Manual.