Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology
Auburn University
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Purpose

The Auburn University Faculty Handbook provides guidelines for how to evaluate candidates for Promotion & Tenure (P&T) but leaves some details up to Departments. This document clarifies P&T guidelines for all faculty members of the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology. It has two parts. In Part 1, we describe our P&T process. In Part 2, we describe our P&T criteria for research, teaching, Extension, and service.

Part 1. Department P&T Process

Initial Appointment Letter.

Each faculty member's appointment letter broadly defines expectations for their position, including the rough proportions of their effort that should be allocated to teaching, research, Extension, and/or service. These proportions can change depending on a faculty member's strengths and the Department's needs. But they serve as the basis for the evaluation of productivity.

Annual P&T Evaluation by the Faculty.

Each year, in February or March, Assistant Professors (non- and tenure-track) receive feedback on a draft of their P&T dossier from the tenured faculty. This is part of the Department's Faculty Mentoring program, and thus is run by the Faculty Mentoring Committee. Consult that committee and/or their documents for further detail. Here, suffice it to say that to make these reviews as informative as possible, the process follows a similar process as the Third Year Review and P&T Application.

Annual Evaluation by the Department Chair.

Also in each year, in January or February, all members of the Faculty submit an annual report of their scholarly activities to the Department Chair. This is done in accordance with the *Faculty Handbook* and in a format specified by the College of Agriculture. These evaluations are another source of feedback but only consider accomplishments by calendar year and function to determine possible merit-based raises. During the P&T process, the Department Chair's letter is a significant part of the P&T package, so the annual evaluations provide individuals with the Chair's insight on their progress.

Third Year Review.

The *Faculty Handbook* mandates a Third Year Review of all probationary and non-tenure track faculty by the tenured faculty in their department. This review takes place before the end of April in the third year of an appointment. The Third Year Review process is run by the Department Chair rather than the Faculty Mentoring Committee. The Third-Year review includes a vote by the tenured faculty as to whether or not the candidate is making acceptable progress towards promotion, and tenure when applicable. It is important to note that a successful Third-Year review is not a guarantee of promotion or tenure and failure to demonstrate clear progress towards P&T may lead to a letter of non-continuation (see *Faculty Handbook*, Chapter 3, Section 3.9.1.1, "Noncontinuation of Probationary Faculty"). If the faculty vote in the Third Year Review is a majority negative, the tenured faculty can either (1) set benchmarks that the probationary faculty must meet before the next Annual Evaluation, or (2) vote by secret ballot for non-continuation. Also, if in the Third-Year Review there is a majority-negative vote on acceptable progress towards promotion or tenure, all subsequent meetings to evaluate the progress of that probationary faculty member will be run by the Chair.

P&T Application.

Typically, after five years of service, an Assistant Professor (non- and tenure track) applies for promotion, and tenure if applicable. Likewise, faculty typically serve for at least five years at the Associate Level before applying for promotion to Full Professor. If a candidate has time in service from another institution, they may request earlier consideration for promotion; this request should be in writing at the time of the initial appointment (FH Chap. 3.3.4). Additionally, if a candidate has been particularly meritorious, an exception can be made, and the candidate can be considered early if they exceed the defined criteria with quality work. These situations are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Here is a rough schedule of steps for a P&T application (specific dates and deadlines are set by the Provost's and Dean's offices in each year):

- *Mid-March:* Candidate consults with Department Chair to decide whether or not to apply for promotion, and tenure if applicable. This meeting may be initiated by either the candidate or Department Chair. If the decision is to go forward, following the meeting the Department Chair begins the development of the material identified in the *Faculty Handbook*, Chap. 3.6.5.C3, "Information to be Supplied by the Department Chair".
- *April:* Candidate gives Department Chair a completed dossier as per guidelines set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*, Chap. 3.6.5.C2 "Information to be Supplied by the Candidate". The Chair may provide feedback on how to improve the dossier before sharing it with external reviewers. Candidates can continue to update their dossier until the deadline set by the Provost.
- *July:* Department Chair solicits external reviewers for evaluation of the candidate as set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*, Chap. 3.6.5.C3E, "Confidential Letters from Outside Reviewers."
- *August:* Department chair receives letters from external reviewers. These external reviewers and their letters are never shared with P&T candidates.
- *September:* Candidate's dossier is made available to the voting faculty of the Department

for review.

- *September:* Eligible faculty (at higher rank than candidate) meet to evaluate P&T applications. This meeting is run by the Department Chair. For tenure track faculty, this meeting ends with two votes: one on whether a candidate has earned promotion and another for the awarding of tenure. For non-tenure track faculty, only a vote for promotion is taken. The in-person and absentee votes are announced in the meeting.
- *October:* Department Chair finalizes the dossier and submits it to the College leadership.

Internal Letters.

As a dossier passes from the Department to the College P&T Committee, the University P&T Committee, and then the University's top leadership, letters are appended at each stage. At the Department level, these include (1) a letter written by the evaluating faculty, (2) a letter written by the Department Chair, summarizing their evaluation and vote, and (3) optionally, signed letters from individual faculty members expressing their own views. Here we provide guidance about the letter writing process.

- The process of writing the Letter from the Faculty should be transparent and inclusive. By default, the lead writer is the candidate's Faculty Mentor. If that is not possible, another member of the evaluating faculty is designated at the faculty meeting to write the Letter from the Faculty. The Letter from the Faculty should be addressed to the College P&T Committee.
- The Letter from the Faculty should share the result of the Faculty vote and summarize the discussion leading up to that vote. This should also address situations where expectations for the candidate deviate from the guidelines. Some editorial polishing is encouraged, but nothing outside of the discussion should be introduced. The weights given to specific strengths and weaknesses of an application should reflect the weights given in the faculty discussion.
- Faculty should not assume that members of the College or University Committees are familiar with our P&T guidelines when drafting their letter. Therefore, it should specifically assess a candidate's productivity in light of the criteria outlined in this document. The lead writer makes a first draft and shares it with the rest of the participating faculty. All comments and edits should be signed and appended to a common editorial thread. The letter should list faculty that reviewed and agree with the content of the letter.
- Letters from individual Faculty members are especially useful in the event of a split vote. In that case, letters should express both sides of opinion.
- The Department Chair should not participate in the writing of the letter from the Faculty. The Chair writes their own letter.

The candidate will be provided copies of all letters and, after reviewing these letters, has five business days for rebuttal. Those letters become part of the dossier before it progresses to the next stage.

According to the Faculty Handbook, the maximum duration of probationary academic appointments (i.e., non-tenured in a tenure-track position) is seven years. Thus, in typical cases, if a candidate is not granted tenure on the first attempt, they have one other chance. However, extensions might be granted by the Provost under certain circumstances (see FH, Chap. 3.6.4).

Criteria for Promotion and Tenure

Promotion vs. Tenure.

Promotion is separate from Tenure. To be promoted is to move up the professional ladder. Promotion decisions are based on a candidate's record of scholarly activity, that is, their achievements *based on appointment* in research, teaching, Extension, and/or service. By contrast, tenure is the end of probationary employment; it imparts a higher level of job security. Therefore, tenure decisions are based not scholarly productivity *per se*, but rather on a candidate's record of academic responsibility, professional integrity, and collegiality. Collegiality will be assessed using the questions outlined in the Faculty Handbook:

- Are the candidate's professional abilities and relationships with colleagues compatible with the departmental mission and with its long-term goals?
- Has the candidate exhibited an ability and willingness to engage in shared academic and administrative tasks that a departmental group must often perform and to participate with some measure of reason and knowledge in discussions germane to departmental policies and programs?
- Does the candidate maintain high standards of professional integrity?

Promotion to Associate Professor vs. to Full Professor.

The following guidelines apply to faculty of all ranks, unless noted otherwise. Thus, promotion to Full Professor is primarily a matter of sustained productivity. It is fundamental that over the course of their career, a faculty member is finding ways to increase the impacts of their programs in teaching, research, and Extension. A general rule of thumb is that, by their first promotion, a faculty member should have established a *regional and emerging national* reputation, and by their second promotion, an *established national reputation and provide evidence for international engagement in their field*. Positive national/international reputation may be documented by senior editor service (or higher) for reputable journal(s), invited talk(s) at national/international conferences, service on grant review panels for nationally/internationally competitive programs, securing research funding for national/international collaborations, or leadership at the national level in a professional society; this is not an exhaustive list. And expectations should be appropriate for the roles, responsibilities, and scope of the appointment. It is also expected that as a faculty member moves up the professional ladder, they take on more service work, and provide more leadership on and off campus.

Promotion Criteria: Research

The Department recognizes that there are many ways for faculty with research appointments to make positive contributions to their field and stakeholder communities. We also recognize the challenges associated with quantifying those contributions in a manner that is productive, fair, and consistent. Here, to make our research-based promotion criteria as explicit as possible we offer specific, quantitative guidelines for publication, grant-writing, student training, and other outputs. But we stress that these are only guidelines, not strict rules.

Here are the quantitative expectations **<u>per year</u>, per <u>25% research</u>** Full Time Equivalent (FTE):

- *Publication:* An average of one peer-reviewed research article in refereed journal(s). Journals should be varied and of good repute; full-length original research articles in society journals (e.g., ASM, ESA, APS, IMSE) will be preferred, including an average of 0.2 senior or corresponding author publications originating mostly from work at Auburn.

- *Grant-writing*. Faculty that do not have adequate funds for their program from extramural sources are expected to write and submit one competitive grant proposal. Successful grantsmanship often takes several attempts per year.

- *Student Training.* Faculty have the responsibility to train and mentor future scientists. Candidates should be major advisor for one new or continuing graduate student. Faculty are expected to recruit and fund their own students. (For appointments ≥ 25% research, at the time of application for Promotion to Associate Professor and Tenure the candidate should have graduated at least one student.)

- *Other Outputs.* One of any of the following: invited talks at scientific meetings or other departments, abstracts, conference proceedings, other non-refereed publications, copyrights, patents, and presentations at professional meetings.

We do not set explicit targets for levels of extramural funding. We acknowledge that some types of research are more expensive than others. The important thing is that the candidate for P&T has been able to secure whatever funding is needed to maintain a successful research program, and meet the quantitative expectations defined above and some of the qualitative criteria, below.

The following are qualitative criteria as well as questions to help formulate statements about research quality.

- *Impact on field*. Has a candidate’s research changed our understanding of entomology or plant-microbe interactions, or changed the way biologists can do research? Is their research novel? Integrative? Collaborative? Transformative?

- *Impact on community.* How has a candidate's research improved the lives of their stakeholders? Has it changed paradigms in production or pest management practices? Is their research practical? Inclusive? Economically valuable?

- *Undergraduate research experiences*. Research experience is key to quality instruction in STEM fields. Candidates are expected to provide these kinds of opportunities to a diversity of undergraduate students. Products or other outcomes from these experiences are particularly valued.

- *Service on graduate Advisory committees.*

- *Trainee labor market outcomes.* Has the candidate's students been placed into discipline-related positions after graduation?

- *Honors and Awards.* Receipt of research awards, including awards given to advisees, and invited talks.

Promotion Criteria: Instruction

The Department recognizes the Policy on Quality Instruction (*Faculty Handbook*, Chapter 4) and the many ways to contribute to the Departmental teaching mission. There are many effective methods to teach complex concepts, and academic freedom, as it applies to teaching, allows educators to present information in a way they believe is most effective.

For teaching quantity, here is the expectation **<u>per year, per 25%</u>** teaching Full Time Equivalent (FTE):

- Six credit hours of instructional workload (course instruction, graduate student advising [max of 3 credit hours], mentoring departmental undergraduate students [majors or minors] in research).
- A comprehensive peer review of teaching—three reviews prior to promotion to either Associate or Full Professor. Such a review should follow guidelines established by the Department's Peer Review of Teaching Committee.
- One scholarly contribution prior to each promotion. Examples include, but are not limited to, curriculum development; publication in peer-reviewed instructional journals; instructional grant(s); providing high impact experiences for undergraduates.

As with Research, this is a guideline, not a rule, and may vary from one year to the next depending on the needs of the department and other claims to the faculty member's efforts. As with research, this is the expectation once a candidate's teaching program has been established, the time until which may vary depending on the discipline and appointment. Note that the Dept. Chair may ask that a course not be taught because of enrollment minimums or other restrictions.

The evaluation of teaching quality is less straightforward. But here are some of the things that can be considered:

- *Implementation of research-backed approaches*. How does a candidate leverage pedagogy science to enhance their instruction? Details and help for approaches to engage students in active learning can be obtained through Auburn's Biggio Center.
- *Positive evaluation*. Has the candidate had favorable evaluations of their teaching by their peers? How have they responded productively to student, peer, or administrative inputs? For more details on the Peer Review of Teaching Process, consult that committee's documents.
- *Enrollment*. Has the candidate successfully maintained enrollment in course(s) above the minimum?
- *Awards and Honors.* Has the candidate's instructional efforts been awarded by the college, or university, or professional society? Has the candidate been invited to speak on their teaching methods?
- *High impact experiences for undergraduates*. Study tours and study abroad programs, and involvement with research, provide valuable learning experiences and candidates are encouraged to develop and lead these.
- *Curriculum development and maintenance*. Has the candidate developed new courses or made major revisions to courses already on the books? Is the candidate consistently updating material?

Promotion Criteria: Extension

The Department recognizes that there are many ways for faculty with Extension (ACES) appointments to make positive contributions to their stakeholder communities and discipline. We also recognize the challenges associated with quantifying those contributions in a manner that is productive, fair, and consistent. Here, to make our Extension-based promotion criteria as explicit as possible we offer specific, quantitative guidelines for publication, agent and citizen training, stakeholder interactions, and other achievements. But we stress that these are only guidelines, not strict rules.

Here are the quantitative expectations **per year, per 25% Extension** Full Time Equivalent (FTE):

- Publication of three ACES publications (e.g., ACES articles, timely information sheets, newsletters, popular press articles, etc.) that align with their area(s) of responsibility.
- Three citizen (e.g., county production meetings, field days) or agent training programs or demonstrations.
- Involvement with one workshop.

Here are the qualitative criteria as well as questions to help formulate statements about Extension program quality:

- *Impact on the community*. How has a candidate's Extension improved the lives of their stakeholders? Has it changed paradigms in production or pest management practices? Has it improved the health and economic outlook of people living in the Southeast? Has it improved public attitudes about basic and applied science? Has it improved the local environment or safeguarded local wildlife?
- *Responsiveness to community*. Is the candidate’s Extension program based on needs assessment(s)? Are current problematic situations being addressed? Have citizen surveys, focus groups, Priority Program Teams, and other stakeholders provided input into the candidates Extension program?
- *Collaboration* with ACES’s Priority Programming Team(s) as appropriate to assignment(s).
- *Fulfillment of appointment obligations*. Has the candidate addressed the needs of each of their assigned stakeholder groups?
- *Effective communication*. Has the candidate employed effective means to reach their stakeholders? For example, have they strategically used asynchronous communication (social media, podcasts, etc.), mass media (e.g., radio spots, TV broadcasts), direct contact (phone, site visits), and scheduled group events?
- *Funding for Extension projects*. Has the candidate been able to support the research needed to provide their stakeholders with timely and rigorous guidance about local and regional challenges?
- *Recognition*. Has the candidate reviewed awards, or in some other way been recognized by their stakeholders and professional organizations? *Professional participation and leadership.* Has the candidate been involved in Extension-related professional organizations? Have they provided leadership in those organizations?

Promotion Criteria: Service

All faculty members are expected to participate in self-governance, and the operational business of the department, college, and university by serving in various capacities, for example, on committees, boards, panels, task forces, and commissions. This activity is broadly known as service. Moreover, faculty members are expected to further their discipline by providing service to their professional communities by volunteering for their professional societies, serving as editors and reviewers for professional journals or other professional publication outlets, as well as serving on grant panels. Outreach is also considered service. Outreach differs from Extension in the lesser emphasis on program assessment. Examples of outreach activities might include visits to high schools to talk about Entomology or Plant Pathology, insect displays at campus events, and others. It is reasonable for service activities to occupy 5 to 10% of a faculty member's time.