

Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure

Department of Health Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

American University

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The Department of Health Studies (DHS) expects candidates for promotion and tenure to be demonstrably excellent scholars and teachers, and exemplars of meritorious service. A candidate who is unable to document impactful and sustained scholarship during the pre-tenure years will not be recommended for promotion to Associate Professor or tenure, even if their teaching record is excellent. Conversely, an excellent scholar who is an ineffective teacher will not be recommended for promotion or tenure.

In assessing a faculty member's achievements, the DHS is directed by the standards, timetables, and procedures for reappointments, promotion, and tenure as stipulated in the Faculty Manual, supplemented by instructions from the Dean of Faculty, the Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Actions, and the Dean of CAS. The DHS is also guided by principles of inclusive excellence when assessing a faculty member's research, teaching, and service throughout the tenure and promotion process.

The guidelines that follow are intended to assist faculty as they reflect on their development as scholars and teachers relative to reappointment, promotion, and tenure. They are also intended to guide DHS's Rank and Tenure Committee (RTC) and Chair in fulfilling their responsibilities during the promotion and tenure process. These guidelines are only one of several resources for candidates to consult, particularly the university policy guidelines mentioned above.

The field of Health Studies embraces subfields that draw from several academic and professional disciplines. Thus, faculty research agendas and products are associated with different epistemologies, methodological regimens, and authorship styles and formats. Assessments of candidates' attainments must include evidence of commitment to, and mastery of, one or more of these different conventions.

Promotion to the rank of Professor is primarily the result of the faculty member's level of sustained and cumulative scholarly achievement, high-quality teaching, and exemplary service. Length of time in rank or at AU is not a factor in promotion to Professor, nor is the number of years taken to warrant consideration for promotion.

The following three sections delineate criteria currently in use to define and describe excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service. As a general principle, faculty members are expected to achieve high quality performance in each area. Strength in one area cannot compensate for weak performance in another. In sum, the goals for reappointment, tenure, and promotion must include excellence in all three areas.

Scholarship

Scholarship refers principally to the creation and dissemination of knowledge to audiences of scholars, which may include other researchers in a particular area, practicing health-related professionals, and interested parties among the general public. Because the criterion of excellence in scholarship is connotatively broad, it cannot be measured by a fixed number of publications. Thus, “excellence” in scholarship is measured by work that is significant in advancing a field of inquiry or discipline related to health studies. Embedded into the expectations of scholarship is the value of inclusive excellence in scholarly activities. Faculty are encouraged to demonstrate diversity, equity, and inclusion and how these principles are operationalized in their research agenda.

External Funding and Grants

Candidates for tenure and promotion are expected to be the Principal Investigator or Multi-Principal Investigator of an externally funded grant. We equally value grants obtained as Multi-Principal investigator given the vital role of team science in the Health Sciences. Serving as a Co-Investigator is valued if the person is an active part of leading the research. Some credit will also be given for actively seeking external funding which was not successful. In reporting sponsored research application activity, candidates may, at their discretion, include information concerning the scores and reviews or the stage of their submissions received. Although all funding applications are considered important in the evaluation process, we particularly value applications for which the candidate is Principal Investigator (or Multi-Principal Investigator). Should the candidate receive a high score indicating a positive peer review, but funding not be made available, this will be considered in the review. Applications may be made to a wide range of funding sources (e.g., federal agencies, state agencies, private foundations). We value a wide range of funding resources because we recognize that bias exists in the external grant review process (e.g., racial bias towards Black principal investigators for NIH awards which can impact inclusion and advancement of Black faculty). Our evaluation of the receipt of an award as an indicator of scholarly accomplishment will be stronger insofar as the particular funding source conducts a rigorous review process. Finally, though external funding is expected, substantial external funding may not be an applicable standard in all subfields, and it is the candidate’s responsibility to make that case.

Scholarship expectations can be met in several ways. The traditional norm in DHS is that faculty members should have published a significant body of work in refereed, scholarly journals to meet the standard. Other work such as book chapters or a textbook or a monograph may also be used as scholarship activities.

In the interest of clarity, the following comments are offered for guidance:

- Publishing in refereed, scholarly journals is considered the standard with metrics that provide the reach and impact of the work. Both the number of papers and quality of the journals will be considered during the review. We recognize that the rate and quantity of publications for faculty who are engaged in community collaborations may require more time for building consensus and partnerships for products such as publications.
- Publishing in online journals will be considered if the editorial and refereeing processes are demonstratively commensurate with established disciplinary standards.

- Refereed book chapters are more highly weighted than invited book chapters; however, book chapters that present original research would be more valued than general refereed book chapters.
- Invited articles and edited collections are valued but the weights credited will vary. The former may attest to the stature of a scholar and will be considered in the context of the invitation.
- An edited collection of original scholarship could represent an expansion of established knowledge and would be valued as such, whereas an edited collection of previously published scholarship or conference proceedings would carry a lesser value.
- Other types of publications, such as chapters in edited collections, non-refereed journals, substantive encyclopedia entries and research reports, are valued but generally less so than refereed journal articles and books.
- Conference presentations are an indication of involvement in a candidate's field.
- Professional honors or awards for scholarship do serve as evidence of scholarship, as do keynote or invited presentations at scholarly venues and events, which may be noteworthy for a candidate advancing to a full professor.

Styles of authorship vary across the many specialized subfields within Health Studies. The range of standard usage makes it imperative that candidates detail the nature of the applicable convention relative to his or her contributions. In many subfields, first or single-authored publications carry the most weight. Further, in some fields, last author publications are weighted more heavily and may be a sign of effective mentorship. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to provide information about the normative practices regarding the listing of authors in their subfield.

The *Faculty Manual* stipulates that, "The University shall base its assessment of a faculty member's achievements on the aggregate productivity and impact of the work since degree completion, including evidence that the faculty member is productive at AU" (Section 10(b)). Accordingly, when a faculty member is evaluated for reappointment, promotion and tenure, their publication record prior to joining the DHS faculty is considered but there must be evidence of work completed at AU.

Assessment of the impact of a faculty member's scholarship through quantitative indicators, such as impact factors, "h-index," the direct citation of articles, or download of articles may be used by DHS. Other methods of demonstrating impact (but not all methods are required at once) include direct citation, acceptance rates, views and downloads, documentation of a peer adopting an innovation or practice, invitations to speak or engage in further scholarly activity because of previous publications or activities, mentions in social media, high attendance counts at presentations, etc. In addition to impact factors, DHS may rely on multiple measures, and values external assessments by established scholars who do not have personal or professional relations with the candidates under review. Such evaluations are required during review for tenure and promotion as determined by the *Faculty Manual*, the Dean of Faculty, the Committee on Faculty Actions, and the Dean of CAS. In addition, DHS values community-based scholarship and research activities which result in public impact, which can be demonstrated through a number of different professional and public outlets. DHS also recognizes that some community-based work that may result in having a significant public impact may be undervalued in

traditional scholarly outlets. Examples of this might include community-based presentations, testifying in a public hearing, or serving on a community-advisory board. These activities should not be overlooked in the totality of one's work.

Excellence in scholarship requires a sustained record of impactful, knowledge-expanding scholarly publications and, as noted in the *Faculty Manual*, evidence of "the likelihood of continued successful achievements." Indicators of a well-grounded **future** research trajectory include grant submission under review, articles under review at peer-reviewed journals, contracted book manuscripts or other works-in-progress, or peer-reviewed presentations at academic and professional conferences. Published scholarly works consist of scholarship that has been submitted and accepted in final form and scheduled for publication. Work under review, even if revised and resubmitted, does not constitute publication. Publication contracts or submitted work under review do not count toward published work but rather as indicators of one's scholarly trajectory.

Promotion to Full Professor

To be promoted to Professor, faculty members must demonstrate new funding since obtaining tenure and a continuing and sustained record of outstanding scholarship. This typically includes a body of publications in refereed, scholarly journals that demonstrate the faculty member is an expert in their respective field. This body of work represents, in scope, significance, and scholarly rigor, an achievement such as a significant body of high-quality articles in refereed, scholarly journals important to the candidate's field; or another set of publications, such as multiple edited works or other productions that involve substantial contributions to the field of inquiry. Other activities appropriate to a senior scholar may include but are not limited to refereed chapters, scholarly refereed presentations, training grants and contracts, or equivalents.

Teaching

The University's commitment to the scholar-teacher ideal requires demonstrated evidence that excellence is achieved in both teaching and research. Teaching encompasses a variety of instructional activities including classroom instruction, engaging individual learners using diverse methods, community-based learning activities, and working proactively to reach audiences in formal and informal settings. Achieving and maintaining a superior level of achievement in teaching and, more broadly, in a wide spectrum of instructional activities, is a prerequisite for reappointment, promotion, and tenure in DHS. Central to maintaining a superior level of achievement in teaching is inclusive excellence. The department envisions inclusive excellence in teaching as involving the equitable engagement of all students in valuable learning experiences and the use of teaching methods and materials that incorporate diverse experiences and sources of knowledge. Faculty are encouraged to provide specific examples of how they manifest the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their teaching practices within their teaching portfolio.

The evaluation of teaching must be accompanied by the entire portfolio of teaching and instruction-related activities and accomplishments. The Office of the Dean of Faculty's website provides instructions [here](#). A teaching portfolio should include the following:

A. Holistic teaching narrative (as currently required in Files for Action - comprehensive narrative): Faculty reflect on performance of their courses (what worked, what actions to change/improve, etc.) and address achievements, including engagement with students beyond the classroom and any new curricular initiatives. Faculty are expected to employ inclusive

practices in teaching and instructional activities (including mentoring and advising). Faculty should strive to detail, where possible, these inclusive practices (e.g., strategies to address internal bias, to incorporate antiracism into teaching and mentoring, to build an inclusive classroom, to address issues such as how stereotype threat impacts learning, to accommodate the needs and abilities of students, to enhance the accessibility of materials, etc.).

B. Self-assessment of pedagogical activities (select one of the following)

- Professional development related to teaching, including CTRL events attended
- Annotated syllabus
- Examples of feedback to students
- Written self-evaluation of teaching (e.g., classroom video, teaching outside the classroom)
- Descriptions of community-based teaching activities (e.g., class projects that meet community-defined needs, opportunities for student collaboration with community organizations, opportunities for students to learn from community members, etc.)
- Descriptions of course redesign intended to enhance the inclusiveness of course content and teaching strategies (e.g., specific course elements designed to enhance cultural competency, strategies to bolster student skills for recognizing and adapting to cultural differences, approaches to meet diverse learning styles, etc.)

C. Peer (faculty) assessment of teaching

- Peer classroom observation and follow up conversation, at least twice before each major review: Reviewers from inside or outside the teaching unit, selected by chair in consultation with faculty member. Use unit-developed template or rubric (CTRL has examples.) Classroom observation should include a focus on the faculty member's use of effective inclusive classroom strategies. Faculty member writes reflection in response (half-page maximum). For faculty who teach entirely online, the peer assessment will include a review of the discussion board, assignments, introductory video, announcements, instructor's office, learner's lounge, or other personalized interactions between the students and faculty member.

D. Non-numeric student assessment of teaching (select one of the following)

- Student observer committee report: CTRL and School of Education train a group of students, perhaps drawn from Peer Advisors, to observe classes. Faculty member receives the report and may respond. (Pilot with senior faculty.)
- Narrative portions of SETs: If any narratives are submitted for a course, all narratives from that course must be included. Faculty are encouraged to respond constructively to issues raised in the narrative comments with ideas or steps for addressing valid student concerns.
- Report from focus group with students led by a facilitator. Reviewers are encouraged to weigh numerical scores in light of any expressions of bias related to physical characteristics and the like.

E. SET numeric scores

- OIRA will make summary SETs report available to be included in the portfolio.

Constrained and Improved Use of SETs

Teaching units shall not use SETs as the sole or predominant indicator of faculty effectiveness. Their guidelines for applying integrative and holistic judgment to portfolio reviews should include maximum proportions for SET scores to count within the teaching portfolio, customarily up to a ceiling of 50%. When individual faculty receive very low SET scores consistently over time (the “fire alarm” scenario), other components of the individual’s portfolio may provide clues to diagnosing and addressing the problems.

DHS will follow the Senate’s model teaching portfolio in the Beyond SETs document.

Promotion to Full Professor

Those seeking promotion to Professor must exhibit a continued commitment to teaching excellence as described above. Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor must be based on evidence of continued growth as a teacher, demonstrated, for example, by the development of new courses and programs, revision of existing courses, and the introduction of new pedagogies and instructional strategies, among other activities.

Service

Service embraces a broad range of activities that may occur on many levels within and beyond the University. All academic units depend on faculty service. Indeed, rights and privileges associated with faculty membership evoke a responsibility for service. Accordingly, a record of consistent and engaged service to DHS, CAS, AU, and professional and community organizations (including community organizations serving diverse populations facing health inequities) is expected for a favorable promotion and tenure decision. Such activities may include participation in standing and *ad hoc* committees, participation in important DHS-sponsored events, service to scholarly and professional associations, educational institutions and professionals, and to local, national and international communities. When applicable, faculty may demonstrate how their service activities promote inclusive excellence, diversity, and anti-racism at the department, college, university, and field levels.

The nature and mission of DHS elicit a broad range of activities in which faculty engage in service to diverse professional and community organizations, especially professional and community organizations focused on advancing health equity (this is an important focus of service because diverse populations are most likely to face health inequities). DHS faculty may work with a number of diverse health institutions, community organizations, and serve on advisory and editorial boards that serve professional communities. Appointment or election to participate in such activities is an expression of the regard in which one is held by members of those communities. DHS evaluates a faculty member’s consistent service to professional and scholarly associations through a range of indicators. These include: election to office in professional and learned societies; holding positions of responsibility (invited or elected) on professional committees; participation on grant review panels; organizing or participating in professional conferences; serving on editorial boards of scholarly journals; serving on advisory boards or guiding the work of community organizations using their expertise; refereeing works by scholars submitted for publication; editing scholarly journals; and maintaining active membership in professional and learned societies.

The relative weight credited to service depends on the nature, context, and function of the services themselves. It is important to note that while American University is committed to service to community in its broadest sense, the *Faculty Manual* states that, “service beyond the university cannot substitute for a service contribution to the university” (Section 10(c)(ii)).

DHS recognizes that expectations associated with research and teaching limit the DHS and University demands that should be made on pre-tenure faculty. Accordingly, the DHS expects that tenured faculty provide significantly more service than pre-tenure faculty. Committee assignments and other service-associated activities must typically be adjusted to reasonable amounts commensurate with a faculty member's years in service and progress toward reappointment, promotion, and tenure. Pre-tenure faculty should consult with their DHS mentor, faculty colleagues, and the chair of the RTC to ensure that service activity in and beyond the University will not constrain opportunities to satisfy expectations for scholarly research, publication, and teaching. Although some record of service is expected of all, it does not provide sufficient basis for reappointment, tenure, or promotion in the absence of satisfactory performance in teaching and research/publication, as specified above.

Promotion to Full Professor

To merit promotion to the rank of Professor, a candidate must have a record of active and constructive contributions to faculty governance at all levels of the university community, a record of mentoring early career faculty, and evidence of outstanding performance in professional service to scholarly and professional communities.