

**Criteria for Tenure and Promotion  
Department of English  
Tennessee Technological University**

**General Statement of Purpose**

The Department of English at Tennessee Technological University evaluates all candidates for tenure and promotion according to the criteria and procedures stated in the *Tennessee Technological University Faculty Handbook*, especially those described in the excerpts from the handbook reprinted below. Given the diversity of disciplines housed within the English Department, evaluation of criteria relevant to tenure and promotion decisions may vary and carry different weighting, depending on the individual and his/her discipline. Therefore, all department members must see their obligation to know the definitions and standards required.

Candidates and other department members should also review other relevant sections of the *Faculty Handbook*, including the sections on “Academic Freedom and Responsibility,” “Academic Tenure,” and “Promotion Procedures and Forms List.” The handbook is available online through the University website. For further discussion of the University’s tenure and promotion policies, as well as tenure-decision results since 1980, see the *AAUP Guidebook for New Faculty*, also available online.

Note that the definitions below are also those used for tenure decisions. Guidelines and examples not already contained in the *Faculty Handbook* have been added (in **boldface**) to clarify the full range of activities by which candidates in the Department of English may be evaluated for tenure and promotion. Criteria not relevant to English faculty are set in brackets.

**Departmental Position on Three Major Components of Tenure and Promotion**

The department recognizes that the vote for tenure and the vote for promotion to associate professor need not be linked. Candidates may choose to seek one without seeking the other at the same time. Yet the criteria outlined below are the same for both votes. Candidates meeting the minimum criteria for tenure have also met the minimum criteria for promotion to associate professor, and vice versa.

Teaching

Teaching serves as the English Department’s primary function, and all candidates for tenure and/or promotion are expected to demonstrate a commitment to teaching. Candidates are expected to stimulate students intellectually and to prepare them for professional or educational advancement. The department will evaluate each candidate’s performance in the classroom recognizing that there are numerous teaching styles and methods.

Candidates for tenure/promotion to associate professor must meet these minimum criteria:

1. During the candidate's period as an assistant professor, s/he must be observed no less than three times by higher-ranking department faculty members who volunteer for the task, and who write an observation report offering comments and an overall evaluation of positive or negative. One of these visits must be in the first year of the candidate's appointment, and the other two may take place at any time prior to the candidate's final tenure/promotion vote. Each observation should take place in a different academic year, and of the three observations, at least two must be conducted by different faculty members. Of the three observation reports, at least two must be positive, and any negative report should contain suggestions for improvement.
2. Each year, the candidate must submit a revised version of their teaching philosophy document, in which they reflect critically on their pedagogy for that year. This might include specific engagement with a set of IDEA evaluations, specific reflection on one particular course, or some other method of self-evaluation for the preceding year. This document should be retained in the dossier every year, so that comparisons can be made across the entire candidacy. (The candidate must only provide one new version of this document each year. Candidates in their second year need not provide a new version for both of their evaluations that year.)

Candidates for promotion to full professor must meet these same criteria, with the following exception:

1. During the period between promotion to associate professor and promotion to full professor, the candidate must be observed only twice, by two different full professors in the department, and only one of these observation reports must be positive.

### Scholarly Activity

The English Department expects all candidates to pursue scholarly activity (i.e. research or creative work) beyond the classroom, but recognizes that these activities are diverse in form and purpose. Though scholarly activity is less crucial than teaching for earning tenure, the lack of demonstrable promise in this area can weaken a tenure candidacy. Promotion to associate or full professor does require a record of scholarly accomplishment. Evaluation depends more on quality than quantity of activities, and on the overall contribution the candidate makes in his or her chosen discipline(s).

Candidates for tenure/promotion to associate professor must meet these minimum criteria:

1. During the candidate's period as an assistant professor, s/he must have published or accepted for publication at least two peer-reviewed articles in professional journals (print or online). This requirement includes any peer-reviewed publications that are printed during the period of candidacy, regardless of their date of acceptance. Creative Writing faculty may substitute creative publications in a journal or magazine with a

national reputation (or edited collection). A book monograph counts to fill this requirement.

Candidates for promotion to full professor must meet these minimum criteria:

1. During a candidate's period as an associate professor, s/he must have published or accepted for publication at least two peer-reviewed articles in professional journals (print or online). These two articles cannot be the same that were included in the candidate's promotion to associate professor. Creative Writing faculty may substitute creative publications in a journal or magazine with a national reputation (or edited collection). A book monograph counts to fill this requirement

### Service

Though teaching and scholarly activity are usually the primary factors in tenure and promotion decisions, the English Department also expects and encourages a strong commitment to public and professional service. How this service is distributed among the broad categories of options listed below, and the amount of attention given to service in relation to the other three areas, is determined by a combination of departmental needs and individual choice and ability. The department recognizes that each faculty member's talents are different and that the expression of those talents in the service area, as in the others, will take a variety of forms.

Candidates for tenure/promotion to associate professor must meet these minimum criteria:

1. During the candidate's period as an assistant professor, s/he must serve on two standing department, college, or university committees each year after the candidate's first year. The candidate must document that these committees have regular duties.

Candidates for promotion to full professor must meet these minimum criteria:

1. During the candidate's period as an associate professor, s/he must serve on two department, college, or university committees each year. The candidate must document that these committees have regular duties.

### **Criteria for Appointment or Promotion** (from *Faculty Handbook*)

The following are criteria that distinguish between academic ranks:

#### A. Instructor

1. Master's degree in the instructional discipline or related area.

2. Potential ability in teaching and/or research/scholarship/creative activity and/or service/outreach.
3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

#### B. Assistant Professor

1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
2. Evidence of potential ability in teaching and/or research/scholarship/creative activity and/or service/outreach.
3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

#### C. Associate Professor

1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related field.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of assistant professor at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to associate professor.
3. Documented evidence of ability in teaching and/or research/scholarship/creative activity and/or service/outreach.
4. Documented evidence of high quality professional activity which may lead to national recognition in the academic discipline, and/or professional activity consonant with the goals of the University and of the academic department/unit to which the faculty member belongs.
5. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

#### D. Professor

1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related field.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of associate professor at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to full professor.
3. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development or superior research/scholarship/creative activity will contribute to the positive record of the candidate for advancement to the rank of professor. Since there is no higher rank, promotion to professor is taken with great care and requires a level of achievement beyond that required for associate professor. Promotion to professor is not a reward for longevity; more exactly it is recognition of superior achievement within the discipline with every expectation of continuing contribution to the University and the larger academic community.
4. Documented evidence of sustained high quality professional productivity and national recognition in the academic discipline or sustained high quality professional productivity

in the academic discipline that is consonant with the goals of the University and of the academic department/unit to which the faculty member belongs.

5. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, professional integrity, and a high degree of academic maturity and responsibility.

The minimum rank qualifications should be met in every recommendation regarding appointment to academic rank and for promotion in academic rank. Exceptions to the minimum rank qualifications can be recommended by the departmental/unit peers and by the President of the University; however, such exceptions are not favored and should be granted only upon a showing of a candidate's exceptional merit and/or other extraordinary circumstances, such as an objective need to deviate from these minimum qualifications in filling positions and/or retaining otherwise qualified faculty within certain academic disciplines.

#### Definitions of Faculty Activities (relevant to both tenure and promotion)

As noted above, all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members are expected to engage in teaching, scholarly activity, and public and professional service, but not all are expected to engage in each activity to the same degree nor is each individual expected to be engaged in all aspects of each activity. It must further be noted that some overlap among these related activities is to be expected. The departmental peers have the primary responsibility for evaluating the quality of faculty performance relative to appointment to or promotion in academic rank. The following descriptions of these professional activities shall be used as general guidelines in evaluating a candidate's potential (in cases of appointment) or performance (in cases of promotion).

#### A. Teaching

Teaching may consist of a combination of the following professional activities:

1. Classroom, on-line, and laboratory teaching of credit courses and seminars, including preparation and delivery of lectures, conduct of classes, supervising laboratory work, evaluation of students, and conferences with students regarding coursework. This activity may be conducted on a team basis.
2. Individual instruction, including (a) directed individual studies, i.e., credit instruction on an informal individual basis; [(b) private lessons, e.g., private music lessons;] (c) supervision of student interns, such as students enrolled in a practicum, practice teaching, or work experience courses, and cooperative education students, including evaluation of student progress, conduct of seminars and critique sessions, and counseling of students; (d) thesis [and dissertation] supervision, including service as a member or chair of graduate committees; [and (e) clinical teaching, as in a health-related field].

3. Academic advisement, including informal counseling with students on academic course or program selection and scheduling, and other matters related to academic progress.
4. Course materials, curriculum, and teaching methodology development, such as development of new approaches, improvement of teaching materials, experimentation with teaching methodologies and assessment methods, and development of structure, content, and sequence of courses.
5. [Non-credit instruction in professional non-credit continuing education programs and development of professional instruction programs, which may be on an assigned or overload basis.]
6. [For librarians, instruction is to be equated with the performance of professional library responsibilities.]
7. Faculty development, i.e., formal and informal activities primarily directed to maintaining and enhancing faculty teaching capabilities.

#### B. Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity

Research/scholarship/creative activity includes those professional activities designed to discover, create, or disseminate greater knowledge, appreciation, or understanding of an academic discipline, including, but not limited to:

1. Pure research: seeking new knowledge, investigating realms not covered by current understanding or challenging current understanding.
2. Applied research: the application of known methods or theories to specific circumstances.
3. Pedagogical research: the development of pedagogical techniques and the application in the classroom or laboratory, that furthers the dissemination of knowledge.
4. Artistic creativity and performance: the creation and exhibition of works of art or crafts, or the composition and/or performance of plays, music, etc.
5. **For faculty in the department, this may include textbooks, media criticism, investigative reporting, documentaries, slide shows, photographic collections or other exhibits, production of documentaries or documentations, editorials and other reflections.**
6. Faculty development: formal and informal activities primarily directed to maintain and enhance faculty research, scholarship, or creative capabilities or performance.

Evaluation of the candidate's research/scholarship/creative activity should stress the quality of the documented work, and should be based on the professional judgment of peers in the discipline. Documentation of these activities should manifest ability in the candidate's discipline. Some methods of documenting this evaluation include, but are not limited to, publication of articles in refereed journals, publication of books by recognized presses, proprietary research, production of juried artistic works, presentation of refereed papers at professional meetings, obtaining competitive grants from professional agencies, or similar means.

### C. Service/Outreach

Service/outreach includes those activities undertaken in service to the community, the University, the higher education profession as a whole, and the faculty member's academic discipline, including:

1. Service to students unrelated to credit instruction, such as sponsoring student organizations and extracurricular activities, and non-assigned tutorial instruction to enhance the academic skills of students.
2. Service to the University, such as service on departmental, college, and University committees, assignments involving student recruitment, institutional development, public relations, and consultation with University offices.
3. Service to scholarly and professional organizations, including participation in such organizations as a member, officer, or committee member, as a member of an editorial board of a scholarly or professional organization, or service to accrediting organizations and agencies.
4. Service to the community, industry, or government, including (a) professional service, i.e., service directly related to the professional expertise of the faculty member, including consulting activities whether for compensation or not; and (b) other contributions to the cultural environment of the community, such as service as an officer or member of boards or committees, service to non-profit charitable organizations, or to governmental agencies.
5. Faculty development, i.e., formal and informal activities primarily directed to maintaining and enhancing faculty capabilities in public and professional service.
6. **For departmental faculty, service may include documentaries, public relations work, public education, advertising campaigns, and professional media review presentations.**