

Department of Religious Studies:
Guidelines on Promotion and Tenure

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| Prepared by | |
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1. TEACHING, RESEARCH AND SERVICE: Guidelines.

The Department of Religious Studies values excellence in both teaching and research. Excellence in one dimension alone may strengthen a case, but by itself will not be sufficient to guarantee tenure and/or promotion.

a. Teaching:

The Department of Religious Studies has a tradition of placing great emphasis on good teaching. The Department also has a tradition whereby faculty at all ranks teach a broad range of courses, from undergraduate surveys, upper division courses, to specialized seminars. While planning has just begun for our graduate program, it is anticipated that faculty will also teach graduate courses as appropriate when the graduate program begins.

In assessing teaching quality, the Department relies on a variety of sources, including numerical data compiled from student course evaluations, signed comments on student evaluations, and regular classroom visits by colleagues before and during the tenure or promotion consideration process. Documentation of activities is important. Faculty are encouraged to retain a copy of any syllabus used, and shall have placed one copy of such on file in the Department

b. Research:

In making a recommendation for tenure or promotion at the department, college and university levels, committees give special attention to the activity and achievements of the candidate as a research scholar. Normally, this is measured by his or her publication record. Though the publications may be on various topics, committees expect to see a coherent plan of research. It is the responsibility of the candidate to demonstrate coherence. Committees also place great weight on research and publication trajectory. The Department of Religious Studies expects a candidate for tenure and promotion to associate professor to have at the very minimum: **A/** a book manuscript, based on original research in primary sources, that has already been accepted for publication (i.e. the manuscript has already gone through the editorial review process; and is a completed manuscript that has been accepted for publication unconditionally); **or**, and **less preferably**, **B/** the equivalent in substantial articles (6 – 8), at least some of which must have been accepted by first class, peer reviewed/refereed journals recognized as such by scholars in the candidate's field of specialty. Quality as well as quantity counts. Publications should make a significant contribution to scholarship. Additionally, the record and the candidate's own statement should indicate a program, schedule and objectives of future work.

For promotion from associate to full professor, the department expects the candidate to have accepted for publication a second book or the equivalent in articles, with the same criteria noted above for assistant professors.

Critical editions and/or translations with a strong scholarly component, including a critical introduction, critical scholarly apparatus, and commentary, shall count as original scholarship.

c. Service:

The Department expects its untenured members to participate responsibly and cooperatively when called upon for service within the Department; concomitantly, the Department shall ask for service from its untenured members in reasonable and appropriate fashion. But in the final analysis, service counts significantly less in consideration for tenure than either teaching or research. Though untenured faculty members may find it appropriate to serve on one or another college or university-wide committee, they should undertake such duties only on a very limited basis, if at all, and in consultation with the Department Head. No untenured faculty member will be penalized for declining to serve on committees outside the department.

In the case of promotion from associate to full professor, service is weighed heavily, and the candidate should normally have made an important contribution to the Department, college and university.

Service to the profession, while not a major element in a tenure or promotion decision, is evaluated favorably and may indicate as well that the faculty member has the esteem of his or her professional peers. The Department recognizes reviews, manuscript evaluations for journals and presses, etc., as service to the profession.

2. DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES:

For the Department of Religious Studies, the procedure (based upon a “regular” time line of service; adjustments to months and quarters/terms specified below may be made as appropriate based upon time of initial appointment if not in the Fall, and any leaves taken) is as follows:

a. Annual reviews of untenured faculty are to be conducted by senior faculty each spring. The candidate should submit an up-to-date c.v., copies of signed teaching evaluations plus a narrative describing accomplishments over the past year and goals for the coming year. The Department Head and/or senior faculty members will make classroom visitations, review the material and write a formal statement on performance.

b. Third Year Review: In the third year of regular service, the tenured faculty will review and evaluate performance in the categories noted under 1. above. The review should be candid and include, if necessary, specific suggestions for improvement. This review should be signed by the Department Head and by the person reviewed. A copy will be placed in the latter's personnel file.

c. Promotion and Tenure: The candidate is normally reviewed for tenure in the sixth year of service, or when prior service has led to an agreement (made at the time of appointment and

normally written into the employment contract) shortening the time to review (this is considered a “regular” P&T case and not an “early” P&T case).

During the spring term before a case comes up for submission, the Department Head will appoint an ad hoc committee of tenured faculty (from inside and/or outside the department) to review the candidate and make at least two classroom visits to evaluate teaching. The committee then makes a preliminary report to the tenured members of the Department noting the strengths and/or weaknesses of the case. During the late spring and summer, the Department Head begins to compile a dossier. Normally outside evaluations of the candidate's scholarship are sought from no less than six well-regarded scholars in the candidate's field. Some, and no more than half, of these referees will be chosen from names proposed by the candidate; the Department will select the other referees from its own independently-generated list. Candidates should not choose dissertation advisers or research collaborators as referees, for this may raise questions about the objectivity of their evaluations. On-campus letters from those familiar with teaching, scholarship or service may also be sought. The candidate may or may not waive the right to see the referees' letters. Even if the candidate has waived the right of access, he or she does have the right to request a summary of the substantive comments of the letters. If the candidate selects an 'open' file, the whole file can be opened. Whichever choice is made by the candidate, that choice is known to the referees.

b. The dossier should also include all significant publications, and a candidate's statement of accomplishments and objectives in scholarship, teaching, and service. The Department Head will add to the dossier quantitative data from teaching evaluations, signed student comments, brief vitae of the referees, a statement of the candidate's position description, an evaluation of the journals in which the candidate's articles have appeared, and any other appropriate materials.

c. After all the outside letters have been received, evaluation of the dossier falls to a Promotion and Tenure committee which will have already been appointed by the Department Head, and this appointed committee (to consist of no less than three members) will prepare its report and recommendations for the Department (usually by early October). Voting members of the Department in addition to the members of the appointed committee shall have access to the full dossier. The report of the committee shall be circulated to the voting members of the Department, and all votes in the committee will be counted and reported to them. In the case of promotion to associate professor with tenure, the voting members are tenured faculty with the rank of associate or full professor, and emeritus faculty who wish to exercise their voting privilege; in the case of promotion from associate professor to full professor, the voting members are full professors who are tenured or who are emeritus. Should the appointed committee have an 'outside' member or members, that person or persons may be present for and participate in the discussion but may not vote. At the end of the discussion a vote is taken by signed and secret ballot. When all votes have been received, the Department secretary or designated neutral party shall inform those voting of the numerical count but preserve the anonymity of the individual ballots. If there is a major discrepancy between the discussion and the vote count the Department Head must reopen the discussion. The ballots themselves will be

placed in an envelope sealed and signed by the Department Head. Voting members of the Department who have read the dossier but cannot be present at the meeting may write a letter to the Department Head, stating their views on the candidate and formally recording their signed vote. The Department Head does not cast a vote. The envelope with the ballots will be retained in the Department unless, at a later stage, they are requested by the Dean's Advisory Committee or the Provost's office.

d. The Department Head then writes his or her own statement, which may or may not agree with the Department's vote. This statement, the report of the appointed committee, the recorded vote and the other materials including a brief, factual summary of the discussion in the Departmental meeting, are to be included in the dossier. The completed file is then sent to the College of Arts and Sciences, usually no later than 1 November.

3. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES

The University's tenure consideration procedures are described in the university's Faculty Handbook, the Administrative Rules, the Survival Handbook on Tenure and Promotion, as well as the guidelines issued by the office of the Provost and of the Dean. These documents are usually updated each year. What follows below is a summary of the current procedures; it should not be considered definitive. It is the responsibility of the candidate to know the current regulations.

1. The Dean's Advisory Committee, elected by the College of Arts and Sciences faculty, evaluates tenure cases in the fall and early winter. The committee may request the Dean or Associate Dean to collect more information (e.g. additional outside evaluations) or it may itself interview department members or others about a case. Its report and vote are advisory to the Dean. The Dean or the Associate Dean meets with all candidates in the College to discuss their cases after the College has completed its report. The objective of this meeting is to give the candidate a full account, within the limits of confidentiality, of the contents of the dossier and an opportunity to add new material or comments, if that is desired.

2. At this point, the case goes to the Faculty Personnel Committee, a university-wide body elected by the faculty. It normally deliberates in the late winter and spring. The report of this committee is advisory to the Provost. The Provost's decision, made with the advice of the Faculty Personnel Committee and with the department and college level reports, is the final one. There are appeal procedures in those cases where the Provost denies tenure or promotion.

A final word: the tenure process, as the description indicates, is long, complicated and sometimes stressful. However, it contains many procedural safeguards for the well-being of the candidate. The policy of the Department of Religious Studies is to hire people who we predict will be strong candidates for tenure and promotion.