

# FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCES PROMOTION AND TENURE CRITERIA

(Revised and updated October 30, 2020)

## **1a. Criteria for Promotion and Tenure for Assistant and Associate Professors**

Decisions to promote faculty and the awarding of tenure are important to the department, college, and university in that they determine the quality of faculty in future decades. Therefore, recommendations should be selective, particularly for appointments to indefinite tenure. The primary missions of Florida Atlantic University are teaching, research (including other creative activities, hereafter called research), and service (including administrative work, hereafter called service). In every promotion and/or tenure process, all three areas must be considered. Promotion to Associate Professor should be initiated only if an individual has a record of competency in teaching, research, and service and distinction in either teaching or research. Promotion to Professor should be initiated as recognition of the candidate's academic maturity and accomplishments. Recommendations must be based on evidence of distinction in one area (teaching, research or service) while continuing to be active and competent in the other two areas.

Excellence in all areas is desirable, but it is recognized that equal excellence in each area is rare and exceptional. The department, in following the university guidelines, recognizes that there are multiple routes for promotion. For example, a candidate may demonstrate distinction in research and may be promoted if the record in teaching and service is one of commitment and competency. Similarly, a candidate may demonstrate distinction in teaching and may be promoted if the record in research and service is one of commitment and competency. In every instance, the record of teaching, service and research shall be thoroughly documented, with due deference to the department and college of what constitutes high quality in each case.

Each candidate will be evaluated in terms of his or her Annual assignments. Assignments are made by the Chair in consultation with the Dean, and address what is expected in terms of teaching, research, and service. If the assignments have stressed one area of endeavor more strongly, then this area will receive relatively greater attention in the evaluation of the candidate for promotion. Candidates with distinctive assignments will require an evaluation that respects this distinctiveness and explicitly enables the candidate the opportunity to become promoted via one of the many promotion routes. A distinctive assignment is one that differs from the assignments given to most faculty members. It may stress an unusually heavy instructional or service commitment, or it may emphasize heavily the research role of the professor.

## **1b. Criteria for Promotion of Instructors, Lecturers, Scientists, Scholars and Research Professors**

The Department will adopt the current College of Science criteria and procedures for appointment, evaluation and promotion of Instructors, Lecturers, Scientists, Scholars and Research Professors.

## **2. Evaluation of Research**

Candidates should follow protocol established in the most recent Tenure and Promotion Guidelines from the Provost's office regarding portfolio preparation and submission. The person who nominated selected referees should be clearly identified in the portfolio.

Department Procedures:

Florida Atlantic University Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure require letters from professional specialists outside the University, evaluating the candidate's accomplishments in research. A minimum of three letters from references outside FAU are required. Referees should be at the rank the candidate is aspiring or higher.

The Chair and senior members of the faculty should provide a list of potential referees in the general area of specialization of the candidate, or in an area close enough where the referee is competent to conduct the review. The Department Chair and the candidate will select the final list of referees from the suggested list. The Chair will contact the selected referees and request the review letters. All letters should be solicited only from evaluators who are in a position to comment in a discriminating and objective manner on the candidate's current record and potential, and where no conflicts of interest (like substantial collaboration) exist. Each letter of evaluation should include a statement of the way in which the evaluator knows the candidate and the qualifications of the person writing the letter. Evaluators must also include a current vita with their evaluation.

## **3. Evaluation of Teaching**

Effective teaching is the hallmark of the professorate. Faculty seeking tenure and promotion must have a demonstrable record of effective instruction in the classroom and competency in guiding independent student learning at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Both undergraduate and graduate teaching assignments are to be evaluated.

Department Procedures:

All promotion and tenure recommendations must include as thorough an evaluation of teaching effectiveness as can be assembled. Descriptive data such as course level, number of students and type of courses taught will be included. Peer evaluations and the perceptions of students, including the SPOT (Student Perception of Teaching) scores, will also be a part of the packet.

Peer Evaluation:

As part of teaching evaluation for promotion and tenure, and as otherwise specified by university procedures and college bylaws, peer evaluation of faculty teaching will be conducted by one or more of the following: a) the department's master teacher, b) the faculty member's assigned mentor, and c) a tenured faculty member selected by the chair in consultation with the faculty member being reviewed. The CES College of Science Master Teacher Committee maintains suggested guidelines and review forms for peer reviews.

Candidates should follow protocol established in the most recent Tenure and Promotion Guidelines from the Provost's office regarding portfolio preparation and submission.

#### **4. Evaluation of Service**

Candidates should follow protocol established in the most recent Tenure and Promotion Guidelines from the Provost's office regarding portfolio preparation and submission. Candidates may include up to two letters of evaluation from internal (FAU) reviewers to comment on the service contributions of the candidate.

Department Procedures:

Description and evaluation of the candidate's service are required. The candidate must provide a list and details of service activities, both at the university and in the profession, and a self-evaluation of contributions in each service activity. Letters or memoranda, or other written communications from committee chairs, letters of appreciation, etc., are suggested as means of demonstrating service.

### **5. Review of Progress toward Promotion and Tenure for Assistant Professors.**

**A. Mentoring of Untenured Faculty.** Assistant professors and any others of the faculty who are untenured, but employed on a tenure earning track will be provided with a mentor who will help them prepare for promotion to Associate Professor and/or tenured status. The mentor will be a tenured member of the faculty at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor. The selection of the mentor will be made by mutual agreement of the mentor, the candidate, and the Chair of the Department. The candidate may, without prejudice, request a change of mentor.

The role of the mentor is to become familiar with the candidate's assigned duties and his or her attempts to fulfill the assignment. The mentor may assist in the following:

- (1) Teaching: reviewing course syllabi, course subject matter, lecture notes, and examination format; choosing peer reviewers;
- (2) Research: helping select research projects; helping select potential granting agencies; choosing outlets for manuscripts; reviewing manuscripts prior to submission;
- (3) Service: comparing relative merits of particular service activities over others, and;
- (4) Other: helping in any other field of endeavor that may bear on normal progress toward promotion and tenure.

**B. Annual Appraisal.** The Department Chair must provide each faculty member who is or will be eligible for consideration for promotion/tenure with an annual review of progress toward promotion and tenure. This annual review is performed by the Chair with input provided by the Geosciences Personnel Committee. The result of the review by the Chair of the Department will be conveyed in writing to the faculty member, and a follow-up meeting may be held as requested by either party for review and comment.

At the time of evaluation for promotion to Associate Professor and tenured status, the tenured members of the department will examine the Chair's annual appraisals. Consistently favorable annual appraisals will have communicated to the candidate that in the Chair's judgment, normal progress was being made toward promotion and tenure. Likewise, a record of marginal or unsatisfactory appraisals may suggest that the candidate may not be eligible for advancement. However, the faculty members voting on promotion and tenure are charged to make an assessment of a candidate's qualifications independent of those made by the Chair in the annual appraisals. A candidate may have received favorable annual appraisals from the Department Chair yet still receive a negative vote from a promotion/tenure committee because of the following:

(1) The promotion and tenure vote is based on an evaluation of a more comprehensive packet than was examined by the Chair when the annual appraisals were written. The promotion/tenure decision considers a longer record and is influenced by the opinions of scholars outside the department who have evaluated the candidate's record. The Chair's annual appraisals are based on a smaller set of materials.

(2) Although the Chair receives input from the Geosciences Personnel Committee in arriving at the annual appraisals, the Chair ultimately makes these annual appraisals independently. The Chair's annual appraisals are, therefore, the assessment of a single individual with a unique point of view. The body deciding upon promotion/tenure makes its judgment based on a consensus of all tenured faculty in the department.

**C. Third Year Review of Untenured Assistant Professors.** Untenured Assistant Professors in the department will undergo a review during the beginning of their fourth year of tenure-earning status to determine if they are making normal progress toward promotion to Associate Professor and tenured status. Thus the review is based on three full years in the Assistant Professor position. This review will be conducted by the tenured members of the faculty acting as the Third Year Review Committee. A second level of review is conducted by the College Promotion and Tenure Committee. Both reviews will examine the evaluation file of the candidate and will compare accomplishments with assigned duties. Strengths and/or weaknesses in the record will be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Department and the Dean of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science, as well as to the candidate. If the review is strongly critical of the candidate's progress toward promotion to Associate Professor and tenured status, the Third Year Review Committee will communicate their opinion to the candidate through the Department Chair.

The Third Year review will differ from the annual appraisal of progress toward promotion/tenure in the following ways:

(1) The third-year review is made by all tenured faculty;

(2) The candidate will prepare a packet similar to a promotion and tenure packet (see Attachment 1). The Third Year Review Committee will examine the format and appearance of the packet, as well as its substance, and advise the candidate on how the packet could be improved;

(3) The results of the third-year review are binding and are communicated to the candidate through the Department Chair and Dean of the College.

The guidelines for the Third Year review are attached to this document (Attachment 1).

## **6. Minimal Criteria for Promotion and Tenure of Assistant and Associate Professors**

### **A. Promotion to Associate Professor**

#### **(1) Teaching**

a. The candidate is expected to demonstrate effective and competent instruction as demonstrated by student evaluations, peer review, and other evaluation vehicles. The candidate must show his/her commitment to quality instruction as well as evidence of keeping abreast of developments in his/her field.

b. The candidate is expected to show evidence of activity on Master's thesis and doctoral dissertation committees through completion. A supervisory role on such committees is highly desirable.

c. Mentoring undergraduate and graduate independent studies is considered as teaching and is meritorious.

d. Training and mentoring of research fellows and postdoctoral students is considered as teaching and meritorious.

#### **(2) Research and Other Creative Activity**

Research and other forms of creativity are essential faculty activities, and a candidate must show productivity in this area, including research paths that show efforts to be independent from the candidate's graduate mentors. Publications and grant success are strong evidence of accomplishment in the research category. Research is not evaluated on the basis of philosophical orientation, nor the specific topic examined, provided that the topic is relevant to geosciences in general. The department does not adopt a standard that a minimum number of research items must be completed before a candidate may be considered for promotion. Rather, the research and other creative activities of candidates will be examined as an entire body of work. It is expected that the candidate will make serious effort to secure external funding for his/her research.

The following are examples of materials that are of primary importance in the evaluation of a candidate:

a. Publication of research that results in books or articles in refereed journals or proceedings.

b. Publication of academic textbooks.

c. Application for and attraction of external funding to help support personal research and/or training and mentoring of department students.

*d.* Presentation of papers at local, national, and international forums that represent the results of research and other creative activity.

The department recognizes that outstanding scholarship may be published in minor journals and proceedings. This need not diminish the value of the research. The individuals evaluating a candidate should look at the quality of the research independent of the outlet. The importance of a piece of research may in part be evaluated by how often it has been cited by others in the field. Candidates are urged to consult citation indexes to support claims of importance of a piece of research, or other reviews of pertinent work in his/her respective field. This may include metrics such as the h-index.

### **(3) Service**

The Department of Geosciences recognizes that service is a normal and essential requirement of university life. Faculty members may be given service as a part of their annual assignment, in which case they shall be evaluated in terms of their performance of assigned service. As with other categories, the department does not adopt a standard that a minimum number of service items must be accomplished before a candidate may be considered for promotion. Rather, the service activities of candidates will be examined as an entire body of work, which will be evaluated based on its merits.

Categories of service include the following:

- a.* Participation on departmental/college/or university committees or similar duties that are part of the annual assignments,
- b.* Public and professional service to the discipline of geosciences and to professional societies.
- c.* Review and/or editorial work of books, manuscripts and proposals for professional journals, publishers, and funding agencies.

## **B. Promotion To Professor**

Stature in the field/profession must be established for Professor candidates. Such stature is usually assessed through external letters of evaluation from respected academics and other esteemed persons of special significance to a faculty member's record and/or recognized through honors and awards. The research, other creative activities, and service of candidates will be examined as an entire body of work, which will be evaluated on its merits.

### **(1) Teaching**

- a.* The candidate is expected to be able to show a high level of competence in undergraduate and graduate teaching as demonstrated by student evaluations and peer review and other evaluation vehicles. The candidate must show his/her commitment to quality instruction as well as evidence of keeping abreast of developments in his/her field.
- b.* The candidate is expected to have achieved competence in curriculum design and development of innovative teaching approaches.
- c.* The candidate is expected to show a high level of involvement in the graduate programs of the department as evidenced by supervision of doctoral dissertations and masters theses to completion.

d. Mentoring undergraduate and graduate independent studies is considered as teaching and is meritorious.

**(2) Research and Other Creative Activity**

The following categories of performance are typically considered with most attention in the evaluation of a candidate for Professor:

- a. Maintaining research programs and disseminating the findings of research conducted in these programs.
- b. Applying for and attracting funding to support research and/or training and mentoring of department students.
- c. Receiving recognition for the quality and impact of research at national and international levels.
- d. Publishing scholarly studies and insightful reviews, occasionally as an invited participant.

**(3) Service**

Documented service to the profession is expected of candidates seeking promotion to Professor. Categories of service include the following:

- a. Participation on departmental/college/or university committees or similar duties that are part of the annual assignments,
- b. Public and professional service to the discipline of geosciences and professional societies.
- c. Review and/or editorial work of books, manuscripts and proposals for professional journals, publishers, and funding agencies.

**C. Tenure**

Tenure criteria must reflect a commitment to the Department, College and University missions, and the candidate's potential for future significant contributions to such missions. A guiding question to evaluate tenure should be, "Will the university be made better and stronger by its relationship with this professor over the remainder of his/her academic career?" In this context, criteria for tenure are those for promotion. For Assistant Professors, recommendation for tenure will be made at the time of recommendation for promotion to Associate Professor. Individuals hired at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor will be reviewed for immediate tenure at the time of the hiring decision. An offer of immediate tenure would necessarily go through normal university procedures which would require department, college, and university approvals.

*Attachment 1*

**Third Year Promotion and Tenure Review of Assistant Professors**  
**Department of Geosciences**

(Revised and updated October 30, 2020)

Assistant Professors will be notified in the official letter offering employment from the University that shortly after the third year of employment in a tenure-earning line, he/she will undergo a review of his/her progress. A promotion and tenure review will be undertaken by the tenured faculty meeting as a Third Year Review Committee and will commence at the beginning of the fourth year that a new assistant professor is in tenure earning status. Review will also be conducted by the College Promotion and Tenure Committee which will provide feedback to the Chair and Dean on the progress of the candidate towards earning tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

Assistant Professors are required to present a packet modeled on the normal sixth year University promotion/tenure packet. Candidates should follow protocol established in the most recent Tenure and Promotion Guidelines from the Provost's office regarding portfolio preparation and submission. The packet will contain a summary of teaching evaluations, all scholarly publications, all scholarly manuscripts accepted or under review, and any work in progress. The Assistant Professor may also submit (at most) two letters of evaluation of his/her record from outside the institution.

The primary concern of the promotion/tenure review will be the potential of the individual, not the actual performance to date. It is possible that an individual with limited accomplishments could receive a positive promotion/tenure review if work in progress is deemed to be of very high quality. The Third Year Review Committee and the College Promotion and Tenure Committee will examine the materials submitted, meet to discuss the case, and vote (via secret ballot) on whether the Assistant Professor is on track for promotion/tenure.

Assistant Professors will be notified by written memorandum from the Department Chair regarding the outcome of the promotion/tenure review at the Department level. The memorandum will provide a summary of the points raised at the meeting that discussed the case. The intent of the summary is to provide the Assistant Professor with feedback from the evaluation that can be used to improve performance. Candidates will be notified in writing by the Dean of the College regarding the outcome of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee Review.

If the third-year review is negative, the Chair of the Department, in consultation with the Dean, may recommend a plan to improve the record that could result in acceptable performance. Consistent with University policy, the Department Chair may recommend a terminal year contract at the conclusion of the third year review.

An individual who receives a positive Third Year review is not automatically guaranteed a favorable vote for promotion/tenure at the normal review period during the sixth year.