

School of Plant and Environmental Sciences

Guidelines for 2- and 4-Year Reviews, Promotion, Permanent Tenure, and Post-Tenure Review

Overview

These guidelines have been developed by the Faculty of the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences (School) in accordance with university policies as published in the Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook. These guidelines fulfill the unit requirement for written and published policies that guide promotion and tenure processes (Faculty Handbook section 3.4.4.1). This document describes School expectations regarding achievements and milestones for professional advancement and serve as a foundation for established standards.

Candidates will be evaluated in the context of the overall contributions made to the School and the faculty member's potential for having a sustained, positive impact in supporting the School's, College and University mission.

Considerations for promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review will be based on each faculty member's employment contract appointment and any adjustments thereafter. Evaluation will incorporate assigned distribution of effort to three mission areas: A) Teaching and Advising, B) Research and Creative Activity, and C) Service and Outreach, and Extension, if appropriate. In addition, a School expectation is D) Citizenship.

Procedure for Approval and Revision of School Guidelines

As outlined in the Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook (section 3.5.3), Adoption and subsequent Revision of these guidelines requires approval by a majority of tenured and tenure-track faculty within the School. Requests to revise these guidelines must be made in writing to the Chair of the School P&T committee. The P&T committee Chair will bring the request for consideration at a subsequent P&T committee meeting. Any changes to the guidelines must first be approved by a majority vote of the P&T committee, followed by a majority vote of School tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Minor changes to align the School guidelines with annual updates to the Faculty Handbook, such as renumbering a section relevant to Promotion and Tenure with no substantive changes in content, may be made and accepted by majority vote of the School P&T committee. The School tenured and tenure-track faculty will be notified of such changes by the Chair of the School P&T committee.

Guidelines for Promotion to Advanced Instructor

School guidelines for Promotion to Advanced Instructor are extensions of policies noted in the Faculty Handbook (section 5.1.6) and the CALS guidelines.

School Instructors are central to the unit mission. Instructors are eligible for promotion to Advanced Instructor after serving a minimum of five years as an Instructor. Consideration for promotion will be based on the Instructor's employment contract appointment and any adjustments thereafter. Candidates will be evaluated based on the appropriate balance of: A) Teaching and Advising, B) Service and Outreach, and C) Citizenship.

Promotion to the rank of Advanced Instructor is based on excellence in teaching, evidence of significant professional growth, and serving the School, College, University and/or the profession. Expectations for promotion will be based on assigned distribution of effort and demonstration of excellence, or continued progress towards excellence in:

A. Teaching and Advising

1. The candidate is expected to demonstrate mastery in teaching and have a track record of successful curriculum development. Evidence of teaching proficiency includes student perception of teaching (SPOT), annual evaluations, and peer evaluations of teaching. It is expected that Instructors seeking promotion have SPOT scores consistently at or above CALS averages, and that peer evaluations of teaching are consistently positive or showing improvement. Peer evaluations of teaching are encouraged at least once every two years for candidates seeking promotion to Advanced Instructor, ensuring that at least two current peer evaluations are obtained during any 5-year window. Efforts to develop and improve course and/or core curriculum is expected for promotion to Advanced Instructor. This includes work to strengthen traditional classroom teaching (including using technology) as well as efforts to develop or augment online programs.
2. Instructors seeking promotion to Advanced Instructor should have a track record of impactful advising. This includes advising students and teaching assistants, supporting School undergraduate advisors, mentoring peers, and/or serving as an advisor for student organizations.

B. Service and Outreach

1. Candidates are expected to provide high-quality service to the School commensurate with their appointment allocation. This can include service on School, College (CALS), or University committees. Service can also include efforts to promote pedagogy, participation in teaching workshops, augmenting teaching environments by securing equipment or resources that bolster teaching approaches, serving roles in college or university governance, or serving in service roles within their professional organizations.
2. Participation in professional conferences and societies specific to the candidate's area of teaching, and/or serving as a peer-reviewer for educational programs and materials are encouraged.
3. Based upon contractual allocations, administrative duties assigned to the Instructor will also be gauged as a metric for promotion. This includes program development and management, accreditation, student outcomes, and other measures to promote the long-term success of the program.

C. Citizenship

The candidate should have made notable contributions to strengthening the School culture, as noted by collaboration with fellow faculty, and participation in: School seminars,

undergraduate and graduate student events, diversity initiatives, alumni outreach, and/or advancement projects. Efforts to increase the external visibility of the School by highlighting activities and successes, including via social media outlets, are valued and highly encouraged.

Guidelines for Promotion to Senior Instructor

School Guidelines for Promotion to Senior Instructor are extensions of policies noted in the Faculty Handbook (section 5.1.6) and the CALS guidelines.

Instructors are eligible for promotion to Senior Instructor after serving a minimum of five years as an Advanced Instructor. Consideration for promotion will be based on the Instructor's employment contract appointment and any adjustments thereafter. Candidates will be evaluated based on the appropriate balance of: A) Teaching and Advising, B) Service and Outreach, and C) Citizenship.

Promotion to the rank of Senior Instructor is the capstone rank for Instructors, and is based on outstanding teaching and leadership serving the School, college, university and the profession. Expectations for promotion will be based on assigned distribution of effort and excellence, or continued progress towards excellence in:

A. Teaching and Advising

1. Candidates for promotion to Senior Instructor should have an exemplary track record of teaching. Evidence of teaching excellence includes student perception of teaching (SPOT), annual evaluations, and peer evaluations of teaching. It is expected that Instructors seeking promotion have SPOT scores consistently at or above CALS averages, and that peer evaluations of teaching are consistently positive. Peer evaluations of teaching are encouraged at least once every two years for candidates seeking promotion to Senior Instructor, ensuring that at least two current peer evaluations are obtained during a 5-year window. Leadership in course and/or core curriculum development is expected for promotion to Senior Instructor. This includes work to strengthen traditional classroom teaching as well as efforts to develop or augment online programs.
2. Instructors seeking promotion to Senior Instructor should have a track record of impactful advising and mentoring. This includes significant leadership mentoring other faculty, advising students and teaching assistants, supporting academic advisors, and/or serving as an advisor for student organizations.

B. Service and Outreach

1. Candidates are expected to provide high-quality service to the School commensurate with their appointment allocation. This can include service on School, College (CALS), or University committees. Service can also include efforts to promote pedagogy, participation in teaching workshops, augmenting teaching environments by securing equipment or resources that bolster teaching approaches, or serving roles in college or university governance.
2. Participation in professional conferences and societies specific to the candidate's area of teaching, and submitting/reviewing manuscripts for pedagogical/professional publications are encouraged. Demonstrated leadership within one's professional field is expected for promotion to Senior Instructor.
3. Based upon contractual allocations, administrative duties assigned to the Instructor will also be gauged as a metric for promotion. This includes program development and management,

accreditation, student outcomes, and other measures to promote the long-term success of the program.

C. Citizenship

The candidate should have made notable contributions to strengthening the School culture, as noted by collaboration with fellow faculty, and involvement in: School seminars, undergraduate and graduate student events, diversity initiatives, alumni outreach, and/or advancement projects. Efforts to increase the external visibility of the School by highlighting activities and successes, including through social media outlets, are valued and highly encouraged.

Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor and Conferral of Tenure

School guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor and the Conferral of Tenure are extensions of policies noted in the Faculty Handbook (section 3.1.2 and section 3.4).

The Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook (section 3.4.2) requires that tenure-track candidates receive two progress and performance evaluations by the School Promotion and Tenure (P&T) committee, typically the first during years 2-3 and the second during years 4-5 of the pre-tenure probationary period. The School requires that the information used for these progress reports is formatted to be consistent with the promotion and tenure dossier format (dossier format guidelines available on the Provost's website).

At the time of consideration for Promotion and/or Tenure, the P&T committee will evaluate the candidate's dossier, annual reviews, (e.g., eFARs), probationary period and progress reviews conducted by the School Director and the School P&T committee, and external evaluations from individuals at peer institutions (per the Faculty Handbook). School recommendations for promotion and/or tenure will be made in the fall semester of the appropriate employment year (as outlined in the Faculty Handbook).

Promotion and Tenure is a decision made for the future and based on the past. As stated in the Faculty Handbook (section 3.4.4), recommendations for tenure should imply few if any lingering doubts about the value of the candidate to the School's program for the duration of their employment in the School. The criteria for promotion to Associate Professor are founded upon excellence, or the continued development towards excellence, in the three areas for consideration: A) Teaching and Advising, B) Research and Creative Activity, and C) Service and Outreach. In addition, a School expectation is D) Citizenship. Based on the contractual distribution of faculty appointments, individuals seeking promotion and tenure must demonstrate excellence in the primary appointment area. In addition, demonstration of a high level of general competence in the other areas is expected. As achievement of excellence in more than one area may not always be evident, the demonstration of continued development in each of these areas is critical when considering promotion to Associate Professor. Expectations will vary according to assigned distribution of effort.

A. Teaching and Advising

1. The candidate should show evidence of accomplishments in the quality and quantity of teaching and show documented progress in becoming an excellent teacher of undergraduate and graduate students. Teaching load should be commensurate with their assignment allocation. Evidence includes annual faculty activity reports, peer evaluations of teaching, student perception of teaching (SPOT), and teaching recognition by students, peers, and/or alumni. The teaching evaluations are expected to be consistently at or above CALS averages, and/or show a consistent trend towards improvement over time. Efforts to improve teaching are expected of all candidates being considered for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure.
2. Faculty members should demonstrate evidence of successful mentoring of graduate students toward degree completion. At least one graduate student should be successfully mentored to completion of their graduate program as committee Chair. In addition, the candidate is expected to serve (or have served) on other graduate committees as Co-chair or as a committee member. Metrics for gauging mentoring success include student publications, presentations at local, regional, and/or national conferences, and gainful

employment or acceptance to professional school upon completion of the student's degree.

B. Research and Creative Activity

1. Candidates for promotion to Associate Professor are expected to have established an independent, productive research program at Virginia Tech, or have demonstrated the critical role they play in the success of interdisciplinary research team(s). Evidence of success in procuring extramural funding is an integral part of developing a successful research program. The faculty member should have obtained external funding to support their research, ideally as a Principal Investigator or as a Co-Investigator on collaborative projects. The numbers of grants submitted, funded, as well as funding amounts should be commensurate with the faculty appointment.
2. The faculty member must have established a track record of publishing scholarly works since their appointment at Virginia Tech. Candidates for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure are expected to publish peer-reviewed papers that must include original research publications and may also include books, book chapters, and reviews. In general, the number of works published each year (~3) should be consistent with the School average. The publications should reflect contributions that are appropriate for each candidate's scholarly discipline (i.e., impact factors, target audience, etc.). As such, fewer high impact publications or a greater number of lower impact publications may be appropriate. Candidates should be senior or lead (first) author on a substantial number of these publications and, where needed, provide rationale for other authorship positions and evidence of their critical role in the success of projects leading to publication. Involvement of students as co-authors is expected.
3. Interdisciplinary collaborations, either within the institution (Virginia Tech) or with external partners (regional, national, or international) are strongly encouraged and will be evaluated as another metric for success and promotion to Associate Professor with tenure.

C. Service and Outreach

1. The candidate should actively serve on School, College (CALs), or University committees. Service can include membership on a standing or ad hoc (e.g., faculty search) committee, or other service as assigned by the School Director.
2. Participation in professional conferences and societies specific to the candidate's scholarship is expected. The candidate should be a regular member of at least one national or international scientific society appropriate to his/her field of study. Promotion to Associate Professor with tenure should be commensurate with evidence the candidate is consistently expanding his/her professional network and recognition through discipline-specific society and conference participation.
3. Professional service may include participating in peer review for professional journals, grant review panels, and, if relevant, consulting activities.

D. Citizenship

1. The candidate should have made notable contributions to strengthening the School culture, as noted by collaboration with fellow faculty, and participation and support of School seminars, activities, student presentations/defenses, undergraduate and graduate events, diversity initiatives, alumni outreach, advancement projects, and/or Extension work. Efforts to increase the external visibility of the School by highlighting scholarly activities via social media outlets are valued and highly encouraged.

2. The candidate's integrity and professional and ethical conduct will be considered in making the decision for recommendation to Associate Professor with tenure decision.
3. The future role of the candidate to contribute to the School's tripartite mission will also be considered as a part of the recommendation for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure.

Additional Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor for Faculty with Extension Appointments (and Conferral of Tenure, if applicable)

Developing and delivering effective, high-quality Cooperative Extension programming is central to the Extension mission. Faculty with Extension appointments should demonstrate strong evidence of program outputs and impacts to improve population health of Virginians. The breadth and depth of programming should be commensurate with their appointment. Evidence that the candidate's Extension work is improving population health of Virginians with a trajectory for national dissemination will be determined based on a review of the candidate statement, research and creativity, list of trainings and workshops, consumer publications, messages, and media, and input from field faculty (agents). Specific to Extension Specialists for promotion to Associate Professor, the candidate should include a brief summary of the Extension Peer Review Team report findings within the dossier in *Section VI. D. Additional outreach and extension activities and outcomes* and the following information in the candidate statement:

- the specialist's area of Extension programming responsibility and appointment
- issues being addressed and relevance/importance to Virginia and nationally
- target clientele/population
- program/intervention goals and objectives
- documented outcomes, significance, and reach of programming (agent, clientele/population, etc.)
- how others (e.g., specialists, agents, clientele, volunteers, students, and stakeholders) help inform and are engaged in the program
- synergy between extension and research and creativity work (in addition to teaching, if appropriate)

Candidates are expected to uphold standards of research and creativity similar to other faculty, to support Extension programming. The Specialist must have established a track record of publishing original research that complements the candidate's signature Extension programming in peer-reviewed publications (e.g., journal manuscripts, book chapters, etc.). Peer-reviewed publications, messages, and media for the public (e.g., agents, clientele, volunteers, students, and stakeholders) are encouraged to increase visibility of Extension work and impacts.

Consistent with stated expectations of non-extension faculty, candidates are expected to show evidence of accomplishments in teaching, service, and citizenship according to their assignment.

Guidelines for Promotion to Professor (and Conferral of Tenure, if applicable)

The School considers the rank of Professor to represent the very best of academic faculty achievement. School guidelines for Promotion to Professor are extensions of criteria published in the Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook (section 3.1.3). Careful consideration will be given to the individual's scientific and scholarly achievements, teaching accomplishments, and overall contributions to the School, College, and University. As stated in the Handbook (section 3.4.4), promotion to Professor is contingent upon national or international recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator. Promotion to this rank is to be reserved for School faculty whose achievements are broad and particularly noteworthy.

Promotion to Professor presumes that the candidate has met the criteria for the rank of Associate Professor, and has continued to maintain professional growth and development in each area of evaluation. Promotion from Associate to Full Professor does not result merely from accumulation of time in rank at the Associate level, but rather is awarded based on continuing superior achievements in teaching/advising, research and creative achievements, and service/outreach. This includes prominent contributions to plant and environmental sciences and Virginia Tech, and also notable distinction among the scientific community at large.

For faculty seeking promotion to Professor, at least one review must be conducted of the candidate's progression towards Professor prior to submission of the dossier (Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook section 3.4.5.3). This review will be conducted by the School P&T committee. Written recommendations of the committee's suggestion(s) for improving the candidate's positioning for promotion must be provided to the candidate, and a signed copy retained in the appropriate files. The School P&T committee requires the candidate assimilate his/her information to be consistent with the promotion dossier (format guidelines available on the Provost's website).

A. Teaching and Advising

1. The candidate should show evidence of exemplary teaching of undergraduate and graduate students. Consistently good perceptions of teaching by students (SPOT) and peers, and/or teaching recognition awards should be demonstrated. For promotion to Professor, innovations and/or scholarship in pedagogy, particularly those that are recognized beyond classroom feedback metrics, are particularly notable.
2. Faculty members should have successfully mentored to completion several graduate students with at least one being a PhD student. A demonstrated track record of former students successfully transitioning to relevant careers or high-quality training positions is highly desirable.
3. The candidate should have served on numerous graduate student advisory committees (thesis/dissertation) before being considered for promotion.

B. Research and Creative Activity

1. Candidates for promotion to Professor must have demonstrated clear success in procuring extramural funding. The faculty member should have a track record of sustained funding as a Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator or as a critical member of an interdisciplinary research team. The candidate is expected to have a sustained record of sufficient funding to support their program and students to warrant promotion to full Professor.
2. Promotion to the rank of Professor assumes that the candidate has a consistent publication record (refereed publications) in journals with a high impact and appropriate in his/her

field. Demonstration(s) of papers published in internationally-recognized journals is strongly encouraged. Books and book chapters are also recognized as scholarly activities.

3. Clear metrics of scientific recognition as reflected by invited conference presentations at national/international meetings and strong external peer evaluations that denote the candidate as a recognized expert in his/her discipline.
4. Interdisciplinary collaborations, either within the institution (Virginia Tech) or with external partners (regional, national, or international) are strongly encouraged and will be evaluated as another metric for success and promotion to Professor.

C. Service and Outreach

1. The candidate should show increasing levels of responsibility as it pertains to School, College (CALs), and/or University-wide committees. This can include service on standing or ad hoc (faculty search) committees, with a track record that demonstrates clear leadership on committees expected to have a sustained impact on the institution.
2. Participation and leadership in professional conferences and societies, including participation on conference organizing committees, and/or elected leadership roles, and/or elevation to fellow status within one's professional societies.
3. For promotion to Professor, the candidate is expected to demonstrate sustained review activity for peer-reviewed journals, be appointed to journal editorial board(s) and/or service on review panels/study sections for grant funding agencies.

D. Citizenship

1. Evidence that the candidate has made sustained contributions to strengthening the School culture, as noted by collaboration with fellow faculty, and participation and support of School seminars, activities, student defenses, undergraduate and graduate events, diversity initiatives, alumni/development outreach activities, and Extension work. Efforts to increase the external visibility of the School by highlighting scholarly activities via social media outlets are valued and highly encouraged.

Additional Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor for Faculty with Extension Appointments

Candidates for promotion to Professor must demonstrate strong evidence of comprehensive programming with deep and broad impacts on populations of interest, with emphasis on the dissemination of programs and/or concepts at national and international levels. The candidate should include a brief summary of the Extension Peer Review Team report findings (since promotion to Associate Professor) and address the same topics as noted under Promotion to Associate Professor.