

Guidelines for Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure, and Continuing Appointment

Department of Media and Information Michigan State University

(October 24, 2014)

Preamble

These guidelines are presented in order to operationalize the evaluation criteria identified in the bylaws of the Department, specifically Research-Creative Activities, Instruction, and Citizenship.

While guidelines can be neither exhaustive nor complete, they are intended to be deeply illustrative. As such, the guidelines provide minimum quantitative standards to attain ‘Satisfactory’ ratings on the evaluation criteria. The significance of an individual’s work, we assert, is not necessarily indicated by its quantity. Therefore, once the minimum levels have been demonstrated, ratings beyond ‘Satisfactory’ shall be more dependent on assessment of quality. These guidelines address the issue of quality.

The academic community has long maintained that all scholarship, and especially research and creative activities, must be supported by evidence of positive, independent, external review. The type of evidence or review may vary, but not the principle. This document supports that view.

At the same time, it must be noted that any candidate for promotion, tenure, reappointment, or continuing appointment shall be given full opportunity to present any evidence he or she wishes to provide and to make a case for the merit of her or his accomplishments. The candidate may propose equivalencies to the specified minima in all areas of evaluation.

In the spirit of the University guidelines for promotion, reappointment and tenure: The essence of scholarship is the thoughtful discovery, transmission, and application of knowledge, including creative activities, that is based in the ideas and methods of recognized disciplines, professions, and interdisciplinary fields; and that is recognized by peers. What qualifies an activity as scholarship is that it be deeply informed by the most recent knowledge in the field, that the knowledge is skillfully interpreted and deployed, and that the activity is carried out with intelligent openness to new information, debate, and criticism.

1. Research-Creative Activity

In parallel with University guidelines, dimensions of research and creative activities recognized by the Department include but are not limited to:

- *Discovery of new knowledge, including creative activities, and originality of approach*
- *Development of innovative problem-solving strategies or methodologies;*
- *Application and dissemination of knowledge; and*
- *Research and creative activities in outreach, professional/clinical, extension, international, or urban arenas.*

1.1. The following evidence shall be considered in assessing Research-Creative Activity. These activities shall be evaluated and reviewed by peers:

a) Research: Definition

Publicly observable peer-reviewed research made available through, but not limited to, online and print publications, either published or clearly shown to be "in press". Any single work can only pertain to one reappointment or promotion decision.

b) Creative Works: Definition

Publicly observable peer-reviewed creative works may take the form of, but are not limited to, audio, video, film, scripts, treatments and computer-generated products.

c) Fiscal Entrepreneurship Definition

Fiscal entrepreneurship in support of Research-Creative Activity shall include but not be limited to securing funding from external sources for Research-Creative Activity, and various efforts directed toward securing funding.

1.1.1. The term "per year" refers to an academic year of full-time employment; official leaves adjust the determination of active years.

1.2. Minimum Standards for a Satisfactory Rating in Research-Creative Activity. These activities shall be evaluated and reviewed by peers.

Non-peer reviewed research and creative works can contribute to ratings of Strong or Outstanding, but peer review of research activity or evaluation of creative activity in the amounts specified below is central to meeting the minimum standards in these categories. Candidates may provide background information for faculty from other domains of specialization regarding the competitiveness and prestige of the mechanisms by which their research and creative works were peer reviewed.

1.2.1. For reappointment as assistant professor or specialist:

Four peer reviewed research works or creative activities, or some combination of refereed works and scholarly book(s).

1.2.2. For promotion to associate professor with tenure or reappointment as a specialist with continuing appointment status:

An average of two peer reviewed research works or creative activities per year within the probationary period(s),¹ including at least several in which the candidate is a major contributor. Candidates submitting research-creative works or scholarly book(s) may suggest substitution of one larger, significant work for several smaller ones. For those who come to the Department with the rank of associate professor, for the purposes of tenure, work completed prior to their Michigan State University appointment shall be considered as equivalent to work accomplished while at Michigan State University.

Evidence of success as principal investigator in securing external funding for research or creative activity.

1.2.3. For promotion to professor with tenure or to senior specialist:

An average of two peer reviewed research works or creative activities per year, on a substantial proportion of which the candidate is a major contributor, including several years of sustained, outstanding achievements since the attainment of associate professorship.² Candidates submitting research-creative works or scholarly book(s), or the editorship of a prestigious academic journal may suggest substitution of one larger significant work of this nature for several smaller ones.

Evidence of success as principal investigator in securing external funding for research or creative activity.

1.2.4

Peer-reviewed work is essential in evaluation. However, non-peer reviewed research and creative works can be considered in all reappointment, promotion and tenure decisions.

1.3. Ratings of Strong or Outstanding in Research-Creative Activity shall be based on the professional judgment of the Departmental Recommending Committee or Departmental Review

¹ For an assistant professor, two probationary periods (one prior to and one following reappointment) typically comprises six years, and review for tenure and promotion may not take longer. The faculty handbook specifies that tenure may be granted during either period, but stipulates that promotion from assistant professor to associate professor should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements and that “a reasonably long period in rank” is often required to demonstrate this achievement.

² There is no proscribed time in rank, however, the faculty handbook stipulates that “a reasonably long period in rank” is often necessary for a confident assessment of individuals’ stature.

Committee, regarding the degree to which a candidate exceeds the minimum quantitative standards, listed above.

Evidence the Committees shall consider includes, but is not limited to, the following: The overall quality and quantity of peer reviewed publications and evaluated creative works; the prestige of the site of publication or evaluated creative activity; evidence of significant contribution consistent with the standards of the relevant field; the visibility of a candidate's work in the field as indicated by frequency of citation, awards or prizes from academic and professional associations; the extent of audience reach of creative works, the quantity, prestige and scholarly-creative impact of the candidate's work; the number of fellowships, grants, contracts, or consultantships awarded, sought, or undertaken; conference activities, including peer-reviewed papers, peer-evaluated projects, and invited participation; the presentation of colloquia, invited lectures, and demonstrations; editorship of peer-reviewed journals or books; and participation on editorial boards, grant review teams or as peer-evaluator of publications or creative work. The Committees shall not create or apply a predetermined quantitative threshold necessary to rate a candidate as Strong or Outstanding on this dimension.

Although evaluating the significance and quality of creative activities is often difficult and subjective, Departmental Recommending Committees and Departmental Review Committees shall consider the following, non-exhaustive list of possible ways creative works are evaluated:

- Positive reviews by qualified academic and professional external judges;
- academic and professional commissions, honors, prizes, and awards received for the activity;
- audience reach and impact;
- invited showings, peer reviewed conference exhibits and case studies, museum or gallery exhibits;
- selection of the materials for commercial or non-profit distribution.

In general, the selectivity and/or prestige of the entity evaluating a creative activity shall also be taken as an indicator of the overall quality of the project. Thus, for example, selection for a national festival or conference shall be considered more significant than for a regional event; a network broadcast shall be valued more highly than a local telecast; and a juried showing or competition shall carry greater weight than a non-juried event.

2. Instruction

2.1. Evidence the committee shall consider can include but is not limited to:

- a) Student ratings of classroom performance (required)
- b) Academic advising activities;
- c) Contributions to curriculum, including overseas studies programs;
- d) Teaching Portfolio (a narrative in which candidates describe their teaching philosophy, goals, and strategies)
- e) In the year preceding a tenure or specialist with security decision, the chairperson or a faculty member appointed by the chairperson shall formally observe a class taught by the

candidate and provide the candidate and chairperson a written evaluation to be included in the omnibus file. The candidate has the option to veto one choice.

Other evidence may include:

- f) Peer assessment of teaching materials
- g) Scholarly or creative activities designed to enhance or develop teaching goals
- h) Fiscal entrepreneurship in support of instruction including but not limited to efforts to receive funding from internal and external sources for instructional activities.
- i) Other evidence of teaching excellence (e.g. testimony from past students).

Equivalent evidence of teaching strength at other institutions may be provided, depending on the candidate's length of service in the Department at the time of her or his candidacy.

In evaluating a candidate on Instruction, committees shall assume, unless evidence to the contrary has been presented, that the candidate has adhered to the MSU "Code of Teaching Responsibility."

2.2. Minimum Standards for a Satisfactory Rating in Instruction.

2.2.1. For reappointment as assistant professor or as specialist:

SIRS scores averaging 3.0 or less for each "composite profile factor" (on a scale of 1 – 5, 1 being best). Higher than minimal expected average aggregate SIRS scores shall require the recommending committee to independently seek further evidence in evaluating teaching quality.

2.2.2. For promotion to associate professor with tenure or to specialist with continuing appointment status:

For all courses with enrollment under 100 students taught since initial appointment, aggregate SIRS scores averaging 2.5 or less for each "composite profile factor" and evidence of advising graduate students on their projects. Higher than minimal expected average aggregate SIRS scores will prompt the review committee to independently seek further evidence in evaluating teaching quality.

2.2.3. For promotion to professor with tenure or promotion to senior specialist:

For all courses with enrollment under 100 students taught for six semesters prior to current review, aggregate SIRS scores averaging 2.5 or less for each "composite profile factor"; and evidence of substantial contributions to the academic work of graduate students. Higher than minimal expected average aggregate SIRS scores will prompt the review committee to independently seek further evidence in evaluating teaching quality.

2.3. Ratings of Strong or Outstanding in Instruction shall be based on the professional judgment of the Departmental Recommending Committee or Departmental Review Committee,

regarding the degree to which a candidate exceeds the minimum standards as outlined in section 2.1.a-k.

3. Citizenship

3.1. Six categories of performance define the principal evidence to be considered in assessing a candidate on the dimension of Citizenship:

- a) Outreach citizenship, operationalized as application of research findings, creative projects and other works to benefit local, state, national, and international external publics; presentations and consultations with government agencies, community organizations, and other relevant businesses and organizations; dissemination of research-creative works to the general public; service on committees in areas of professional expertise; international citizenship activities.
- b) Academic-Professional citizenship, exemplified by activities such as editing, reviewing, and judging research-creative works for journals, conferences, exhibits, shows, prizes, awards; leadership positions in academic-professional associations and organizations.
- c) University citizenship, including participation in academic governance; leadership positions on University committees and advisory boards; involvement in interdisciplinary or trans-collegiate activities; contributions to the University's diversity mission; participation in non-Departmental programs; and membership on non-Departmental search committees.
- d) Departmental citizenship, evidenced by activities including: Positive contributions to departmental life; professionalism in departmental governance; membership and/or leadership roles on departmental committees; seeking and obtaining funding support for students; organizing and/or participating in departmental workshops and colloquia; efforts to recruit and retain diverse undergraduate and graduate students; nurturing alumni and corporate relations in support of teaching and research-creative activities; representing the Department at conferences, meetings, etc.; and mentoring junior faculty.
- e) Student-oriented citizenship, including: Academic and/or career guidance to individual students and student associations; sponsorship of student organizations; arranging student internships; advising students from the MSU Honors College; recruiting students to the department; and recruiting and training Undergraduate Teaching Assistants and graduate assistants.
- f) Fiscal entrepreneurship in support of any of the prior categories of citizenship activities including but not limited to efforts to receive funding from internal and external sources for citizenship activities.

g) Service-oriented fiscal entrepreneurship, including: Application to (or “efforts to receive”) funding from both internal and external sources for instruction, and service; funding from both internal and external sources for instruction, and service; collaboration on grant writing and funded projects with researchers within and across disciplines at MSU and other institutions; creativity in exploring diverse funding opportunities tied to categories of citizenship.

3.2. Minimum Standards for a Satisfactory Rating in Citizenship.

3.2.1. For reappointment as assistant professor or as specialist:

At least one substantial activity in one of the categories above, in which the candidate performed a primary leadership role.

3.2.2. For promotion to associate professor with tenure or reappointment as specialist with continuing appointment status:

At least two substantial activities in one or more of the categories above, in which the candidate performed a primary leadership role.

3.2.3. For promotion to professor with tenure or to senior specialist:

At least four substantial activities in two or more of the categories above, in which the candidate performed a primary leadership role.

3.3. Ratings of Strong or Outstanding in Citizenship shall be based on the professional judgment of the Departmental Recommending Committee or Departmental Review Committee, regarding the quantity of time and effort devoted to Citizenship activities by the candidate; the significance of those activities; the quality of the candidate's performance in citizenship-related roles; and the impact of the candidate's citizenship contributions on society, the academic field or profession, the university, or the department.

4. Fiscal Entrepreneurship and Engagement with Society

4.1 Depending on the individual's expertise and interest, fiscal entrepreneurship may relate to research and creative works, instruction, and/or citizenship. Often fiscal entrepreneurship will be collaborative and often it will be multidisciplinary. Evidence of fiscal entrepreneurship will be evaluated in terms of the number of entrepreneurial efforts and successful outcomes, amounts sought, and the role that the individual took in those efforts and outcomes. Fiscal entrepreneurial efforts are those that intend to bring some financial benefit to MSU.

Unanimously approved by the Department, May 4, 2006
Revisions approved December 3, 2010

Further revisions approved October 24, 2014

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