TENURE AND PROMOTION

The English Department seeks to promote excellent teaching, distinguished scholarship and creativity, and exemplary professional service to the Department, the College, the University, and the community at large. The best English departments in the nation exhibit these characteristics, and our goal is to achieve and maintain equal ranking with these departments. The English Department generally follows the guidelines for tenure and promotion set down in college and university documents, and candidates should begin by carefully consulting those documents. Insofar as the department uses more specific evaluative language, it is noted below.

I. General Tenure and Promotion Procedures

Candidates for tenure and promotion are evaluated at the departmental level by a vote of the tenured faculty (for candidates seeking tenure), followed by written evaluations from the FEC and the Department Chair. The FEC reviews all relevant documents and credentials and makes a recommendation to the Department Chair, who then makes a separate recommendation. After the candidate has reviewed the tenure and promotion packet, is certain that everything is in order, and agrees to continuing the process, the Chair forwards to the Dean’s office the Chair’s and the FEC’s recommendations and the results of the tenured faculty vote.

Relevant documents and credentials to submit: In addition to consulting college and university guidelines, candidates should consult the department’s annual FAIR form. The categories of this form indicate the breadth of professional activity that may be expected from candidates. Not every category needs to be represented in a candidate’s vita, but a range of activity can be an indicator of professional commitment and participation. Quality is the most important factor, and since quality is more difficult to assess than quantity and range, candidates are encouraged to submit a brief account of their professional accomplishments that explains their significance and worth. Candidates need three to six external letters, so they should submit a list of at least ten potential reviewers to the Department Chair by mid-March of the year before they go up. Reviewers should hold at least the rank to which the candidate seeks promotion. They should have no significant relationship to the candidate (e.g., major professor, co-author), unless there are mitigating circumstances that would indicate otherwise (e.g., to review scholarship so specialized that few expert reviewers exist). Candidates may examine the files of past candidates if they wish.

Third-Year Review: While the Department Chair may informally counsel tenure-earning faculty annually concerning the progress they are making, both the Chair and the FEC will officially evaluate tenure-earning faculty in their third year to advise them as to whether they are on track for the earning of tenure and promotion after their fifth year.

II. Tenure and/or Promotion to Associate Professor

In keeping with the normal practice of major universities, the Department generally considers a candidate for tenure and promotion to associate professor under a single set of criteria.
Candidates become eligible for promotion and tenure in their sixth year of service to the Department. Time on leave as described in University guidelines does not count as service years. Under exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be recommended for early tenure and promotion.

In order to be recommended for promotion to the rank of associate professor, each candidate must be outstanding in teaching or in research, at least strong in the other, and show commitment in the area of professional service.

**Teaching Ability and Effectiveness**

The Department seeks to ensure high-quality teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In evaluating the quality of each candidate's teaching the Department shall consider student surveys; peer evaluation based on classroom visitation; and a teaching portfolio. Peer evaluations take the form of letters from qualified (preferably tenured) colleagues who have personally observed the candidate in the classroom. Such observations shall occur in the three semesters immediately prior to the term in which the candidate is considered for promotion and/or tenure. The Chair will choose the evaluators in consultation with the candidate, who will have prepared a list of four qualified (preferably tenured) colleagues.

Additional evidence of the quality of the candidate's teaching can include directing individual studies, theses, and dissertations as well as serving on honors, thesis and dissertation committees; academic advising; receiving awards or formal recognition for outstanding teaching; obtaining grants or financial aid for innovation and experimentation in teaching; developing new programs and courses of study; developing new syllabi or instructional methods and materials for existing courses; and other materials the candidate wishes to make available.

**Scholarship and Other Creative Activity**

The Department requires distinction in scholarship and other creative activity. In evaluating each candidate, the Department shall consider the quality of the work, including its significance to the candidate's field(s); sufficient quantity is necessary both to permit a reliable judgment and to assure continued commitment. Published work is most important; however, the Department recognizes that a candidate's scholarship and other creative activity also includes both work in circulation and work in progress.

The most significant evidence of scholarship and other creative activity includes a completed book-length project of original scholarship or creative activity, which a respected press has published or accepted and slated for publication, plus two or more published articles, book chapters, and/or short creative works. Since a department builds its reputation primarily on books, they are preferred. However, an equivalent record of eight or more substantial, well-placed articles, book chapters, and/or short creative works will also count as evidence.

Another category of evidence includes papers read at professional meetings and readings or performances of creative work; grants and fellowships received in support of scholarship and other
creative activity: review articles and reviews published in magazines and journals; and editorships, assistant editorships, and advisory positions on the boards of nationally distributed journals.

Other evidence can include encyclopedia articles; newspaper articles and reviews; abstracts; active participation in professional organizations and conferences as related to scholarship and creative work; consulting on professional matters related to scholarly expertise; scholarly and creative work in electronic media; and reviews, citations, reprints, and translations of one's own work. The candidate is responsible for providing appropriate descriptive and evaluative documentation pertaining to the publication outlets.

Service

The Department expects each faculty member to contribute to the intellectual life and governance of the University. Evaluation considers only those service activities that are related to the candidate's professional expertise or to the mission of the University. The Department assumes the responsibility to provide opportunities for departmental service.

Service shall include participation in departmental, college, and university committees and councils; involvement in the organization and expedition of meetings, symposia, conferences, and workshops; membership on national, regional, and state professional committees; participation in local, state, and national boards, agencies and commissions; participation in electronic/telecommunications programs; judging writing competitions; service to public schools; and appearances before civic and community groups.

III. Tenure and/or Promotion to Professor

While meeting the criteria in section II demonstrates that one is qualified to be an associate professor, one must accomplish more, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in order to be recommended for promotion and/or tenure to the rank of full professor. Candidates must demonstrate the following:

Successful teaching and significant involvement in the graduate program, including but not limited to directing theses and dissertations and serving on degree committees.

Achievement of national or international reputation within one's field based on distinguished work, normally including two published books (at least one since promotion to associate professor). In special cases, the department may recommend promotion on the basis of one important and well-received book and a substantial body of articles or creative works.

Sustained participation in professional life, including a record of significant involvement in regional and national organizations and in departmental, college, and university committees.
Commentary on Tenure and/or Promotion

These questions and answers are intended to help candidates preparing for tenure and/or promotion. Additionally, the Department Chair's consultation with faculty who expect to be considered for tenure and/or promotion the following year will be helpful. In your first few years on the faculty, you will also find it helpful to seek the advice of senior colleagues on matters relating to promotion and tenure.

Commentary on section II: Tenure and/or Promotion to Associate Professor

(1) **Does the Department really expect strength in both teaching and research/creative activity?**

Yes. The Department is committed to both our teaching and research missions, and one simply cannot gain tenure without demonstrating strength in both of these areas and excellence in at least one.

(2) **Does service "count"?**

Yes. The Department will not recommend promotion to associate professor and tenure for any candidate who is not a useful department citizen as well as a fine teacher and a productive writer/scholar. Remember, however, that service counts less than teaching and research/creative activity; we urge untenured faculty to use their time wisely and keep their priorities balanced.

(3) **How do we determine strength in teaching?**

High quality teaching can be demonstrated by a variety of means, for example, student surveys, peer evaluation, formal awards or recognition, grants or funding for teaching experimentation or innovation, and a teaching portfolio. As a way of preparing for the recommended peer evaluations, candidates may wish to ask senior colleagues to observe their teaching during their first two years in the Department.

(4) **What is the teaching portfolio?**

For promotion and tenure, the University requires a formal binder that must be assembled in conformity with its guidelines. This binder contains a section on teaching, which the Department considers to be the candidate's teaching portfolio. It will include a statement of teaching philosophy, commentary on development of innovative course materials, and other documentation or descriptions of your teaching activities that you wish to have the promotion and tenure committees consider. The University requires that the portfolio contain materials from all of your years credited toward tenure, including years you may have brought in from another institution.

Note that the portfolio must include the student survey forms that are required by university policy.
How do we determine strength in research and other creative activity?

While many factors are involved, the Department recognizes that publication of a book by a respected press significantly enhances your — and the Department's — visibility and reputation in the profession. Nevertheless, we also acknowledge that, in the course of a faculty member's career, some research and creative projects are better suited to publication in electronic or shorter print forms. In either case, publications that have undergone the scrutiny of peer review carry the greatest weight.

The Department strongly encourages candidates to publish a book. New faculty are advised to plan for the publication of a book well in advance since publishers' review processes often take much more than a year. Publishing well-placed articles/shorter creative works that are widely recognized as having made a significant contribution to the field is also a mark of excellence.

The department recognizes that faculty who are recommended for tenure and promotion will contribute to one (or sometimes more) of our three programs: Literature; Creative Writing; and Rhetoric/Composition and Professional/Technical Writing. A candidate may come up in more than one area by submitting an appropriate combination of publications or an interdisciplinary book that meets the qualitative standards of each, accompanied by other evidence of scholarly activity such as readings, conference papers and grants. While different kinds of publication are valued in the three programs within the English Department, there is no hierarchy among programs. Work in one area is not inherently more valuable than work in any other area. There are, however, distinctions within programs; not all publication is equally valuable in enhancing a faculty member's and the Department's visibility and reputation in the profession. The following explanations are meant to guide candidates for promotion and tenure in understanding how these distinctions are likely to bear on promotion and tenure decisions.
Literature Program

Published work in the Literature Program is evaluated on the following bases:

Books. Books of original scholarship published at respectable presses carry the most prestige, followed closely by editions of literary and cultural texts. Also of significant value are edited collections of essays, textbooks, surveys of scholarship, and study guides.

Articles. Full-length articles in refereed, nationally or internationally circulated journals and in edited collections carry the most prestige. Very brief articles, review essays and reviews in such journals also qualify as important publications. Other kinds of articles, such as newspaper and magazine reviews and essays, also provide evidence of accomplishment.

In the Literature Program, a book that has been published or scheduled for publication by a University press or its equivalent plus two or more published articles is the best evidence of the scholarly profile necessary for tenure. A strong equivalent record of article and book chapter publication will also be considered.

For tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, a lengthy and textually complex edition of a literary work (or letters, diaries, etc.) derived from manuscript and/or printed sources counts as a book, as does a comprehensive edition of historically significant texts requiring extensive search work and archival research. A new edition (i.e., a new typesetting) or facsimile of an earlier edition that has not been rigorously edited through textual research and analysis-based emendation does not count, though its introduction may be assigned the same weight as a scholarly article. A facsimile that does include extensive analysis of textual history, the book or manuscript as material artifact, language, and scribal and print practices and errors, or reconstruction of a damaged text, may be given the same weight as a comprehensive edition. In the case of promotion to Professor, it is expected that a candidate whose primary area of expertise is textual studies will have either a scholarly edition and a scholarly book in his or her own words, or two scholarly editions and a significant body of analytical articles published in scholarly journals or books.

To count as a book for promotion and tenure, works of bibliographic research will be held to the highest standards regarding their completeness and analytic depth.

Creative Writing Program

Publications in creative writing will be evaluated on the following bases:

Books: a volume of the author's own work — whether a novel, collection of short stories, a volume of poetry, drama, or creative non-fiction — carries the most prestige. These may be published either by small press, university press, or trade presses of high quality, distinguished reputation and national distribution.
**Journals or anthologies:** short stories, poems, plays, novel excerpts, creative non-fiction essays published in distinguished literary journals or collections by reputable editors, and distinguished productions of original drama, constitute work valued the highest after books.

Other kinds of publication and publication-related activity we value include: the conceptualization and/or editing of textbooks, anthologies, literary journals; collaborative authoring; performance art and publications via electronic media.

In terms of preferred publication, promotion to Associate Professor would require a book plus two or more published stories or essays or a dozen or more poems. A strong equivalent record of publication of shorter works will also be considered. Promotion to Professor would require two books or a book and its equivalent, with preference being given to the former. In the case of drama, distinguished professional production might be considered equivalent to a book.

**Rhetoric/Composition and Professional/Technical Writing Program**

In the Rhetoric/Composition and Professional/Technical Writing Program, a book that has been published or scheduled for publication by a University press or its equivalent plus two or more published articles is the best evidence of the scholarly profile necessary for tenure. A strong equivalent record of article and book chapter publication will also be considered. In this field, innovative textbooks, pedagogical methodology and research, historical and empirical research, and collaborative and interdisciplinary work are considered primary forms of scholarly achievement and legitimate and regular ways of making knowledge in the profession. Therefore, a candidate for tenure may be able to or even required to demonstrate the standards of critical and original scholarship and prestige of his or her field with publications of these kinds.

**Books:**

Books of original scholarship published at respectable presses, followed closely by innovative textbooks (which are considered scholarly in this field) carry the most prestige. Also of significant value are co-authored scholarly books and edited collections of critical essays. Of some value are anthologies of student or professional writing and composition readers.

**Articles:**

Full-length articles in refereed, nationally circulated journals or in edited collections published at respectable presses and chapters in collaborative books published at respectable presses carry the most prestige. Also of significant value are full-length review essays and thorough surveys of scholarship.

(6) **When is a book a book?**

For purposes of promotion and tenure, it is obviously best that the book be in print. If your book has not quite reached that stage, however, you must provide evidence that it is in its final form (i.e., has been accepted as a completed manuscript and is scheduled for publication). A pre-completion contract, valuable as it is, is not in itself enough to qualify you for consideration for promotion and tenure.
(7) **Does work you published before joining this department count toward promotion and tenure?**

Yes, but with certain caveats. The Department is concerned with evidence of involvement in new projects and long-term productivity. A book and several articles completed before arrival here will undoubtedly enhance your credentials. But, a few years later, the Department would not consider these publications alone as satisfactory evidence of continuing commitment to publication.

An assistant professor’s first book is often a revised dissertation, and such a book, published by a good press, represents a significant achievement. You must, however, demonstrate substantial and on-going research or other creative activity in order to qualify for promotion and tenure. This work might well include an extension or continuation of the dissertation.

(8) **How are publication outlets judged?**

The Department strongly advises all faculty to place books and articles in the most visible, selective, and prestigious presses and journals possible. The Department has no desire to impose a rigid hierarchy in the judgment of presses or journals, but an awareness of the quality of outlets, based on the practice of external reviewing, is important. For example, a book from a solid and respectable press is what the Department expects and hopes for, but we recognize that the prestige of the outlet can vary according to the nature of the publication. Outlets considered prestigious vary greatly from field to field. In each area, however, there are good, bad, and mediocre outlets. It is important to seek opinions about presses and journals from others knowledgeable in the field in order to place work as advantageously as possible. Book publication with non-university commercial presses that require an author’s subvention may fail to be considered adequate evidence of scholarship. In such cases, other evidence, such as reviews of a book already in publication and other publications by the candidate, will be necessary.

In order to help the Evaluation Committee gauge the quality of your publication outlets, you need to supply the appropriate material. For example, for critical books, include not only the published work or the typescript with letter of acceptance (and copies of readers’ reports if available) but also the publisher’s entry in the [MLA Directory of Scholarly Presses](#), and, if available, a recent publisher’s catalogue. For articles/shorter creative works, supply not only offprints (or copies of typescript for accepted but not yet published works including copy of letter of acceptance and readers’ reports if available), but also a photocopy of the journal’s editorial page/masthead (showing names of editors and editorial board) and a photocopy of the entry for that journal in the most recent [MLA Directory of Periodicals](#).
(9) Do conference papers and readings count as evidence of ongoing research activity?

Yes. Conference papers and readings contribute to the Department's reputation and visibility. However, such presentations are not publications, and when preparing for a presentation, you should keep in mind the potential for submitting a version of the presentation for publication.

(10) What about collaborative work?

Collaborative publication is common in some areas of English studies. While the Department recognizes the value of collaborative projects, we emphasize the importance of establishing an independent reputation. The Department has no guidelines about what proportion of your work should be independently authored, but you are undoubtedly in a better position if you have some clearly definable texts of your own in print (articles or book chapters) when you are considered for tenure. If you do collaborative work, seek advice early and often (for example, at the time of your annual evaluation) about how the Department is perceiving your independent reputation.

Commentary on section III: Tenure and/or Promotion to Professor

Anyone appointed as or promoted to professor should be a distinguished and steadily productive critic, scholar, or creative artist, nationally or internationally visible in his or her field. A professorship is to a large degree a matter of professional status, not something one earns by time in service or merely quantitative production. By these means, our departmental goal is to achieve and maintain equal ranking with the best English departments in the nation.

Most of what we say above about promotion to associate professor with tenure is equally relevant here. Higher committees rely heavily on outside referees to verify a Department's evaluations: our candidates will have to meet the expectations of senior faculty in equivalent and better universities.

Two points, however, need further commentary.

(1) Do "two books" equal promotion?

Simply having published two book-length works, without regard to the quality of work, to other evidence of an active and substantive research program, to outstanding teaching, and to sustained service, is no guarantee of promotion. In addition to outstanding teaching and sustained service, the department expects on-going publication. The Department grants a professorship for the achievement of national (preferably international) reputation.

Promotion to professor presumes among other things the publication of an impressive body of distinguished work, typically including at least two books. While the Department endorses both book and article publication, the Department does not expect to promote candidates who have produced only articles.
(2) When can a faculty member be considered?

Books should be in print before consideration for a promotion to professor. This is not always feasible when considering a faculty member for promotion to associate professor, but general practice for promotion to professor requires that material should be in print.