

PROMOTION AND TENURE POLICIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC SCIENCES OF THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Prologue:

The following document contains definitions, procedures and evaluation criteria used by the Department of Basic Sciences of the College of Veterinary Medicine of Mississippi State University. This document is to be used in conjunction with the policies and procedures stated in the Faculty Handbook of Mississippi State University (http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty_handbook/handbook.pdf) and the policy statement of the College of Veterinary Medicine of Mississippi State University. This document reflects the philosophy and procedures which apply to the majority of the faculty in the Department of Basic Sciences; exceptions to the norm will be considered on a "case-by-case" basis.

If approved changes are made to promotion and tenure guidelines of the university faculty handbook, then this departmental document must be revised as necessary no later than the effective date of the revised university document. This document will be automatically reviewed for updates every three years, unless there is a need for more immediate revision.

Chronology of Tenure and Promotion for Eligible Candidates

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| July 1 | <p>The applicant provides the Department Head with a current CV, intent to apply, and names of 4-6 potential external evaluators and a brief description of each potential evaluator (see page 8 for details) for review.</p> <p>The applicant should download the P & T application forms (http://www.provost.msstate.edu/resources/faculty/forms/forms/10/PTApp_7_30_10.pdf) and begins to prepare his/ her dossier.</p> |
| July 15 | <p>The applicant provides the Department Head with a revised CV.</p> <p>After consulting with the Departmental P & T Committee and selecting 6 evaluators, the Department Head will communicate with these evaluators to determine which will be willing to provide an evaluation. A minimum of 4 external letters of evaluation will be required.</p> |

August 1	The Department Head provides evaluators who have agreed to review the applicant with the necessary materials including applicant's CV.
August 30	Letters of External evaluation are due. The applicant provides Department Head with complete dossier that may include CV (which may be updated from July 15 version, and the Department Head may provide additional comments or advice.
September 15	The Department Head inserts all received external letters of evaluation into the dossier.
October 1	The Departmental P & T Committee has been provided with all necessary materials for review of the applicant.
November 15	The College Promotion and Tenure Committee has received the applicant's dossier, including letters of recommendation and rationale from the Department Head and Departmental P & T Committee that were inserted by the Chair of College P & T Committee.
December 15	The Dean shall receive the letter of recommendation form the College P & T Committee.
January 15	The Provost shall receive the letter of recommendation from the Dean.
March 10	The President shall receive the letter of recommendation from the Provost.

Promotion:

Definitions of Professorial Ranks:

Assistant Professor: The rank of Assistant Professor is granted mainly on the basis of potential. It is awarded to persons with the appropriate training who have evidence of potential for a successful career in research/creative achievement.

Associate Professor: The rank of Associate Professor is granted on the basis of performance and professional growth. In the Department of Basic Sciences it is awarded primarily in recognition of sustained competent performance in research/creative achievement. An Associate Professor is a faculty member who has met the criteria for Assistant Professor, has consistently

demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in teaching and service, and excels in research/creative achievement.

Professor: The rank of Professor is granted to a faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in research/creative achievement and in one of the other two areas of teaching or service, and has achieved a national reputation in their area of expertise. To achieve the rank of Professor, the faculty member must demonstrate enhanced growth and sophistication in research/creative achievement over that of an Associate Professor. A rating of excellence in the second area and of satisfactory or above in the third area will also be required.

Criteria for Excellence:

To demonstrate "excellence" in research, an individual must initiate and maintain an active, independent, productive research program at Mississippi State University. While there is an expectation for independent research activity, faculty members will also receive credit towards promotion and tenure for activities derived from collaborative or team research efforts. To obtain a rating of "excellent" in the area of research a faculty member must do both of the following: 1) publish original research results in peer-reviewed journals, and 2) aggressively seek external research funding. Other items that contribute to research excellence include but are not limited to, abstracts, book chapters, grant reviews, presentations, intellectual property, scientifically-based creative achievement. These items will enhance the individual's credentials, but cannot replace either of the two above-listed criteria.

It is expected that an Associate Professor will perform at a higher level of accomplishment and productivity than an Assistant Professor for both a rating of "excellence" and "satisfactory". The same would be true for a Professor compared to an Assistant and Associate Professor.

To achieve an evaluation of excellence, it is expected that a faculty member who has a major FTE commitment to research (i.e., 50% or greater) will be the senior or corresponding author (which indicates leadership of the project) on a significant number of his/her peer-reviewed publications, and that he/she will be the principal investigator on grant applications for external funding and/or the lead investigator for recognizable sub-projects in program/center/large interdisciplinary grant applications. In the case of multi-disciplinary projects where two or more faculty members share leadership in project and graduate student direction, it will be incumbent upon the applicant to adequately explain the extent of his/her involvement in the project. It is also expected that the faculty member be successful at obtaining external funding and that for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor the faculty member demonstrates sustainable and/or renewable success in receiving external funding. It is expected that a faculty member who has substantial FTE commitment to research (i.e., 25-49%) be the senior or corresponding author on a moderate number of his/her peer-reviewed publications, and that he/she will have a clearly recognizable role involving

intellectual input (such as a co-investigator) on grant applications for external funding. It is expected that a faculty member with a limited FTE commitment to research (i.e., less than 25%) will be a co-author on peer-reviewed publications and will be an identifiable participant, preferably co-investigator, on grant applications for external funding.

The quality and impact of the applicant's publications will be in part assessed by the opinions of the outside evaluations and the Departmental P & T Committee. Grant applications should be submitted with the goal of all or almost all of a person's research FTE effort being committed to funded projects. In addition to submitting grants and manuscripts, successfully competing for grant awards and publishing manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals will be a crucial factor in achieving an evaluation of excellence.

An individual will receive an evaluation of satisfactory in research if consistent activity is demonstrated in conducting research, authoring or co-authoring peer-reviewed manuscripts, submitting grant applications, and conducting other forms of scientific creative achievement, but the level of activity and accomplishment is not up to the standards defined above for "excellence".

Because promotion to Professor requires that a faculty member be considered excellent in an additional area, the criteria for an evaluation of excellence in teaching and service are listed. Excellence in teaching may be documented by peer reviews, student awards, student evaluations, student successes, faculty teaching awards, recognition of teaching excellence, sample course materials, recordings of teaching sessions, graduate student theses and dissertations, and any other documentary materials that demonstrate teaching effectiveness on the university campus or at the national or international level. Satisfactory performance would include documented efforts to evaluate and improve teaching. Individuals with teaching commitments in the graduate program will be evaluated in a similar fashion. Service at the College of Veterinary Medicine may include diagnostic or clinical duties, committees, workshops, symposia, extension activities, or technology transfer to name a few. An evaluation of excellence requires documentation of the level and impact of these activities. At the level of Professor, excellence in service must be demonstrated as having a significant impact or contribution at the state and regional level, at least.

In all cases the FTE commitment of a faculty member in a program, i.e. research, teaching, diagnostic/clinical/service, will be considered when determining a performance rating. The efforts expended must be consistent with the faculty member's FTE commitment.

Tenure:

At the time of initial appointment, each faculty member shall be informed in writing as to whether he/she will be progressing toward evaluation for tenure, and, if in a tenure-track, the faculty member will be informed in writing of the time frame

of his/her probationary period as indicated in his/her offer letter. The requirements for granting an individual tenure in the College of Veterinary Medicine are identical to those for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. For most faculty members, consideration of tenure and promotion to Associate Professor will be done simultaneously. If a faculty member is granted tenure as an Assistant Professor he or she automatically meets the standards for Associate Professor. For those individuals hired at or promoted to the rank of either Associate Professor or Professor, a tenure decision will be based on excellence in one of the three areas and satisfactory in the other two areas. An individual considered for the early granting of tenure (i.e., who at the time of hiring was given some time credited toward tenure from employment in a previous academic position) must have demonstrable independent research performance at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Mississippi State University.

Tenure is granted with the university's expectation that the faculty member will continue to perform at or above the minimum standards set by the department, school, or college, and university (Faculty Handbook p. 29).

Probationary Period (from Faculty Handbook):

A faculty member must apply for and be recommended for tenure by the president during the sixth full contract year of employment in a tenure-track position. Failure to earn tenure at the end of the sixth full contract year will result in a terminal contract in the seventh full contract year. The probationary period for tenure-track faculty begins at the start of the faculty member's first full contract year. A full contract year is defined as one that starts on August 16 for 9-month employees and on July 1 for 12-month employees and continues until the next contract period. If the initial contract is for a partial year, e.g., starts after August 16 for a 9-month employee and after July 1 for a 12-month employee, that time is not included in the probationary period. Up to five years at other universities may be counted in this probationary period, as determined and agreed upon by the departmental promotion and tenure committee, the department head or director, the dean, and the faculty member in the letter of offer at the time of initial appointment. For clearly stated personal reasons (e.g., emergencies related to health, activation of military service, pregnancy, adoption, childcare, care of parents), a faculty member may request an extension of up to two years from the first five years of this probationary period for an approved leave of absence or a modified assignment. Specific aspects of such an extension must be established by the department head or director, the dean, the provost, and the faculty member. Such an agreement must be in writing. The departmental promotion and tenure committee shall be notified in writing of the extension and the revised probationary period. IHL Board Policy 403.0101 allows a faculty member or an administrative employee who held faculty rank at the level of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor and tenure at another institution to be awarded tenure at the time of initial appointment if recommended by the faculty of the tenuring department, the dean, the provost, and the president, and awarded by the IHL Board. For faculty members with a shortened probationary period as specified in

an offer letter or an approved extended probationary period, the "third-year review" should be held at the midpoint of the individual's probationary period.

Relationship between Promotion and Tenure

Faculty members who have met the requirements for promotion, but who have not fulfilled the probationary period for tenure, may be promoted without tenure. Faculty members who are granted tenure as assistant professors automatically meet the criteria for promotion to associate professor (Faculty Handbook p. 30).

It should be noted that the year for which a tenure track faculty member must be considered for tenure is stated in the offer letter. Generally, promotion is considered at the same time, but in unusual cases tenure-track faculty members can be promoted early (before tenure), and the same chronology is used in cases of early promotion.

Evaluations for Tenure and Promotion:

Attainment of tenure in the College of Veterinary Medicine is by no means automatic or based on years of service, but is the result of a thorough evaluation of a faculty member's activities in the areas of research, teaching and service. Similarly, promotion is not automatic, but is the result of thorough evaluation of performance.

In addition to the basic requirements for tenure and promotion described herein, tenure and promotion are also contingent upon successful performance of those duties for which the individual was hired. The faculty member shall be advised and counseled annually by the Head of the Department of Basic Sciences concerning his/her progress toward tenure.

The applicant will participate in a mid-probationary period review of credentials by the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. Typically this will be after the third full year of his/her appointment. The faculty member will provide a current curriculum vitae which indicates which activities were initiated at Mississippi State University and what his/her FTE commitments have been. He/she may include copies of his/her annual performance evaluations. The Committee will review these credentials and provide a letter indicating a non-binding appraisal of whether the faculty member is making adequate progress toward tenure and areas in which improvement is needed.

The applicant for tenure and/or promotion will be evaluated with respect to research, teaching and service using the criteria described above, by the Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee and by the Head of the Department of Basic Sciences. These evaluations will be independent evaluations by the Committee and the Department Head based on the documentation provided by the applicant and the external letters of evaluation. In addition to the evaluation of performance in research, teaching and service, the

applicant for tenure must have also displayed collegiality, objectivity and professional integrity. As described in the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook, Section V,B.2, "Every person employed by the University is expected to meet high standards of professional integrity, collegiality and objectivity, and to further the goals of his/her department and the University." Acceptable performance in research, teaching and service can be preempted by documented negative issues related to collegiality, objectivity and professional integrity. Negative judgments on collegiality, objectivity and professional integrity issues will preferably be based on information in the faculty member's official personnel file documenting previous infractions; the official personnel file is maintained in the Office of the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Documentation of Performance:

Each applicant will have the responsibility of compiling all documents necessary to effectively present his/her case for promotion and/or tenure. The applicant is encouraged to consult with Department Head in the preparation of his/her dossier. At the beginning of these documents, the applicant must insert a letter of intent stating the areas in which he/she wishes to be judged as excellent and a brief description of the applicant's opinion of why he/she should be evaluated as excellent or satisfactory in the three areas of performance. The applicant is strongly advised to fully document all activities for which he/she wishes to receive credit, while avoiding any redundancies of listings and avoiding the appearance of padding the application. He/she may include copies of his/her annual performance evaluations.

In cases of collaborative or team proposals or projects, it is essential that the applicant clearly document the extent of his/her involvement in the intellectual design, planning, writing and/or conduct of the project; written documentation from the team leader or collaborators to verify the extent of involvement is encouraged. The applicant must clearly indicate which publications resulted from graduate student theses or dissertations. The applicant must clearly document whether research and publications were done solely or partially at Mississippi State University or elsewhere. The applicant must also indicate his/her degree of involvement in co-authored publications not resulting from theses or dissertations. Similarly, the applicant must also indicate his/her level of involvement in team-taught courses, or in committee and other service activities.

All documents prepared by the applicant will be compiled into a dossier that will be presented to the Department Head by August 30. At least four external letters of evaluation (not recommendation letters) will be inserted by the Department Head after the applicant has submitted his/her dossier. External evaluators (below) are specifically selected to avoid conflicts of interest and by identifying appropriate evaluators at peer to peer-plus institutions in the applicant's area of expertise.

External Letters of Evaluation

The applicant's credentials will be evaluated by external evaluators at peer to peer-plus institutions to MSU who have no prior or current interactions with the applicant that would bias the reviewer's evaluation. External evaluators will be selected from a pool of potential evaluators provided separately by the applicant, and then by the Department Head in conjunction with Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee. The process is described further below.

At the time that the applicant notifies the Department Head of his/her intent to apply, the applicant will provide a complete curriculum vitae and list of 4-6 names of potential evaluators to the Department Head by July 1. The applicant will also supply a list of individuals who are in a conflict of interest with the applicant and who should not be selected as evaluators. This conflict of interest list should include mentors, former students, recent collaborators (for at least the last 5 years) and any other individuals the applicant identifies as a conflict of interest. The applicant will supply the following information about these potential evaluators: name, title/rank, address, telephone/and fax number, e-mail address, brief statement of their qualifications, relation to candidate, and short explanation as to why this person was selected in terms of their general qualifications in the discipline.

The Department Head will solicit suggestions of external evaluators from the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. This preliminary list may include names from the applicant's list of potential evaluators. The Department Head, with the concurrence of the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee, will select 6 evaluators, which must include at least 3 names **not** on the applicant's proposed list.

The Department Head will communicate with each of the 6 external evaluators identified by the above process, asking whether each is willing to provide a confidential evaluation of the applicant's credentials within the required time frame. The letter or electronic mail message sent to potential external evaluators requesting the review will be inserted in the applicant's dossier. If less than 4 agree to provide a letter, the Department Head and the Committee will identify additional individuals until at least 4 have agreed to supply a letter. All letters received must be included in the dossier before a decision has been finalized by the Departmental P & T Committee.

The Department Head will send a reminder to any evaluator whose letter has not been received by August 23. All letters received will be added to the application after the applicant has turned it in, but before the Departmental Committee has started reviewing it. If any letters are received late, they will be added to the application and all Departmental Committee members will be made aware of them so that they will be a part of the departmental deliberations. No late letters will be added after a decision has been finalized by the Departmental

Committee. In addition to the letters, a listing of the external evaluators selected for the applicant will be placed into the dossier along with a brief statement of the credentials of the evaluator qualifying him/her to be an evaluator, and the dates of communication with the evaluator and the dates of the evaluator's replies.

The Department Head will review the contents of the external letters with the applicant after the applicant has submitted the dossier to the Department and before the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee reviews the applicant's dossier. Prior to reviewing the contents of the external letters with the applicant, any content that might identify the evaluator will be deleted from the letter by the Department Head and the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair to ensure that each evaluator remains anonymous. The letters of recommendation produced by the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Department Head, which indicate the decision with the reasons for that decision, may allude in general terms to the evaluators' opinions in such a way that the evaluators will not be identified.

The candidate may respond to the letters of external evaluation to correct any factual errors represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of each letter. The candidate's letter(s) of factual corrections must be sent to the review level to which the response was made.

Curriculum vitae

The applicant will provide the Department Head with a current curriculum vitae that is an accurate documentation of activities and accomplishments, and that will clearly indicate achievements to evaluators. The C.V. should include a brief description of the applicant's role in publications and grant applications in any situations in which this role is not obvious (for example, when the applicant is co-investigator for a grant or anything but first author or corresponding author for a publication). In addition, if the applicant's C.V. does not contain sufficient information about service or teaching to allow external reviewers to provide an informed opinion on these matters, the applicant should add such information to the C.V., even if this makes the document lengthier than a typical C.V. The Department Head will review it for clarity and accuracy and will indicate what revisions would improve clarity and accuracy. The applicant can provide an initial CV by July 1 for review and then the revised version to the Department Head by July 15. The written intent to apply and a list of potential external evaluators should have been provided by July 1. The individuals who have agreed to evaluate the applicant will be sent a copy of the applicant's curriculum vitae, the departmental and university promotion and tenure guidelines, and information regarding the applicant's commitments to teaching, research and service during the evaluation period. The materials to be evaluated will be sent to the external evaluators no later than August 1, and letters will be required by August 30.

Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee:

The Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee will be composed of all full-time, tenured faculty members in the Department of Basic Sciences. On an annual basis the members of the Committee will vote and select one of the Committee members to serve as the Committee Chair with the term of office being from July 1 to June 30 of the subsequent year. Only individuals who have served as a member of the Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee for one applicant review cycle will be eligible to be elected as Chair of this Committee or as the Department of Basic Sciences representative to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee. The same individual will not serve as Chair for consecutive years. The representative to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Head of the Department of Basic Sciences are not eligible to serve as Chair.

The Department of Basic Sciences will use the following procedure for electing a replacement for the Department's elected representative to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee: if the elected representative must excuse him/herself, must be absent or is of insufficient rank to evaluate an applicant, the professorial faculty of the Department of Basic Sciences will elect a substitute for the evaluation of this applicant only from professors in an appropriate unit selected by the Department Head in consultation with the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee

The Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee members may offer general advice to the applicant on format and completeness of the application. The Committee members can not offer opinions to the applicant on the potential approval of the application.

The purpose of the Committee is to evaluate and render to the Head, Department of Basic Sciences an opinion of the merits of any Department of Basic Sciences faculty member seeking tenure and/or promotion. All eligible members on the Committee will vote on matters of tenure. No Committee member may vote on a promotion to rank higher than the rank held by that Committee member. When there are fewer than three Professors in the department who can serve on the Promotion and Tenure Committee to evaluate the credentials of an applicant for Professor, the additional member(s) will be selected by the Dean, the Chair of the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee (if the Chair is a Professor) and the Department Head. Such additional members, when required, will be Professors at Mississippi State University who have expertise appropriate to evaluate the application. The Department of Basic Sciences representative to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee is not eligible to vote on applicants in the Department of Basic Sciences Committee and will not participate in discussions and deliberations about applicants. A representative to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee is eligible to vote in the Department of Basic Sciences Committee. The Head of the Department of Basic Sciences provides a separate opinion on the applicant and therefore does not participate or vote in

Committee evaluations. Both the College Promotion and Tenure Committee representative and the Head of the Department of Basic Sciences may participate in all discussions of a philosophical or procedural nature related to promotion and tenure.

All Committee members eligible to vote on tenure or promotion will judge whether research, teaching and service are excellent, satisfactory or deficient. The Committee members will also render a judgment on collegiality, objectivity and professional integrity, preferably based on written documentation in the applicant's official personnel file. When written documentation is deemed, the applicant will receive a written request from the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee that the Committee will be supplied pertinent information from the applicant's personnel file; the applicant will provide a written answer. If the applicant agrees, the Committee will request the pertinent information from the Dean, and will include a statement regarding collegiality, objectivity and professional integrity in its letter of evaluation. If the applicant does not agree, the Committee will indicate that answer in its letter of evaluation; the letter will indicate that the Committee expects those administrators who have access to the personnel files to review the applicant's personnel file, and to provide an evaluation of collegiality, objectivity and professional integrity. The Committee members will then vote on whether to recommend or not recommend the applicant for tenure and/or promotion. The Committee will consider a positive recommendation to be one resulting from a "yes" vote by at least one more than half of the Committee members eligible to vote. The Chair of Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee will notify the Department Head of the committee's recommendation. The Chair will write one letter to the Chair of College P & T Committee expressing the vote of the Committee and the rationale leading to that vote, including reasons for any split votes; the letter will be signed by all Committee members. In keeping with University policies on tenure and promotion (Faculty Handbook, 2014), the applicant will be given a copy of the letter from the Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee and of the letter from the Head of the Department that will state their recommendations for or against tenure and promotion and give their rationale for these recommendations. The candidate may respond to the department promotion and tenure committee's and/or the department head's or director's letters to correct any factual errors represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of each letter. The candidate's letter(s) of factual corrections must be sent to the review level to which the response was made. All Committee deliberations will be strictly confidential.

The Department of Basic Sciences Promotion and Tenure Committee may request additional materials from the applicant to clarify the application or make it complete. Acceptances of manuscripts or awards of grants that are listed as submitted or pending in the application can be added until the departmental P & T committee has made a decision.

Accepted	June 14, 1999
Amended	November 10, 2000
Amended	fall, 2002
Amended	summer, 2005
Amended	fall, 2005
Amended	summer, 2014