

Department of Biology  
Review, Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Guidelines

I. Procedures

A. Preamble

This policy applies to all represented faculty and is intended to comply with all provisions of Article 20 of the CBA. In the event of any discrepancies or inconsistencies, the CBA language applies for represented faculty. This policy also applies to all unrepresented faculty, unless a university-wide policy exists that contradicts the terms of this policy.

This policy is focused primarily on the criteria by which faculty are evaluated. Detailed descriptions of the processes by which reviews are conducted are presented in Article 20 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and in relevant UO policies for unrepresented faculty. Procedures specific to the Department of Biology are presented below. This document will be made available in the department or unit (as well as on the Academic Affairs website).

B. Department-Specific Procedures

i. Annual Reviews

Each tenure-track faculty member who has not received tenure and is not in the process of a tenure review will have an annual review conducted by the department head, usually in mid-April. These annual reviews are written with input from the senior colleagues of the candidate's division, and are forwarded to the College. The review is based on the candidate's annual report, which should include the following: (1) a CV, lists of publications and grants, and lists (by year and term) of their courses and committees to date; (2) a narrative description of the candidate's progress during the past year in research, teaching, and service (a brief paragraph for each area will suffice); and (3) a brief description of goals and plans for next year and beyond.

ii. Contract Renewal/Third-Year Review

The candidate's report, containing the items described in Article 20 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and in relevant UO policies for unrepresented faculty, will be reviewed by members of the candidate's division and related institutes. A department vote is held on whether or not to recommend renewal of the contract. Afterwards, a report is written by the department head (usually with significant input from the senior members of the appropriate division), and provided to the candidate. The file, including any responsive material provided by the candidate within ten days of receipt of the report, is then forwarded for review by the dean and then the provost or designee. A fully satisfactory review indicating that the faculty member is on track towards promotion and tenure will lead to a contract extension up through the tenure and promotion year. If the contract

renewal process determines that the faculty member's record is not satisfactory and that promotion and tenure are not likely, the faculty member will be given a one-year, terminal contract. A faculty member may also be given a renewable contract that does not extend to the promotion and tenure year if there are questions as to whether the faculty member will have a record meriting promotion at the end of the tenure and promotion period. In such cases, the faculty member will be required to go through another contract renewal process prior to the promotion and tenure review in order to determine if the faculty member has been able to remedy the shortcomings in the record identified in the contract renewal process.

iii. Review for Promotion and Tenure

a. External Reviewers

Late in the spring term prior to the year when the tenure case is to be considered, the department head will consult with members of the department and, when appropriate, members of any UO research institute/center with which the faculty member is affiliated, and prepare a list of external referees who will be invited to evaluate the research record of the candidate. Independently, the candidate will be asked to submit a list of potential external referees to the department head. External reviewers should generally be from comparable or more highly regarded institutions. Ideally, they should be full professors who have the appropriate expertise to evaluate the candidate's record. Dissertation advisors, close personal friends, or other individuals who might be viewed as having a conflict of interest, are not asked to be external reviewers.

b. Internal Reviewers

The department may also solicit on-campus letters from those familiar with the candidate's teaching, scholarship or service. In particular, inclusion of an internal review is the norm when a faculty member is a member of a research institute/center. This review is prepared by the director of the institute/center, in consultation with its senior members.

c. Institute/Center Evaluation and Vote

It is regular practice for the members of the candidate's specialty area (Ecology and Evolution, Marine Biology, Molecular Biology, Neuroscience) to meet and vote on the candidate's promotion. A letter conveying the institute/center's evaluation of the candidate and the result of the vote will be communicated to the department and included in the candidate's dossier.

d. Promotion and Tenure Committee/Report

The Personnel Committee is a standing committee of the department, elected by its members and charged with evaluating candidates for promotion. This committee is charged with submitting a written report to the department evaluating the candidate's case for promotion. In particular, the

committee report will include an internal assessment of the candidate's work, a summary and evaluation of the external and internal referees' assessment of the candidate's work, an evaluation of teaching that includes a discussion of the numerical student teaching evaluation scores, written comments, and peer reviews, and an assessment of department, university, professional, and community service. The committee report must conclude with a recommendation to the department regarding tenure and promotion. The committee report is made available in the department office for faculty review prior to the department meeting.

e. Departmental Seminar

In early to mid-October, the candidate will present a departmental seminar to the faculty, staff and students of the department, outlining their research accomplishments while at Oregon. The seminar should strike a balance between communicating with experts in the field and those who are not members of the discipline and who are less familiar with the candidate's area of research.

f. Department Meeting and Vote

The department will typically hold a meeting in mid- to late October to consider its promotion and tenure recommendation for the candidate. Department members meet and discuss the committee report and the case. Following discussion, members vote by signed, secret ballot on whether to recommend tenure and promotion (or just promotion in the case of a promotion to full professor). Faculty are also asked to provide a brief statement providing the reason for their vote. Faculty who cannot attend the meeting may submit their vote to the departmental administrator via email. While it is the tradition of the Department of Biology that all tenure-related faculty can participate in departmental meetings related to promotions and tenure and that all may register anonymous votes, only the votes of tenured faculty are reported to the administration. When all votes have been registered, the votes will be tallied in confidence by the departmental administrator, and the department will be informed of the final vote tally. The anonymity of individual votes will be maintained, although the signed ballots will be kept in a sealed envelope by the departmental administrator in case they are requested by the dean or the provost. The department head does not vote.

g. Department Head's Review

After the department vote, the department head writes a separate statement. The statement includes a description of the process, including any unique characteristics of the profession (e.g., books versus articles; extent of co-authorship; significance of order of names on publications, etc.). The

department head's statement also offers an opinion regarding the case for promotion and tenure that may or may not agree with the department vote. The department head's statement, the personnel committee report, the recorded vote, and the materials submitted by the candidate are added to the dossier.

## II. Guidelines

### A. Preamble

These guidelines outline the criteria for promotion and tenure in the Department of Biology. They provide a specific departmental context within the general university framework for promotion and tenure of faculty. The guidelines that apply to the candidate's promotion file are generally those in force at the time of hire or at the time of the most recent promotion. The following criteria are based on faculty performance in research, teaching and service, which are allotted proportional weights of 40 : 40 : 20, respectively.

### B. Research (40%)

Development of a mature and ongoing program of independent, scholarly research is an absolute requirement for a recommendation of promotion with tenure in the Department of Biology. The most important evidence to support achievement in scholarly research is a series of quality publications that are judged to be significant by peers at the university and experts at other institutions. A second criterion is evidence of a continuing commitment to research as evidenced by a body of work that is in progress and significant work being planned.

In addition to the written evaluations of research quality and significance from outside and internal reviewers described above, additional evidence of impact may sometimes include invited lectures, excellence of the candidate's research group, invitations to serve on journal editorial boards and granting agency study sections, and outside financial support. Scholarly work, however, will be judged on its own merits, not on the funding that it may or may not receive. Furthermore, the department recognizes that standardized criteria cannot exist that will apply equally to all faculty members. Rather, we will make every effort to consider the various factors that impinge on each individual case, and judge accordingly.

For promotion to full professor, continued professional development and leadership in the field are expected. In all cases, evidence of a positive trajectory of research accomplishments is expected.

*Definition of Completed Work:* In order for a manuscript to be considered complete, it must be accepted by a publisher, and "in production" in order for it to count towards promotion. The University defines "in production" as the completion of all work on the manuscript by the author, including all revisions. Similarly, articles and book chapters

must either be “in print” or “forthcoming” in order to count towards a faculty’s publications. “Forthcoming” means that an article or book chapter has been accepted for publication and requires no further revisions or editing of any kind. A letter to this effect from a journal editor or editor of a volume of essays for each “forthcoming” publication is recommended. Generally, it is expected that the book should be “in production” and that each listed article or book chapter should be “forthcoming” by the time the candidate meets with the dean in order for the publications to count fully towards promotion.

### C. Teaching (40%)

Strong teaching is an absolute requirement for tenure in the Department of Biology. Unsatisfactory teachers will not be tenured even if their research is stellar. It is recommended that faculty follow the following guidelines drawn from the "Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" as compiled in a study supported by the American Association for Higher Education and the Education Commission of the States:

- Good practice encourages student-faculty contact. Student motivation and interest is encouraged by frequent student-faculty contact. Does the teacher spend the appropriate amount of contact hours in lectures, labs, discussions, office hours, and drop-in visits?
- Good practice encourages cooperation among students. Working with others often increases active learning. Sharing ideas and responding to others' thoughts can improve critical thinking and can deepen understanding.
- Good practice encourages active learning. Effective learning does not occur simply by sitting in class listening to a lecture, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. Does the teacher encourage students to talk about biology, think about biology, write about biology, and relate biology to past experience?
- Good practice gives prompt feedback. Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Does the teacher provide frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate performance and provide early, prompt, and adequate suggestions for improvement?
- Good practice communicates high expectations. Expecting students to perform at a high level becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Does the teacher hold high expectations for students and communicate to students that level of achievement?
- Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning. Students bring different talents and backgrounds into the classroom and learn in different ways. Does the teacher give all students the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work best for them?

The central criteria for teaching excellence are command of the subject matter, the ability to present key ideas clearly and logically, and the progress made by students toward mastery of the concepts that are central to the subject.

The department also encourages the recognition of diversity, and the fostering of an inclusive classroom environment.

The department assesses quality of teaching in several ways: (1) Self-assessment of teaching performance; (2) Peer evaluation of classroom teaching; (3) Student evaluation; (4) Supervision of student research and reading; and (5) Contribution to the teaching aims of the department.

*Self-assessment of teaching performance.* As described above, candidates should write a short narrative describing their teaching accomplishments and goals to be included in their dossier. The narrative will include: (1) A list of courses taught. (2) A statement of how the candidate's courses fit into the teaching goals of the department. (3) A self-assessment of strengths of the candidate's teaching program. Additional benefit may be gained by a self-assessment of teaching weaknesses (and attempts to address these weaknesses), but it is not required that the candidate point these out. (4) A statement of teaching plans for the future.

*Peer evaluation of classroom teaching.* Serious, candid peer evaluation is weighted heavily in the overall assessment of teaching quality. University regulations require at least one peer evaluation of teaching in each of the three years preceding promotion for assistant professors and every other year for associate professors.

*Student evaluation.* These evaluations include: (1) Opinions as evidenced from the standard student evaluation computer-scored forms. (2) Signed written statements from students on course evaluations. (3) In some instances, letters solicited from former students.

*Supervision of student research and reading.* Individualized teaching is a major aspect of university education. Faculty are expected to put significant effort into advising and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students. This may involve supervising research projects or teaching individualized reading courses. This important component of teaching may be evaluated by soliciting comments from supervised students. If a faculty member has aided other students whose identities are less obvious, they may wish to list them in their self-assessment, and/or ask them to submit reviews to the department.

*Contribution to the teaching aims of the department.* (1) Does the candidate participate in curriculum development? (2) Does the candidate generate any special initiatives in teaching? (i.e., training grant director, innovative teaching programs, etc.) (3) Does the candidate's teaching program balance the needs of the department with specialty courses of the candidate's own choosing?

D. Service (20%)

The criteria for promotion and tenure include institutional service including department, college, and university committees on curriculum, personnel, and policies, among

others. The faculty play an important role in the governance and policies of this university, and the university expects participation of its faculty members.

The department similarly expects a demonstration of competence in the area of institutional service at the level of the department and the research institute or group. This does not imply that each faculty member must contribute in some fixed proportion to institutional service or that faculty must equally share responsibilities. In particular, untenured faculty will generally have lighter service responsibilities than tenured faculty. Service contributions weigh more heavily for promotion to full professor, and all candidates for promotion to full professor should have demonstrated significant service at the university-wide level.

Individuals bring different skills to institutional service and contribute at various levels from time to time within the framework of acceptable performance. Responsibilities at the various levels of organization must be weighed against each other, balancing heavy commitment in one area against lighter responsibilities in others.

Note, however, that a faculty member's first responsibilities are toward excellent research and superior teaching; exemplary service coupled with lackluster scholarship and ineffective teaching will not merit promotion and/or tenure.

Community service includes academic contributions to community activities and public bodies, as well as to local, national, or international professional organizations. Examples in the local community might include developing science enrichment programs for local children or activism in preserving ecologically important regions that relate to one's academic expertise. Service activities for professional organizations might include reviewing of manuscripts, editorial responsibilities at a research journal, and reviewing grant proposals.

The main point to consider with respect to community service is that it serves largely as an embellishment to one's list of scholarly activities. Service activities have a transient impact on one's scholarly reputation, and in no way substitute for direct involvement in an active program of research.

### III. Post-Tenure Review

#### A. Third-Year Post-Tenure Review

Primary responsibility for the third-year PTR process lies with the department head. The third-year PTR should be commenced by the department head no later than during the Winter term, in order to allow it to be concluded before the end of the candidate's third-year post-tenure. The department head will contact the faculty member and request a CV and personal statement, including a discussion of contributions to institutional equity and inclusion. The department head will add to the evaluative file copies of the faculty member's teaching evaluations received during the period under review, including quantitative summary sheets and signed written evaluations, as well

as any peer evaluations of teaching conducted during the review period. Consistent with department policy and practice, the file will be reviewed first by a committee, which will provide a written report to the department head that may be used as received or placed in additional written context by the department head. For associate professors, the report will specifically present an honest appraisal of progress toward a successful review for promotion to full professor. If the faculty member has undergone an earlier sixth-year PTR that resulted in creation of a development plan due to unsatisfactory performance (see discussion of sixth-year PTR, below), the faculty member's success in addressing concerns will be discussed. The report will be signed and dated by the department head and shared with the faculty member, who will also sign and date the report to signify its receipt. The faculty member may provide a written response if they desire within 10 days of receipt of the PTR report; an extension may be granted by mutual agreement between the faculty member and the department head. The report and, if provided, response from the faculty member, will be placed in the faculty member's personnel file as maintained at the unit level.

#### B. Sixth-Year Post-Tenure Review

The process of the review is described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 20, or in parallel University policy for unrepresented faculty members. Since the sixth-year PTR is expected to be a deeper review of the faculty member's scholarship, teaching, and service, the Department of Biology expects the candidate to provide a portfolio of publications (or documentation of other scholarship activities) and information regarding service contributions, in addition to the materials called for by CBA/VO policy.

A development plan is required for faculty who are not achieving a satisfactory level of performance. The plan will be developed with appropriate consultation and discussion among the faculty member, the department head, and the dean. Ideally, there will be consensus regarding the development plan, but if consensus is not possible, a plan receiving the dean's approval will be forwarded to the Provost or designee for review and approval.

If a sixth-year PTR results in creation of a professional development plan, future PTR for the faculty member will include consideration of the extent to which the terms of the development plan have been met. However, progress toward meeting the goals of such a development plan need not and should not be evaluated solely within the context of the PTR process.

## **Appendix: Suggestions to Untenured Faculty**

### **I. Scholarly Activities**

All faculty are hired with the expectation that they will establish themselves as outstanding research scientists. The department tries to facilitate this process by reducing teaching loads and service expectations for untenured faculty. If, at tenure review time, letters from outside expert peers evaluate a candidate's research as less than outstanding, then it is unlikely that the department will recommend promotion. This is true even if teaching and service are judged to be outstanding. New faculty members especially need to be aware of a pitfall of university life: much of it, for example classroom teaching and committee meetings, is scheduled by others. Thus, it is important to maintain a personal focus on research as a high priority.

Publications resulting from work carried out while a member of the University of Oregon faculty will be given more weight in the tenure decision than those resulting from work carried out previously. While collaborative research is encouraged, it is necessary to demonstrate independence. The clearest evidence for independence is a series of quality publications carried out solely by a single faculty member and members of their lab.

Outside financial support for research is often necessary to pursue high quality scholarship. We recognize the competitive nature of research funding in biology and that substantially more funding is available in some areas than in others. Moreover, substantially more support may be required to carry out some types of research than others. Our department's emphasis is on research quality and significance, not on levels of research funding. A candidate's research funding will be considered within the framework of need and availability. Junior faculty should be cautioned that ability to attract research funding is not a substitute for high quality publications.

Documentation of research accomplishments is crucial. When a research project is complete, it should be published promptly. A steady publication record is evidence of steady research progress. Except in unusual circumstances, a several year gap in one's publication record, followed by a spate of manuscripts just prior to tenure review, will not generally inspire confidence that a candidate has a long-term commitment to research. Moreover, internal and outside reviewers alike will look much more favorably on a set of published papers than on a set of manuscripts nearly ready for submission. At the same time, the department discourages publishing before the work is ready, or a breaking apart of what might make a single very nice story into a collection of substantially less coherent pieces purely for the sake of increasing the number of publications.

Take opportunities to let interest group members (e.g. your research institute) and other departmental colleagues know about your research progress. The department includes considerable breadth, and generally colleagues in your own interest group will be the most knowledgeable about, and have the most expertise to evaluate and help nurture, your research program. The department at large recognizes this fact and at tenure time will place special importance on the recommendations that come from your interest group.

There are several ways of informing members of the department about your research progress. If departmental colleagues are at a professional meeting you are attending, you might urge them to come to your presentation. Asking departmental colleagues to critique manuscripts and grant proposals is a superb avenue for evaluation in a way that will be of particular benefit to you. You should take advantage of group seminars and journal clubs for ongoing communication and feedback about progress in your laboratory. The most direct knowledge that most departmental members will have about your research will come from your departmental or interest group seminars. For this reason, we require that every junior faculty member give a formal, departmental seminar as part of their third-year review.

## **II. Teaching Quality**

Some new faculty will have had little experience being solely responsible for organizing and presenting an entire term's course. If this is the case, you may be assigned initially to team-taught courses. These assignments should be taken as opportunities to analyze critically various aspects of the course, including elements of instruction executed effectively by the professor(s) with whom you are teaching, and elements that might be improved. You should also take the opportunity to attend courses taught by other faculty members. Additionally, the university has a Teaching Effectiveness Program (TEP) that provides support and training for faculty at many different levels. We highly recommend the utilization of TEP's services to help enhance faculty members' teaching abilities.

Student evaluations are important, however, it is not just the raw scores that we are interested in. Student comments will be interpreted in the context of the rest of the teaching record, as well as the context of the particular course. Sometimes very good teachers do not get the best scores on student evaluations, and vice-versa. That is why we try to make a distinction between faculty member A with a score of 9 and comments like "this was a fun and entertaining class" and faculty member B with a similar score but comments like "the instructor really challenged me to think". Likewise, we would try to distinguish between faculty member C with scores of 7 and comments such as "there was too much work for a 100-level class" and faculty member D with similar scores but comments such as "the teacher was arrogant and inaccessible" or "the teacher was habitually late for class".

## **III. Academic and Administrative Service**

The department realizes that administrative and committee responsibilities can detract from the main mission for untenured faculty: academic development, achievement of scholarly goals, and effective teaching. Consequently, untenured faculty members are encouraged to exercise judgment in their allocation of time. Likewise, the department head and institute or group directors are strongly discouraged from assigning junior faculty time-consuming service assignments.

While untenured faculty and junior tenured faculty may wish to contribute to university governance and policy making decisions through service outside the department, this wish

should be discouraged among untenured faculty. Remember, service is no substitute for scholarship and teaching at tenure time.

#### **IV. Community Service**

Untenured faculty should be cautious in taking on larger responsibilities, such as membership on editorial boards or grant-review panels. While such activities can be quite educational and carry a certain amount of prestige, faculty who have not yet successfully developed their own research and teaching programs may be better off postponing such activities for a few years.

Invited lectures (seminars at other universities or at national and international meetings) provide substantial evidence of one's scholarly reputation. Service in an advisory role to governmental agencies also provides an indication of recognition, and to some extent of one's scientific maturity. However, travel fragments time blocks that might otherwise be available for research and teaching. Thus, while untenured faculty are encouraged to present their research to colleagues outside the university, they should be cautious about traveling excessively.