

Department of Physics and Materials Science  
The University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

Tenure and Promotion Guidelines  
Revised on 05/24/2022

**1. Overview**

- a. When a tenure-track faculty member is hired by the Department of Physics and Materials Science, the Chair of the department, in consultation with the Tenure and Promotion (T&P) Committee, will appoint a tenured faculty member from the department to act as a mentor for the tenure-track faculty member. It is the responsibility of the tenure-track faculty to seek advice in the context of tenure and promotion from the assigned mentor. The mentor is not responsible for the outcome of tenure and promotion of the tenure-track faculty member.
- b. All candidates applying for tenure and/or promotion must meet the tenure and promotion criteria set by the Department of Physics and Materials Science, the College of Arts and Science, and the University at the time of the application.
- c. The submission of the dossier must follow the requirements set by the College of Arts and Science and by the University.

**2. Tenure and Promotion Committee and Procedures**

- a. The T&P Committee shall be composed of all tenured associates and full professors with the exception of the department Chair.
- b. Tenured faculty members who are on leave cannot be members of the T&P committee.
- c. During the first faculty meeting of the department in the Fall, the department Chair announces the names of upcoming candidates for tenure and/or promotion. During the same meeting, the department Chair will ask the tenured faculty members to elect a chair for the T&P committee. The department Chair may vote in this election. A T&P Committee chair is to be elected every Spring regardless of whether a candidate in the department is considered for tenure and/or promotion.
- d. The Chair of the T&P Committee must be at a higher rank than that of the potential candidates for tenure and/or promotion.
- e. Spouses may not participate and vote on each other's tenure and/or promotion application.
- f. Only full professors from the T&P Committee will discuss and vote on candidates for promotion to full professor.

- g. Only T&P committee members attend a T&P meeting to discuss a candidate for tenure and/or promotion.
- h. All committee members are responsible for reading the candidate's dossier carefully.
- i. A quorum of two-thirds of the committee members is needed for discussion and deliberation.
- j. In the event that the department has fewer than three faculty members eligible for the T&P Committee, the department Chair will recommend to the Dean of the College of Arts and Science appropriate names from closely related disciplines to form a T&P Committee of at least three members. The Chair of this ad-hoc committee is selected by the department Chair.
- k. The T&P Committee must meet at least once prior to the final deliberation and vote on the candidate. The votes must be cast in a secret ballot, tallied, and recorded by the T&P Chair. Absentee or proxy votes are not allowed. The T&P Committee Chair prepares a recommendation letter based on the discussion of the committee. The T&P Committee recommendation letter must be approved by at least two-thirds of the T&P Committee in a meeting.

### **3. Application Process**

- a. The tenure and promotion process will begin in the spring semester before the last probationary year.
- b. Candidates seeking promotion only should notify the department Chair of their intent.
- c. A minimum of six external reviewers will be selected by the T&P Committee from names submitted by the Department Chair, the Committee members, and the candidate. No more than three members will be chosen from the candidate's list, and no more than one review may be from the candidate's mentors or collaborators. The T&P Committee Chair ensures that at least five letters are obtained in time to be included in the candidate's file.
- d. In addition to reviewing the candidate's application, each reviewer is asked to submit a summary of his/her vitae and a brief statement of any relationship to the candidate.

### **4. Mid-Tenure Review Process**

- a. In the Spring of the third year of a tenure-track appointment, the faculty member is instructed by the department Chair to prepare a dossier for a formal review of her/his progress toward tenure and promotion in accordance with the guidelines of the department and the College of Arts and Science.
- b. The format of the mid-tenure review is the same as that for tenure and promotion with the exception of letters from external reviewers and voting by the T&P Committee members (Section 5). The review process occurs only within the department.

- c. The department Chair reviews the candidate's dossier, then prepares an independent report.
- d. Both chairs of the department and the T&P Committee will meet together with the candidate to provide feedback based on the written reports generated by both chairs.

## 5. Criteria for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

The candidate must have at least five years of professional experience beyond his/her PhD.

- a. **Teaching:** The candidate must demonstrate effectiveness in teaching in the form of:
  - Students' evaluations of all sections taught, including all students' comments
  - Peer evaluations of teaching by at least two tenured faculty members selected by the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee.
  - The tenure-track faculty is to be evaluated for his/her teaching twice: One evaluation before his/her mid-tenure review, during the second year of the appointment, and a second evaluation after the mid-tenure review, during the fourth or the fifth year of the appointment. The teaching evaluation will be part of the faculty mid-tenure and final dossier (amended in January 17, 2019)
  - Courses syllabi
  - Statement of teaching philosophy and narrative
- b. **Scholarship:** Research and scholarship performance will be based on the following:
  - Research narrative demonstrating the establishment of an independent research program
  - Publications in peer-reviewed journals
  - Publications of proceeding articles and/or book chapters
  - Presentations at professional meetings
  - Externally funded research grants
  - Demonstration of persistent efforts in securing external funding
  - Successful mentoring of graduate and undergraduate students
- c. **Service:** Evidence of effective service will be based on:
  - Service to the Department.
  - Student recruitment and retention and public outreach efforts are considered valued services.

- Committee assignments and other efforts that are important to the Department's advancement.
- Service to the College of Arts and Sciences and the University of Memphis.
- Professional services.

## 6. Criteria for Promotion to Full Professor

The candidate must have at least ten years of professional experience beyond his/her PhD.

- a. **Teaching:** The candidate must demonstrate excellence in teaching in the form of:
  - Students' evaluations and comments of all courses taught during the five years before the time of application
  - Courses syllabi
  - Introduction of innovative teaching tools and/or methods
  - Statement of teaching philosophy
- b. **Research:** The candidate must demonstrate excellence in research with national and international recognition beyond his/her tenure and promotion merits. This should be supported in the form of:
  - Continuous research productivity in terms of peer-refereed publications, book chapters, and proceeding articles
  - Invited seminar and conference presentations
  - Sponsored research through externally funded research grants
  - Continuous thesis advising of graduate and undergraduate students
- c. **Service:** The candidate must demonstrate excellence in service in the form of:
  - Participation in committees in the Department of Physics and Materials Science, College of Arts and Science, and University
  - Demonstration of professional accomplishments at the Department level that directly benefit the students and faculty in the Department and the University
  - Significant records of service to the science community
  - Outreach

## 7. Amendments of the Department's Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

- a. Tenure and promotion guidelines may be modified upon recommendations from the Department Chair and/or the T&P Committee, in response to the Department changes and growth and in response to changes at the College and the University levels.

- b.** All full-time faculty members are involved in the discussion of the amendments to the T&P guidelines. A simple majority of the vote of the Department T&P Committee and Department Chair is needed.
- c.** The approved and revised T&P guidelines, with clearly written revision dates, must be approved by the Chair, Dean of the College of Arts and Science, and the Provost.
- d.** The approved document must be archived in the Department of Physics and Materials Science.

# **Instructor Promotion Guidelines**

## **ELIGIBILITY**

After completing five (5) consecutive years of service at the University of Memphis at the rank of Instructor or Instructor Coordinator position, the candidate may apply for a promotion.

## **REVIEW COMMITTEE**

- e. The Instructor Review Committee (IRC) shall be composed of the existing Tenure and Promotion Committee and all instructors with promotion. The Department Chair will not serve on this committee.
- f. The Chair of the T&P Committee will serve as Chair of this Review Committee.
- g. Tenured faculty members or instructors with promotions on leave cannot be members of the Review Committee.
- h. Spouses will not participate and vote on each other's promotion applications.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

- a. In consultation with their Department Chair during the Spring of the promotion year process, the candidate shall initiate the promotion application process.
- b. The Department Chair will inform and guide the candidate on the materials they are expected to provide to support their application.
- c. The Department Chair will notify the Review Committee Chair about the applicants applying for the promotion.

## **REVIEW PROCEDURE**

- a) All Review Committee members are responsible for reading the candidate's dossier carefully.
- b) A quorum of two-thirds of the Review Committee members is required for discussion and deliberation.
- c) The Review Committee must meet at least once before the final deliberation and vote on the candidate. The votes must be cast in a secret ballot, tallied, and recorded by the Chair of the Review Committee. Absentee or proxy votes are not allowed.
- d) The Review Committee Chair prepares a recommendation letter based on the committee's discussion. At least two-thirds must approve the committee's recommendation letter.

## **CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION**

To be promoted, an instructor must have served at least five years (5) at the Instructor or Instructor Coordinator rank in the DPMS. During that time, the instructor must have

demonstrated a record of sustained outstanding performance in teaching and service, documented by the Chair's annual evaluations of the instructor's performance, peer evaluations of teaching, student evaluations of teaching, and other available evidence. The submission of the dossier must be in accordance with the guideline/time period set by the College of Arts and Sciences and by the University.

In addition to the items needed by the College of Arts and Sciences, the candidate must include the following in their promotion dossier file.

### **TEACHING EXCELLENCE**

The candidate can demonstrate excellence in teaching in the form of:

- A narrative describing some of the following:
  - Student-centered teaching philosophy
  - Continuous improvements in teaching
  - Scholarship in the content area linked to teaching
  - Positive student outcomes as reflected in student success
  - Participation in professional development in teaching
  - Contributions to course/curriculum development
- Positive student experiences as reflected in SETE. SETE Summary Sheet and unedited Student comments for the last five years.
- Evaluation of teaching: The candidate must be evaluated for their teaching by a subcommittee composed of at least two tenured faculty selected by the Chair of the Review Committee. The teaching evaluation is part of the promotion dossier.
- Awards recognizing teaching excellence

### **SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

Evidence of service excellence will be based on:

#### **Outreach or public service activities**

- Examples: Organization or assistance with an on- or off-campus event for the public, leading or assisting the development of outreach programs and infrastructure, department student clubs, department open houses, public and school lectures, participation in a high school science fair.

#### **Institutional service activities**

- Examples: Student academic advising, service on a departmental committee, participation in student recruitment, contribution to the development and maintenance of the DPMS instructional and research infrastructure, participation in DPMS tutoring services, judging undergraduate students' research presentations.

#### **Professional service activities**

- Examples: Professional association leadership or committee work, review activities, guest lectures at other institutions, participation in or organization of physics teaching workshops.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS**

- Courses Syllabi
- Physics instruction publications

## **AMENDMENT TO THE INSTRUCTOR PROMOTION GUIDELINE**

- a.** This instructor promotion guideline may be modified upon recommendations from the Department Chair and/or the T&P Committee in response to the Department changes and growth and changes at the College and the University levels.
- b.** All faculty members and instructors are involved in discussing the amendments to the Instructor Promotion guidelines. A simple majority of the vote of the DPMS tenured faculty, instructors with promotion, and Department Chair is needed for acceptance/rejection of the amendments.
- c.** The approved and revised Instructor Promotion guidelines, with clearly written revision date, must be approved by the Chair, Dean of the College of Arts and Science, and the Provost.
- d.** The approved document must be archived in the Department of Physics and Materials Science.