

Retention, Promotion, and Evaluation Criteria and Guidelines

University of Maine
School of Food and Agriculture

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University requirements and procedures for appointment, evaluation, reappointment, promotion, and tenure are detailed in the current Agreement between the University of Maine and AFUM. Because members of the faculty in the School of Food and Agriculture differ in their responsibilities, each individual will be evaluated in proportion to his or her commitments to teaching, research, and service. The Director of the School will be responsible for providing the Peer Review Committee with full details regarding each individual's assignment, conditions of employment, and any Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station commitment. Differences in job descriptions and specific responsibilities among faculty will be taken into consideration in peer evaluations.

The Peer Review Committee consists of six tenured faculty members elected by the faculty to represent the disciplinary breadth of the School (animal and veterinary sciences, aquaculture, food science, human nutrition, landscape horticulture, and agriculture). The School Director is responsible for ensuring that all research areas are represented on the committee. The initial terms for members of the Committee will be staggered so that two new members are elected each year to a three-year term. Members can be elected to serve two consecutive terms. A voting committee chair will be appointed by the Director for a three-year term to serve as the seventh member. A Faculty Mentor may participate in the Peer Review process for tenure-track faculty, serving as an ad-hoc, non-voting representative. At least one Committee member should hold an appointment from Cooperative Extension. The Peer Review Committee conducts all evaluations of faculty, and will meet with them as part of the review process. It is expected that Assistant Professors, instructors, and lecturers will meet annually with the committee to review their progress. The Promotion and Tenure Committee has the same composition as the Peer Review Committee, except for promotion to Professor, when Associate Professors on the Peer Committee are replaced by Professors elected by the School faculty. Individual faculty members should consult the University of Maine Human Resources website for details on deadlines and format for documents.

Criteria for Annual Evaluations, Retention, Promotion, and Tenure

The hallmark of a university professor is a creative and productive mind. For retention, promotion, or tenure, a faculty member must demonstrate thorough professional competence as reflected in teaching, research, and service to the University, the public, and professional organizations. The standards for evaluation are organized under the headings of teaching, research, and service. Evaluation of instructors and

lecturers will focus on the areas of teaching and service as appropriate to their job descriptions.

Teaching, Advising, and Academic Leadership

Reappointment, promotion, and tenure in the School of Food and Agriculture require high-quality performance as a teacher. In addition, there should be a clear commitment to continuous development as a teaching professional throughout a faculty member's career. In evaluating the teaching performance of a faculty member, the Peer Review Committee will examine a number of teaching indicators to determine whether the person has met generally accepted standards of course instructional quality characterized by clear and well-organized presentations, informative lessons and learning experiences, fair and rigorous testing, and a high level of motivation and time investment.

Advising, both undergraduate and graduate, will be considered as part of the teaching load. Faculty will report the number of students that they advise and present information on their advising strategies, procedures, and successes. Faculty are expected to participate in an appropriate level of both advising (e.g. course selection, career planning) and mentoring (e.g. unassigned supervision of independent studies, theses and dissertations) of students. Not accepting unassigned individualized instruction or independent studies will not be held against faculty during the peer review process. Faculty are also expected to participate in ongoing programmatic assessment activities. For some faculty, program leadership and coordination activities are an important component of the academic appointment. Documentation of these efforts should be presented.

The School of Food and Agriculture Teaching Workload Spreadsheet (Appendix A) will be used to assure that the teaching workload is appropriate given the range of academic activities and the faculty member's percent teaching appointment.

Faculty teaching performance will be evaluated on the basis of information and responses focused on the following questions and self-assessment.

1. How do students rate the quality and content of the instructor's classes? Student evaluations will be examined, with particular emphasis on overall rating of the instructor and overall rating of the course. Average and median scores will be evaluated and may be compared to those for other School courses at the same level in the same year. In assessing these results, the Peer Review Committee will be mindful that some factors such as the difficulty of the course material may affect scores and that outlier responses can have a large impact in small classes. Written student comments will also be reviewed for trends or tendencies, positive or negative.
2. To what extent has the faculty member made efforts to develop courses and course content? Course quality, organization, clarity, content, rigor, creativity, and student participation may be considered. Other considerations may include preparation of course materials, new exercises, and new learning experiences to

- improve teaching skills through participation in training sessions, or to initiate new teaching approaches or technological developments?
3. To what extent has the faculty member made efforts to pursue the scholarship of teaching through educational grants, presentations to peer groups, developing course materials for use by others, conducting educational research and publishing the results?
 4. Has the faculty member received any teaching awards or other special recognition of teaching quality that should be considered by the Peer Review Committee?
 5. Has the faculty member participated in ongoing programmatic assessment activities, e.g. contributing materials to review documents, attending assessment meetings, and meeting with internal and external review boards or teams?

Research

For promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure, a faculty member will be expected to have generated a body of research and scholarly work that establishes the person as a creative and productive scientist in comparison with peers in the discipline. The number of high-quality scholarly publications judged to be acceptable for a given faculty member will be governed by the nature of the field of inquiry and the person's workload assignment. In general, it would be expected that a faculty member with a 50:50 teaching/research appointment will produce a minimum of five significant publications in peer-reviewed journals during the tenure evaluation period. It is also important that the faculty member demonstrates efforts and success in gaining external funds in support of university research and scholarship, presents research findings at professional meetings, and contributes as a research advisor and mentor in the training of graduate students.

For promotion to Professor, a faculty member will be expected to have generated a body of sustained, well-cited research and scholarly work that establishes the person as a creative and productive scientist in comparison nationally and internationally with peers in the discipline. In general, it would be expected that a faculty member with a 50:50 teaching/research appointment will produce a minimum of one significant scholarly publication in peer-reviewed journals annually during the period following promotion to Associate Professor. Other scholarly outputs will also be considered. It is also important that the faculty member demonstrates success in gaining external funds in support of university research and scholarship, presents research findings at professional meetings, and contributes as a research advisor and mentor in the training of graduate students.

In preparing the application for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or for promotion to Professor, the faculty member will include written self-assessment that summarizes his/her research and scholarly activity and its significance. External peer reviewers will be asked to evaluate how the candidate's research and scholarly work compare to that of peers in the discipline, and will be asked to respond to the following questions, while keeping in mind the nature of the faculty member's appointment.

1. What is your assessment of the candidate's scholarly contributions to the discipline, and his or her regional, national, and/or international reputation among professional peers? How has the candidate's research helped to advance the field?
2. What is the quality, creativity, and significance of the published work?
3. To what extent has the candidate been successful in funding a research program?
4. Has the candidate contributed effectively to the training of graduate students?

Service

Although faculty members are evaluated primarily on their teaching and research, faculty members are expected to contribute productively to the service activities and outreach mission of the university, to participate in ongoing programmatic assessments, to share their expertise with the public, and to serve their profession. Evaluation of service activities will be based on information provided by the individual, departmental colleagues, administrators, and, where appropriate, outside reviewers or colleagues.

Service to the University of Maine

Each faculty member shares with other colleagues the responsibility for participating on a regular basis in committee assignments or coordination activities within the department, college, and university. These contributions may include organizing seminars, conducting peer reviews, serving on standing committees or governance boards, working on search committees, advising student organizations, coaching student teams and otherwise contributing to the day-to-day functioning of the institution.

Service to the Public

Public service activities of departmental faculty vary depending on the appointment and job description of the individual. In general, faculty members are encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise with the public through participation in seminars and workshops, involvement in outreach activities, publication of scientific bulletins written for the public or technical groups, and by responding to public requests for information (e.g., phone calls and interviews by newspaper, radio, and TV reporters). In addition, public service may involve participation on local and state advisory boards, regulatory committees, and judicial proceedings as an expert witness. If an individual's research is focused on problems tied to specific commodities or industries, the faculty member is expected to ensure that his or her results reach the appropriate audience.

Professional Service

As a part of normal professional activities, faculty members may be expected to serve on editorial boards of professional journals, to serve on review panels for granting agencies, to review manuscripts or proposals, to serve as officers or committee members for professional organizations, to organize or chair sessions at professional meetings, and to serve on graduate committees for students at other institutions. These activities enhance the reputation of the school, the University of Maine, and the individual, and are recognized as an important contribution.

Faculty service will be evaluated to determine whether the individual has met the normal expectations of service described in the preceding paragraphs. The Peer Review Committee will focus on the following questions as a means of evaluating service performance, while taking into account the faculty member's appointment.

1. What is the nature and extent of the candidate's involvement in service within the department, college, and university?
2. To what extent has the candidate been involved in service to the public?
3. How has the candidate contributed to service activities in his or her profession?
4. Is the faculty member's service recognized and valued statewide, nationally, or internationally? Has the faculty member received any awards or recognition for service activities?

Joint Appointments

Faculty with joint appointments in two different units will prepare and present one document for reappointment, promotion and continuing contract or tenure consideration. The administrators of each unit will draft a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the evaluation criteria and review procedures for their respective units. The administrators will also form an individual Peer Review Committee for the faculty member. The committee members will come from both units, with representation based on the faculty member's percentage of time allocated to each unit.

Faculty members submit a copy of their document to the Peer Review Committee using the format required by the unit with the major appointment. The Peer Review Committee evaluates the proposal with respect to the criteria of the unit with the major appointment. The evaluation, comments and recommendations will be forwarded to the unit administrators of both the majority and minority appointments. The unit administrators will draft a single letter summarizing their recommendations which will be forwarded to upper administration.

Recommendations by the Peer Review Committee for Promotion/Tenure/Post Tenure

Promotion and Tenure Evaluation

At the time of a promotion or tenure decision, the Promotion and Tenure Committee will evaluate a faculty member's application and supporting letters, and will judge whether the person's teaching, research, and public service meet or exceed department standards for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure or for promotion to Professor. If the Peer Committee is satisfied that the faculty member has achieved the performance criteria outlined in this document, the candidate will be recommended for promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure or for promotion to Professor, as specified in the application.

Assistant Professors are usually promoted with tenure after a six-year probationary period. However, in some cases, faculty may apply for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor without tenure before the sixth year, and apply for tenure at a subsequent time.

Annual Evaluations, Post Tenure Evaluations and Reappointments

For retention and annual reappointment of pre-tenured faculty, the faculty member will be expected to have demonstrated consistent progress in developing a strong and productive research and teaching program that meets the expectations and criteria associated with promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. Evidence of this progress will take the form of the teaching, research and public service criteria discussed above. In preparing the annual evaluation of a faculty member, the Peer Review Committee will generally comment on strengths, the nature of the person's program, as well as areas that may require further attention.

For the post-tenure evaluation of tenured faculty, the faculty member will follow the guidelines set forth in the AFUM contract. Criteria and procedures regarding the Peer Review Committee's assessment will be developed based on the AFUM contract guidelines.

For retention and annual reappointment of non-tenure-track instructors and lecturers, the faculty member will be expected to have developed a strong teaching program that meets the expectations and criteria of School faculty as described previously in this document. Evidence of this may include peer and student evaluations, developed teaching materials, presentations, publications and other outputs consistent with the faculty member's job description and the mission of the School. In preparing the annual evaluation of a faculty member, the Peer Review Committee will generally comment on strengths and areas that may require further attention. If the Peer Committee is satisfied that the faculty member is making satisfactory progress, the person will be recommended for reappointment.