

PEER COMMITTEE AND PEER REVIEW CRITERIA
University of Maine School of Earth and Climate Sciences

23 March 2023

Approved by Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost April 7, 2023

PEER COMMITTEE:

This committee will consist of four faculty members, all of whom must hold tenure within the School of Earth and Climate Sciences (ECS). Deliberations concerning promotions will be conducted only by committee members holding rank higher than the person being considered for promotion. Faculty members with joint appointments, typically defined by a split salary line, will be evaluated by a Joint Peer Committee, as described in the current Associated Faculties of the University of Maine (AFUM) contract. Any deviation from these criteria that result from a joint appointment will be stated in a Memorandum of Understanding between the affected units.

PREAMBLE:

The School expects all members of our community to make a positive impact on science and society through teaching, mentoring, leadership, research, scholarship, and service. The following criteria reflect the metrics the Peer Committee will employ when evaluating faculty at all ranks. The School uses the review process to ensure accountability and provide mentoring across career stages.

Unless independent criteria are established for faculty members with joint appointments, all tenure-track faculty members with a tenure home solely in ECS will be evaluated on the full range of criteria listed below. Research Faculty and Lecturers are evaluated as contractually agreed for reappointment, and as necessary for promotion. Evaluation criteria are the same as outlined below, in proportion to their appointment, and in consideration of additional contributions, if any.

PEER REVIEW CRITERIA:

The following criteria represent satisfactory performance for a 50% research-50% teaching split and 100% appointment in ECS. The criteria serve as the basis for reappointment, for consideration for promotion to Assistant Professor, for promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure, and for post-tenure and post-just-cause reviews. Promotion to Professor requires, in addition to the below criteria: sustained high-quality, productivity and mentorship related to research, scholarship, and engagement; significant leadership roles; and internationally valued scholarship. Post-tenure review includes a decision whether performance was “satisfactory” or “not found satisfactory”. A rating of “not found satisfactory” implies failure to meet one (or more) of the three major criteria.

The peer committee will justify their rating in narrative form.

These criteria are considered as an average, typically over a four-year period or over the probationary period in the case of untenured faculty. Variations in the conditions of appointment, such as teaching/research split and administrative duties, will result in proportional adjustment of the expectations. The School Director maintains a record of workload distribution and will provide the Peer Committee with details of the faculty member's appointment.

Exceeding the criteria in one of the major review areas alone is typically not sufficient for promotion or tenure; rather the Peer Committee will form a holistic opinion of the candidate's record based on the individual's collective achievements in all of these areas.

Student engagement: *The faculty member shall teach at a level of at least "satisfactory" and make substantive contributions through other instructional activities. The faculty member shall be an effective mentor and advisor, consistent with the disciplinary standard.*

This criterion encompasses all activities related to direct interaction with students, the principal components of which are teaching, advising, and mentoring.

Satisfactory teaching includes demonstrated effectiveness on student learning, supportive relationships with students, instructional modification based on constructive student input, and pedagogy consistent with currently recognized best practices.

A 50% teaching appointment at the University of Maine is twelve credit hours per year; at their discretion, the Director, in consultation with the Dean, may release faculty members for three credits per year to account for advising and other non-classroom academic activity (including but not limited to program coordination, club advising, independent student project oversight, student mentoring, and curriculum development). Thus, in practice, a common teaching load is nine credits per year.

Evidence of satisfactory teaching quality must include: (1) tabulated numeric student evaluations, (2) a statement of teaching philosophy, and (3) other evidence of activities related to the evaluation criteria. Evidence may also include personal student statements, peer evaluation of course content, classroom observation, record of pedagogical training, description of student engagement opportunities outside of class, and other indicators. The geosciences require significant laboratory, quantitative,

and field skills. As a result, ECS values preparation of students in these areas through non-course activities (e.g., by mentoring student assistants and leading seminars, workshops, or field trips unrelated to courses).

Several courses in the School's curriculum are team-taught by two or more faculty members. In recognition of the fact that individual faculty effort in these instances can vary widely, faculty members involved in team teaching must describe the nature and extent of their participation in these courses in narrative form.

Although they are not explicitly referenced in an appointment split, undergraduate and graduate student advising and mentoring responsibilities are important elements in the overall workload of all faculty. Effective advising requires that the faculty member be available to meet with students in a timely manner, communicate academic program requirements to the student, demonstrate an interest in each advisee's academic progress and concerns, and administratively assist students in achieving their goals. Effective mentoring includes providing sound advice and feedback to support a student's scientific progress and career preparation. All faculty members with a research appointment shall serve on thesis/dissertation committees and direct thesis/dissertation work on a regular basis. Graduate advising is considered part of (but not a substitute for) the individual's research and teaching productivity. Refusing to accept additional individualized instruction and/or independent study beyond assigned workload will not be held against faculty during the peer review process.

Scholarly activity: *The faculty member shall produce and disseminate substantive new knowledge in locally and/or globally relevant geoscience areas.*

Quantitative numeric publishing targets listed in this section represent minimum expectations for a 50% research appointment. The minimum number of publications is not necessarily sufficient for securing tenure and/or promotion, as the Peer Committee also considers the role in the publications and the impact of the faculty member's scholarship on the field, via external letters of assessment in the cases of tenure or promotion.

ECS values both quantity and quality of contributions when considering the substance of scholarly activity. The minimum expectation is one refereed article per year, or its equivalent. The majority of publications should appear in outlets, typically respected national or international professional journals, that reach a wide audience of peer scholars. A faculty member should play a major role in authoring some of these articles,

either as the first author, or – for student lead authorship – as the primary mentor. *In all cases, the faculty member should articulate their role for all publications.* Refereed chapters in books, whether research-oriented or for popular audiences, government-sponsored reports, and major publicly available data products, will also typically be considered equivalent to a refereed article, consistent with the extent of the faculty member's contribution. Although they contribute to the full impact of a faculty member's scholarly activity, book reviews, published maps, open-file reports, guidebook articles, abstracts and the like will not be considered as commensurate substitutes for publication in scientific journals. We consider conference and other presentations, whether by the faculty member or others within the research group, as a component of knowledge dissemination, and we encourage at least one presentation per year.

Faculty members can present evidence of the quality of scholarly activity through awards, conference and other speaking invitations, citation metrics, highlight articles, attention from the press, external attestation, stakeholder engagement, and other means.

Faculty members shall support research requiring significant funding through external sources. Such fund-raising is not a substitute for scholarly activity, but the student support it provides contributes to the culture and vitality of the institution. Thus, we expect all faculty members to attempt to procure such funding necessary to maintain an active research program. The peer committee recognizes that the frequency and funding amounts of proposal/fundraising activity will vary and that some research directions require more funding than others. The documents submitted for review shall describe the role of external funding in the execution of the faculty member's research program.

Publications and competitive funding support implicitly require a scholarly argument for the local and/or global relevance of the work. However, the Peer Committee expects additional documentation describing the impact and priority of the scholarship. This can include reference to community white papers, governmental policy, invited presentations, or similar.

Service and professional engagement: *The faculty member shall be an active member of the School, University, State, and disciplinary communities, materially contributing expertise and promoting institutional values.*

Although not explicitly referenced in an appointment split, service and leadership are

important elements in the overall workload of all faculty. We expect activity in all categories below, but do not value one category more than others. Faculty on “soft-money” appointments have a lower expectation of activity in categories related to institutional functions. Leadership roles in any category, however, carry more weight and in some cases offset teaching or research load expectations. Examples of these roles include chairing standing committees, officer roles in university-level groups, and serving as organizer for ad hoc initiatives. Documentation supplied to the Peer Committee shall articulate in narrative form how a faculty member’s activities relate to the review criteria.

a) Inclusion, diversity, equity, access, and social justice: Faculty members shall meaningfully and tangibly promote, implicitly and explicitly, policies and actions consistent with fostering a welcoming community that supports and draws upon society’s full breadth and richness. The School expects all faculty at a minimum to engage in an ongoing basis in DEI-oriented service or actively promote DEI-related issues in their teaching, research, and service.

b) School functions: Faculty members shall participate effectively on the standing and ad hoc committees of the School, contribute to the development of School policy, and be involved in overall unit activities such as recruitment and retention efforts, faculty meetings, seminars, thesis defenses, invited lectures, peer mentoring, and non-classroom interactions with students. Lack of regular attendance at faculty meetings or School seminars without a teaching- or research-driven cause is deemed unsatisfactory in this category. For those faculty members with joint appointments, service to the other unit should be in proportion to the appointment split.

c) College and University functions: Faculty members shall serve on institutional committees and participate in activities that aid the development of the School, College and University. Pre-tenure faculty may limit their activity in this category below that expected of tenured faculty.

d) Professional service: Faculty members must be active members within their discipline, as evidenced by, for example: proposal and manuscript reviews, leading field trips, organizing conference sessions, serving on agency boards, editing publications, supporting government reports and consultation requests, or being an officer in a professional organization.

e) Public service: Each faculty member is expected to contribute to the School’s

interaction with the public. This may include answering inquiries and giving tours of the facilities. Additionally, the individual to dedicate several days a year to the Maine community, for example, through public lectures, and visits to K-12 classrooms.