



Wildlife, Fisheries, and  
Conservation Biology



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## Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology

# Guidelines for Faculty Promotion and Tenure

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Peer evaluation is central to the recommendation to grant tenure or promotion to faculty in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology (WFCB). The tenure track is intended to allow faculty to demonstrate to their peers that they are capable of academic teaching, research, and service of a quality deserving of the protections afforded by tenure. Promotion in rank is similarly dependent on demonstrating to colleagues that performance in one's present rank has been consistently of the quality appropriate to the higher rank. The diversity of teaching, research, and service roles among faculty means that decisions as to the quality of academic work best evaluated by peer judgment, and on the basis of assigned duties. In WFCB this evaluation is provided by the Peer Review Committee, which consists of the tenured and continuing appointment faculty of the Department as voting members, with the Department Chair as a non-voting member.

In the event that there are less than three tenured faculty (excluding the Chair) in the Department, the Committee will be augmented by an additional tenured faculty member from an academic unit in a related discipline. This member is to be elected with the approval of a majority of all WFCB faculty, to serve a term of four years.

The Peer Committee will consider the contributions of the evaluatee in three areas—teaching, research, and service—proportional to their formal appointment. Criteria for evaluation and standards of performance are presented for each area below, followed by comprehensive standards for tenure and promotion.

All faculty will be evaluated for reappointment or review based on the same criteria used for tenure decisions. The Peer Review Committee is expected to provide

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untentured faculty with a forthright indication of their progress towards tenure, explain where improvement is required, and offer suggestions on how performance can be improved.

Members of the Maine Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (MCFWRU) with faculty appointments in the Department will be evaluated with these same criteria for any change of rank within the UMaine system. These faculty members, however, should be aware that their job performance and continued employment is contingent upon evaluation by the federal government (USGS Research Grade Evaluations) under different criteria not described here.

Faculty who are jointly appointed with WFCB and another unit on campus will have a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) drafted within six months of their initial appointment that defines expectations for reappointment, promotion, tenure, and the composition of the peer committee for the jointly appointed faculty member. This MOU will explicitly state if any of the expectations listed in this document do not apply to, or if there are any additional requirements for, the jointly appointed faculty member.



## A. TEACHING

Teaching includes developing and delivering undergraduate and graduate courses, academic advising and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students, and related instructional activities. Professional development in pedagogy and contributions to development of department and university teaching programs also are considered teaching activity. The expectation for teaching load is prorated based on the teaching appointment. Members of the MCFWRU with faculty appointments have graduate teaching assignments defined by a Cooperative Agreement.

***Areas of Evaluation for Teaching*** – The Peer Committee and Chairperson will review the following areas in evaluations of teaching: 1) teaching assignments (as defined by the “Departmental Expectation for Teaching Loads”, Appendix A), 2) instructional planning, 3) teaching level appropriate for the appointment and consistent with department and university norms, 4) academic advising of undergraduate and graduate students, 5) mentoring of graduate students, and 6) other evidence of teaching activity (e.g., professional development, workshops, guest lecturing etc.). Evaluation will seek clear evidence of performance based on the following (unranked) list of possible sources of evidence:

- course syllabi
- data on courses taught, enrollments, and credit hours
- data on student evaluations of courses
- faculty use of learning management systems (e.g. Brightspace) and course content provide therein
- previous Peer Committee evaluations
- peer observations of instruction
- number of undergraduate and graduate students advised
- indicators of advising performance as described below
- progress of advised graduate students toward degree completion
- number of graduate committees served on
- number of undergraduate independent research or honors thesis advising
- number of honors thesis committee memberships
- student contact hours



- attendance at faculty instruction or development courses and evidence for implementation of best teaching practices
- other documentation of teaching effort including, but not limited to, guest lectures, signed student comments from teaching evaluations, and development of web-based or other tangible course components

Course syllabi and content provided in learning management systems (e.g. Brightspace) will be used to evaluate instructional planning, course content, course updating, and communication of course goals, assessment methods, and student expectations. When evaluating teaching loads relative to the formal appointment, the Peer Committee will follow the most recent version of the “Departmental Expectation for Teaching Loads” approved by the faculty.

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. The committee will also consider trends in scores across years which may also serve as a positive indicator of improvement. In assessing these results, the Peer Committee will be mindful that factors such as the difficulty of the course material and implicit bias related to gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics of an instructor may influence student responses and that outlier responses can have a large impact in resulting outcomes in small classes. Signed student comments will also be examined for common student concerns as well as accolades. In general, however, we expect that faculty applying for tenure or promotion will have recent student evaluations near or above college averages for similarly structured courses (e.g., upper-level or introductory, online or in person, lab- or lecture-based).

Peer evaluations of teaching by members of the Peer Committee, or by other qualified faculty who are requested to provide peer evaluations by the Peer Committee, will also be used to evaluate classroom practices. Faculty may also request a peer evaluation from a qualified faculty member of their choice.

Undergraduate academic advising is a critical element in the academic effort. The administrative record should be one of timely and appropriate actions by faculty to their assigned advisees. Faculty should be able to document their availability to



students via posted office hours or open door policies, and may offer other evidence of advising efficacy (e.g., “thank you” letters from graduating advisees or the number of recommendations provided for students). Evidence of other actions, such as advising student extramural groups, participating in student recruitment/retention activities, or advising Honors theses or other independent research activities, may be offered. Faculty with formal research appointments are expected to include undergraduates in their research. Negative performance indicators in this area might also include a clear pattern of requests by undergraduate students to change advisors from a given faculty member, while clear patterns of requests to change advisors to a particular faculty member would be evidence of positive advising performance.

WFCB faculty with research appointments will typically include graduate advising. In addition to data on numbers of graduate students advised, their progress toward degree completion, and numbers of graduate committees served on, candidates may provide a variety of evidence of their activities in this area including evidence of being consulted by students other than those they serve as major advisor, papers co-authored with students, acknowledgment lines within student-authored papers, and scientific and professional contributions of advised students. Negative performance indicators in this area may include a clear pattern of failure of students to successfully complete degrees, to publish their thesis chapters, to cross milestones in a timely manner (e.g., proposal defenses, comprehensive exams, committee meetings), or a pattern of complaints from students about advising.

**Teaching Standards** – Successful performance for the evaluation period must show evidence for:

- Clear and helpful syllabi and/or learning management systems (e.g. Brightspace).
- Course content that is at the appropriate level and shows evidence of updating content to reflect advances in the field, particularly in advanced courses.
- Student course evaluations, student signed comments, faculty peer evaluations, and potentially other evidence of teaching performance that indicate successful teaching of course material and the ability to stimulate students to pursue and achieve course goals.



- The execution of a course load commensurate with the percentage of teaching appointment based on current departmental expectations (see “Departmental Expectation for Teaching Loads”, Appendix A), which will be tracked as a four-year average with a moving window
- Successful academic advising of undergraduates as defined above.
- Successful advising and mentoring of graduate students. For tenure decisions, applicants will show that their graduate students have consistently made clear and successful progress toward degree completion. This may take a variety of forms. For example, to achieve successful ratings in this category a faculty member with a 50% research appointment could successfully graduate multiple MS students or they may currently advise multiple PhD students who have completed their proposal defenses and passed comprehensive exams. Other ways to demonstrate graduate advising success are possible. The peer committee should indicate clearly whether pre-tenure faculty are meeting these expectations during each annual review. Graduate advising is only required for faculty with research appointments but may be used as evidence of teaching success for all faculty regardless of appointment.

Other teaching activities, such as guest lectures or formal pedagogical training, can be used as supporting evidence of teaching performance in the above criteria as appropriate, but these activities cannot replace expectations for performance in traditional course settings and undergrad and graduate advising.

To be rated excellent, the candidate must be rated at least successful in all the above criteria, have high quality course content and evidence of superior teaching performance that indicates the ability to stimulate students to pursue and achieve course goals, and exhibit superior performance in graduate student advising and mentoring. Any department, college, university, or extra-campus recognition of teaching excellence would be considered exemplary.



## C. RESEARCH

Research primarily refers to effort to discover new knowledge, but also includes other forms of scholarship that increase scientific knowledge and understanding that are aligned to the mission of the Department. Candidates for tenure or promotion with research appointments must provide evidence of success in scientific research or related scholarly activity. Faculty are expected to accommodate students in their research. The research expectations should be scaled with the formal research appointment percentage of the faculty member.

Research and scholarly activity includes obtaining funding for proposals, conducting research satisfactorily, publishing in the scientific literature, and other related activities. The Peer Committee will take into consideration the breadth of research activities included under the umbrella of wildlife, fisheries, and conservation biology and the resulting variability in research output. However, in all cases it is typical for individual research projects to take a number of years from inception to initial publication. Evidence of progress toward successfully meeting promotion criteria may thus include project development with funding sources, proposal submission, data collection, data analyses, manuscript/thesis/dissertation writing, publication process in the peer-reviewed scientific literature, and the preparation of summation materials for different audiences (e.g., agency white papers or materials for a general public audience) .

***Areas of Evaluation for Research*** – Evaluation will seek clear evidence of performance. The Peer Committee and Chairperson will make their evaluations based on the following (unranked) materials or information:

- peer-reviewed publications
- research (especially invited) presentations at seminars and conferences
- technical publications (not peer-reviewed), subject to the Peer Committee being satisfied as to their quality
- proposals submitted, proposal success rate, and total grant funding obtained
- graduate and undergraduate student involvement in research
- fostering productive collaborations
- evidence of regional, national (for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor) or international (for promotion to Professor) recognition



- other documentation of scientific productivity including, but not limited to, development of computer models, databases or technical manuals, the development of new techniques, the application or practical use of research results, and the production of materials to explain research findings to non-scientific audiences.

Peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals are required, but technical publications (not peer-reviewed) in other outlets add to overall research productivity. The Peer Committee and Chairperson recognize that both the availability of grants and the size of grants differ markedly across research areas, but researchers should be able to support their research endeavors with external funds. Regional, national or international recognition may be indicated by a variety of evidence including, but not limited to, invited presentations, research and publication awards, publications in high quality or prestigious journals, statements from external or internal reviewers made in letters of support, and editorships.

**Research Standards** – Successful performance for the evaluation period must show evidence for:

- regional and national recognition (for promotion to Associate Professor) and international recognition (for promotion to Professor) in research and scholarly activity. Examples of recognition at these scales may include invitations to present in research seminars, service on grant and other review panels, professional service activities (e.g. journal editorship), and other activities which signify the faculty member is sought out by their peers for their expertise.
- a sustained record of publication. Expectations for numbers of publications will be dependent on publication quality as judged by the Peer Committee, but the minimum expectation for a 50% research appointment is 5 peer-reviewed journal articles over the review period, and pro rata for other appointment types. While all publications during the review period will contribute to publication list, in reviewing individual publications, the Peer Committee will consider the caliber of the research outlet, the role of the faculty member in the publication, and the relevance of the publication to the faculty member's research program at University Maine. In general, faculty should demonstrate they have produced publications based on research carried out exclusively while at the University,





and that they have contributed as lead-author or Principal or Co-Principal Investigator on some published manuscripts. Because conventions for authorship order vary, the faculty member should clearly indicate in their tenure dossier those papers for which they made leading contributions (e.g., indicate student-lead papers for which they provided primary mentorship). For the purpose of this requirement, publications are limited to those that have 1) undergone an external peer-review by subject matter experts in the field and 2) are published (or accepted for publication) in respected journals within a discipline or listed by an indexing authority (e.g., the International Scientific Index—ISI).

- presentation of research at regional and national conferences demonstrated success at obtaining sufficient external funding to maintain research activity. Total funding amounts and their sources may vary markedly depending on the research focus of the faculty member, but the general expectation is that faculty generate sufficient external funding to support research by students or post-doctoral associates that extends well beyond any internal support they are awarded (e. g. assistantships, startup funds). Both sole PI and Co-PI funding that is secured to support research within the department will contribute to the faculty member’s assessment in this area. In making this assessment the peer committee will consider the faculty member’s cumulative role in administering research under a particular grant.
  - evidence that graduate students have a central role in research (see teaching section for more information on graduate advising expectations for faculty with research appointments).

Other documentation of scientific productivity can be used as supporting evidence of research and scholarly performance in the above criteria as appropriate. In particular, book chapters will be evaluated based on their apparent significance, as judged by the Peer Review Committee, but cannot replace publishing in peer-reviewed literature.

To be awarded promotion, the candidate must be rated at least successful in all the above criteria, and to be rated excellent the candidate must demonstrate superior accomplishments in at least four of the five of the criteria.



## E. SERVICE

Service includes all work related to the faculty member's professional expertise and designed to promote social and infrastructure components of science and academe. Even though faculty do not typically have a service appointment, they are expected to contribute to the activities of the Department, College, University, as well as to the larger scientific community. Faculty with an assigned service percentage (e.g., cooperative extension faculty) will be expected to achieve higher performance in this realm relative to the baseline expectations for those faculty without formally assigned service appointments. Presently, all faculty members of the Department, regardless of rank, participate in faculty meetings and assist in departmental tasks, but there are a number of external committees on which the Department must be represented. In general the Department discourages extensive participation in college and university level committees by pre-tenure, tenure-track faculty, because teaching and research are the primary criteria by which tenure candidates are judged. Candidates for promotion to the rank of Professor, however, are expected to have a track record of active participation in extra-Departmental committees and working groups. Candidates should provide details of such service as part of their evaluation package, together with any documentation available as to the quality or content of their service.

**Areas of Evaluation for Service** – Professional service is expected of candidates for promotion to both the Associate and "Full" Professor levels and may include such activities as service to the University, on Councils or Boards or Committees of professional organizations, on editorial boards of professional journals, on statutory and review boards for Federal and State agencies, and as peer reviewers for grant proposals and manuscripts. Evidence of these activities testifies to the standing of the candidate within the profession. Talks and articles for the general public are also evidence of service activity.

**Service Standards** – Successful performance for tenure-track candidates during their pre-tenure evaluation period must show evidence for:

- appropriate participation in Department, College, or University service, but acknowledging the limits to such service inherent in an untenured position



- evidence of some professional service outside the University (e.g., as a peer reviewer for grant proposals or manuscripts or service on national committees)
- other measures of service (e.g., on regional or national committees) may be offered here if they do not duplicate items being offered elsewhere as evidence of standing as a researcher
- efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, either within or external to the University, are encouraged and should be highlighted in the candidate's materials.

Successful performance for promotion to Professor must show evidence for:

- appropriate participation in both Department and broader University service
- evidence of professional service outside the University (e.g., as a peer reviewer for grant proposals or manuscripts, as a member of an editorial board, service on national committees)
- other measures of service (e.g., on regional or national committees) may be offered here if they do not duplicate items being offered elsewhere as evidence of standing as a researcher
- evidence of leadership in service-oriented activities within or external to the University (e.g., chairing a committee or board)
- evidence of significant contributions to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, either within or external to the University.

Excellent performance would include, but not be limited to, additional service such as active involvement or leadership in professional societies and service on editorial or public boards.



## G. STANDARDS FOR REAPPOINTMENT, TENURE, AND PROMOTION

The standards set out below apply to reappointment and the granting of tenure to faculty originally hired as Associate or Full Professor without tenure, to promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with tenure, and to promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. The ratings of “successful” and “excellent” as used below are specifically defined above in the sections on Teaching Standards, Research Standards, and Service Standards.

**Reappointment** – For reappointment, a faculty member must have successful performance as appropriate for their appointment. Pre-tenure faculty must be making progress toward meeting requirements for tenure or promotion to Associate Professor.

**Tenure as and/or Promotion to Associate Professor** – A candidate must receive a rating of successful in teaching and research together with a successful service record for the evaluation period. A candidate’s overall evaluation will be made relative to their teaching: research appointment.

**Tenure as and/or Promotion to Professor** – A candidate must receive a rating of successful in teaching, research, and service, and an excellent rating in either teaching or research, depending on the appointment. Promotion to Professor is contingent upon evidence of sustained productivity that builds on the accomplishments achieved during the Assistant Professor period. A candidate’s overall evaluation will be made relative to their teaching: research appointment. These criteria apply to all faculty in WFCB with the rank of Associate Professor as of the date of the adoption of this document. Any faculty who apply for promotion to Professor within two years of the adoption of these criteria may elect, without punishment, to use the criteria that immediately preceded this document.

**Early Promotion** – Faculty may be considered for early promotion if they clearly exceed the standards for promotion. Faculty who have been awarded credit toward tenure at their initial appointment are not considered “early” if they apply at the time that uses this credit and are to follow the standard expectations outlined above.



## Appendix A - Departmental Expectation for Teaching Assignments

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### Overall Objective

This document is intended to describe the workload expectations for faculty with teaching appointments. We lay these expectations out to provide clarity as to how the department will attempt to:

- Fulfill the teaching and advising needs of the department
- Maintain longer term equity among faculty in their appointment-specific workloads

We acknowledge that no precise formula will be able to capture the differences among teaching assignments, and that a perfectly equitable assignment among faculty may not be possible or may prohibit the department from meeting our teaching needs. The overall goal here is to capture the broad agreement that exists across the faculty as to what constitutes teaching effort and how equity will be best satisfied while fulfilling our core teaching needs.

### Workload Formula

In 2004, full-time teaching was defined by the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture using the "Gelinias model", where 100% Teaching = 24 credit hours per academic year. This formula (see the following page) provides the basis for calculating current teaching loads in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology, as well as multiple other units within the college at the time this document was drafted (e.g., School of Biology & Ecology, School of Marine Sciences). In general, we do not expect teaching loads to exactly match expectations for any given faculty member on any given semester or academic year. We will attempt to make teaching loads as close to expectations as possible using a **running 4-year mean**. Semesters that meet any of the following conditions should be exempted from the calculation of this average:



- Those that include sabbatical leaves
- Those with University-approved *Alternative-to-Teaching* arrangements (e.g., parental leave, dependent care)
- Those that include family, medical, or other forms of paid leave
- Those that include unpaid leave

### Teaching Load Formula

\*As a guideline, a full-time teaching load is 24 credit for the academic year\*

#### Factors for Conversion of Teaching

#### Functions to Adjusted Credit-Hours

Teaching Function	Reported Unit	Adjusted Credit-Hours Normal Course	Adjusted Credit-Hours Writing Intensive Course	Adjusted Credit-Hours Repeat Section Normal Course	Adjusted Credit Hours Repeat Section Writing Intensive Course
Lecture	1 credit-hour				
Class Size	up to 30	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.9
	31-60	1.2		0.7	
	61-100	1.4		0.8	
	101-150	1.6		0.9	
	151-200	1.8		1.0	
	201 & up	2.0		1.1	
Laboratory(Instructor Teaching Lab)	1 credit-hour	1.0			
Laboratory(Repeat Section Instructor Teaching Lab)	1 credit-hour	0.6			
T.A. Teaching Lab	1 credit-hour	0.1			
<b>Other Teaching Functions</b>		<b>Adjusted Credit-Hours</b>			
Independent Study	1 student/semester	0.1			
Thesis (chair)	1 student/year	0.6			
(committee member)	1 student/year	0.1			
Non-Thesis Comm. Chair	1 student/year	0.4			
Honors Thesis/Senior Resea.	1 student/year	0.4			
Undergrad-Advising	1 student/year	0.1			
Undergraduate Program Coordinator	1 student/year	.05	(Maximum of 3 Credits)		
Graduate Program Coordinator	1 student/year	.05	(Maximum of 3 Credits)		

\*Courses for which faculty receive additional compensations are not considered part of the teaching load.

7/7/04