

# Criteria for the Evaluation and Promotion of the Faculty

Department of Physics and Astronomy

## Overview

The Departmental Peer Committee and the Chairperson will evaluate faculty members regularly according to the intervals and procedures specified in the AFUM contract. Each evaluation of a faculty member will be made based on the total contribution of the faculty member to the Department, to the University, and to such other constituencies as may be appropriate in a given instance. It is explicitly recognized that the total contribution of a faculty member results partly from assignments made by the Department Chairperson, partly in response to departmental needs and opportunities, and partly by the individual's self-generated professional goals. It is also explicitly recognized that at different stages in a faculty member's career, the components making up the individual's total contribution may be somewhat different.

In a strong department, each person may have a different role. This role develops over time as faculty members perceive departmental needs and adapt their own strengths and enthusiasms to meet these needs. In our Department, we want people who have the creative ability and the self-motivation to recognize a need or an opportunity, a job that needs doing, and to do it. We expect this process to continue as faculty mature. It is best cultivated by frequent, full, and uninhibited discussion by the whole faculty of the Department, its needs, its goals, its problems, and its aspirations. Involvement in this process is a quality that can be recognized and appreciated, but not always easily quantified. Nevertheless, it is one of the criteria by which we evaluate our faculty.

We expect all tenure-eligible faculty members to carry on creative scholarly activity of a quality judged sound by their peers. We expect there will be a wide range of interests and styles in this activity. Usually this activity will take the form of scholarly research and publication, including successful pursuit of external funding at a level appropriate for the individual's area of scholarship. Vigorous, creative, and high-quality scholarly activity is also a major component in determining the rate at which a faculty member advances in rank.

We expect all faculty members to participate fully in teaching, advising, and curriculum development for the Department. Excellence in teaching is expected and evidence of innovation and improvement of courses is valued. Providing quality advising to our students is an important departmental mission to which all faculty members are expected to contribute.

In addition to the faculty member's activities in teaching, advising, and scholarly research, each faculty member's service and outreach contributions will be evaluated. Service to the Department, the College, the University, the State of Maine, the professional community, and the public are all valued.

Thus, the faculty member's total contribution should include activities in teaching, advising, and curriculum development; scholarly work; and service and outreach. As emphasized above, the mix of these activities will vary from person to person and may vary over a faculty member's career. It is the faculty member's total contribution each year that is important, and a faculty member is expected to contribute in all of these areas unless his/her appointment specifies otherwise. The criteria delineated below assume a standard 50% research, 50% teaching appointment. At all reappointment and promotion points, the Peer Committee will adjust expectations within the criteria for consideration of candidates with appointments that vary from this standard. The Committee will consider that quantities of various types of activities, output and results may vary, according to the research/teaching mix associated with the subject faculty person's appointment, but high quality will be expected in all areas of professional endeavor. The most recent Peer Committee and Chairperson evaluations will be provided for context.

This document is written to cover the milestones of a faculty member who is on the usual appointment/promotion track in the Department. For tenure-stream faculty, this track describes six years as assistant professor, then consideration for promotion to associate professor, and, if successful at that point, consideration for promotion to full professor some time later. In case of considering the granting of tenure without promotion, the Peer Committee will use the criteria for promotion to the applicant's current rank (with tenure), as stated in this document. Early promotion to associate professor with tenure is discussed as one special case below, but other unusual cases will be handled by the Peer Committee in the spirit of the standard criteria herein. For non-tenure-track faculty, the Peer Committee review for reappointment will occur at the regularly scheduled times determined by university guidelines.

### **Fairness, Equity, and Inclusion**

The Department of Physics and Astronomy is committed to providing equal opportunities and fair treatment for all, regardless of gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion, culture, or disability. We are dedicated to complying with all relevant laws

applicable in relation to discrimination on any of these grounds. We actively seek to advance equity throughout our activities.

### **Composition of the Peer Committee**

For matters of reappointment of tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty, post-tenure review, appointment (or reappointment) of adjunct or cooperating faculty, and other routine matters, the Peer Committee will consist of three tenured faculty members elected by the full department faculty to serve three-year, rotating terms. Each member serves as coordinator of the committee's activities during their third year on the committee.

For matters involving granting of tenure or promotion of current faculty, the Peer Committee will consist of all department faculty members at or above the rank/status that is the goal of the application. Thus, for consideration of tenure, the Peer Committee will consist of all department faculty members who are tenured at the time of application. For promotion to Associate Professor, the Peer Committee will be all current Associate Professors and Professors, and only Professors will sit on the committee for consideration of promotion to Professor. In case of an application for tenure and promotion to Professor, the Peer Committee of all tenured Department faculty must first consider and vote on the granting of tenure. If that vote is in favor of the granting of tenure, then the Peer Committee of Professors will consider the promotion to Professor.

### **Criteria for Peer Committee Evaluation and Recommendation for Promotion**

Faculty members in the Department of Physics and Astronomy are expected to contribute in each of the three areas of scholarship, teaching, and service, consistent with their appointment. While appropriate service can strengthen a faculty member's record, it cannot make up for inadequate scholarship or teaching.

#### **Scholarship**

The faculty member must demonstrate development of a significant research program resulting in scholarly contributions to physics, astronomy, or a closely related field and a pattern of obtaining adequate resources to support that research. Examples of scholarly activity include, but are not limited to:

1. Authorship or co-authorship of refereed articles, books or book chapters.
2. Colloquia or talks presented at professional meetings or other institutions.
3. Editorship of one or more scholarly books.
4. Scholarly research proposals submitted and proposals awarded by external funding agencies, including industries.
5. Editorship or membership of the board of editors of a scholarly journal.
6. Peer recognition of scholarly activity, including awards and prizes.
7. Organization of professional meetings, symposia, and workshops.
8. Productive research collaborations including technology transfer.
9. Published reviews of books.
10. Patent disclosures and submissions.

#### *Evaluation of non-tenure-track faculty*

There are no expectations for scholarship for lecturers in the department, though all scholarship will be considered when being evaluated.

#### *Evaluation of Assistant Professors*

The Peer Committee's evaluation will assess the Assistant Professor's progress toward meeting the scholarship requirements for promotion to Associate Professor and the granting of tenure, except that external letters will not be required. Work in progress will also be considered.

#### *Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure*

The Peer Committee must evaluate the extent, quality, and sustainability of the faculty member's scholarly activity. As part of this evaluation, the Peer Committee will obtain six letters evaluating the faculty member's scholarly contributions and potential for continued contribution from recognized authorities in the candidate's research area. These authorities must be from outside the University of Maine System and have national or international reputations in their field. Three of the letters should come from individuals selected by the Committee and three from individuals selected by the candidate. Additional references (from within or without the

University of Maine System) may also be sought at the discretion of the Peer Committee or suggestion of the candidate.

The candidate will meet the following requirements:

1. Must have achieved a national reputation and be respected as a researcher in the professional community, as indicated by the external letters and other documentation of scholarly activity since appointment as assistant professor. This activity would normally include, at minimum,
  - a. publishing refereed scholarly works in which the candidate played a significant role, as explained by the candidate in the narrative of their work,
  - b. obtaining external funding in amounts that support research activities, and
  - c. presenting at major national or international professional meetings.
2. Must have, in the external letters and other documentation, indications that the scholarly activity has good likelihood for continued success.

#### *Early Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure*

To recommend for early promotion, the Peer Committee must determine that a candidate is an unusually productive scholar, in terms of the impact of the applicant's research work on the field. Such impact may be evidenced by, for example, particularly strong external letters, numerous citations in publications of others, recognition from national professional societies, and/or success in competitive funding application pools with national agencies.

#### *Evaluation of Associate Professors*

Associate Professors are expected to continue scholarly activities. Evidence for scholarly activity includes but is not limited to the criteria listed above. Satisfactory performance should not be measured at the level required for promotion but should show ongoing scholarly activity in the areas defined above.

#### *Promotion to Professor*

The candidate must demonstrate outstanding scholarship and be recognized by peers from outside the University of Maine System as having made a significant contribution in his/her area

of expertise. The Peer Committee will obtain six external letters from authorities outside the University of Maine System in the same fashion as used for the promotion to Associate Professor. In addition to meeting the requirements for promotion to Associate Professor, the candidate must demonstrate significant additional scholarly contributions since promotion to Associate Professor. The letters and other documented scholarly activity must indicate that the faculty member is internationally known and has likelihood for continued significant scholarly contributions.

### *Evaluation of Professors*

Associate Professors are expected to continue scholarly activities. Evidence for scholarly activity includes but is not limited to the criteria listed above. Satisfactory performance should not be measured at the level required for promotion but should show ongoing activity.

### **Teaching and Advising**

Each faculty member is expected to contribute to the teaching and advising mission of the Department. Specific responsibilities are assigned by the Chairperson in consultation with the faculty member.

All faculty involved in teaching must have an established record as an effective teacher. Evidence of effectiveness is found in:

1. Course evaluations by undergraduate and graduate students.
2. Signed written student comments.
3. Course materials, including syllabi, homework assignments, examinations, laboratory materials, demonstrations, simulations, or other written materials that are provided to students as part of regular instruction, for at least one of the courses taught by the faculty member since the last review, with a brief description of how these materials are representative of the candidate's teaching.
4. Awards and nominations for awards for teaching activities.

The Peer Committee will also consider other evidence of teaching performance, including, but not limited to:

1. Evidence of innovative teaching, including new methods of teaching, or the development and institution of new courses, as demonstrated by relevant documentation, presentations, reports, or publications, or obtaining funds to enhance teaching pedagogy.
2. Presentations, reports, and publications on teaching.
3. Measures of student performance by an independent mechanism such as comparative norm tests.
4. Participation in ongoing professional development, such as attending workshops or conferences on teaching, collaborating on studies of learning in their classrooms, or similar activities.
5. Observations of the candidate's teaching by others.
6. Actively participating in ongoing peer observations and discussions with the goal of improving one's teaching.
7. Supervision of independent research or senior projects, or participation in the Honors Program.
8. Activity as an undergraduate advisor.
9. Activity as a graduate advisor.

#### *Evaluation of non-tenure-track faculty*

For non-tenure-track faculty whose primary appointment is teaching, the criteria above will be used to evaluate their teaching performance.

Because the appointment of these faculty emphasizes teaching responsibilities, there is also an expectation that such faculty participate in and document their ongoing professional development. This can take the form of attending workshops or conferences on teaching, collaborating on studies of learning in their classrooms, or other similar activities.

#### *Evaluation of Assistant Professors*

The Peer Committee's evaluation will assess the Assistant Professor's progress toward meeting the teaching requirements listed above, for promotion to Associate Professor and the granting of tenure. Documents describing current and planned progress will also be considered.

### *Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure*

In general, the candidate must have chaired at least one M.S. or Ph.D. committee and demonstrated effectiveness as a graduate student advisor. This effectiveness can be demonstrated by student accomplishments, advisory committee meetings, input to defenses, etc.

The candidate must have established a record as an effective teacher, as defined above.

### *Evaluation of Associate Professors*

The Committee's evaluation of teaching and advising will be based on the same criteria as for promotion to rank.

### *Promotion to Professor*

Promotion to Professor requires a continued high level of teaching and advising performance, evaluated according to the criteria for promotion to Associate Professor.

### *Evaluation of Professors*

The Committee's evaluation of teaching and advising will be based on the same criteria as for promotion to rank.

## **Service and Outreach**

Service within the University community can take many forms. Service outside the University is generally limited to activities in the capacity of a professional physicist or astronomer or to activities carried out as a representative of the University.

Examples of service and outreach activity include, but are not limited to:

1. Contributions to Departmental governance, planning, and programs through committee work and by taking on specific tasks.
2. Contributions to College and University governance, planning, and programs through committee work and by taking on specific tasks.
3. Service to professional or scientific organizations as an office holder or committee member.



4. Service as a faculty advisor to and/or participating in student organizations.
5. Technology transfer of research and/or consulting for public and private organizations.
6. Reviewing journal articles, grant applications, books, and book chapters.
7. Outreach activities involving K-16 education.
8. Other evidence of significant service.

#### *Evaluation of non-tenure-track faculty*

Typically, lecturers in the department are responsible only for teaching and professional development. Some of this professional development may align with the needs of departmental service and will be evaluated accordingly.

As with tenure-track faculty, service is not an explicit component of the responsibilities of non-tenure-track faculty, but it is expected and appreciated.

#### *Evaluation of Assistant Professors*

The Committee's evaluation will assess the Assistant Professor's progress toward meeting the service-related requirements of the Department, listed above. Work in progress will also be considered.

#### *Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure*

Evaluation of service will be based on participation in the service-related requirements of the Department, listed above. The case for promotion may be strengthened by a good service record, particularly if it has brought credit to the Department or the University.

#### *Evaluation of Associate Professors*

The Committee's evaluation of service will use the same criteria as for promotion to rank.

#### *Promotion to Professor*

Promotion to Professor requires a continued high level of service performance evaluated according to the criteria for promotion to Associate Professor.

*Evaluation of Professors*

The Committee's evaluation of service will use the same criteria as for promotion to rank.

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Approved by the faculty 5/7/2021.

Approved by Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost 09/03/2021.