

TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES

Department of Sociology

University of Memphis

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I. Overview

The Department of Sociology is a community of scholars and teachers who are dedicated to outstanding research, teaching, and service. Decisions about tenure and promotion are crucial to the maintenance of excellence in the department and larger university. The criteria discussed in this document supplement the University of Memphis Faculty Handbook (Section III: Academic Freedom, Tenure and Promotion) and the College of Arts and Sciences Tenure and Promotion Guidelines. Although the Department of Sociology's criteria are consistent with guidelines established by the University and College, candidates for tenure and promotion should become familiar with each set of requirements.

Candidates for tenure and promotion are evaluated on their research, teaching, and service. Although it is not possible to provide a rigid and absolute criteria for evaluation, it is important to provide junior faculty and others with a well-defined set of criteria and expectations which will guide decisions on tenure and promotion. It is also imperative to outline the procedures and processes that will be followed in order to insure a fair and impartial evaluation of candidates. Departmental Tenure and Promotion requirements are also consistent with the departmental mission statement and overall objectives (see <http://cas.memphis.edu/sociology>).

In terms of **teaching**, it is expected that candidates for tenure (and promotion) demonstrate that they are "effective teachers." An effective teacher (a) has command of the subject matter, (b) exhibits the ability to organize the subject matter and present it in logical and meaningful ways, (c) relates well to students, and (d) demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching and learning.

Effective teaching may be demonstrated through any (or all) of the following mechanisms:

1. Standard student questionnaires, such as the SIRS instrument;
2. Candidate's self-evaluation;
3. Peer evaluation of classroom teaching;

4. Unsolicited and solicited letters from students and/or colleagues that comment on teaching effectiveness;
5. Course syllabi, examinations, and assignments;
6. Development of new courses;
7. Teaching-related publications;
8. Creating relevant computer software and audio-visual material;
9. Introduction of on-line courses;
10. Collaboration with students on publications or other projects;
11. Other out-of class teaching, advising, and mentoring (e.g., working with a student to arrange an internship);
12. Teaching awards and recognitions.

In terms of **research and scholarly activity**, it is expected that candidates for tenure (and promotion) demonstrate “productive scholarship.” The most common way to show research productivity is through the publication of independent research in refereed journals that makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature. Another equally acceptable way is through the publication of original books (not edited readers). It is not expected that candidates for tenure and promotion write books. However, if they have published a book (or have one in press), then it normally would count as several journal articles, depending on the quality of the book and prestige of publisher.

As noted, not all publications are of equal rank. Even among refereed journals, some clearly carry more professional import than others. Candidates should document the quality, importance, and influence of their publications to assist in the evaluation of their work.

In addition to refereed articles and original books, there are a number of other ways to indicate productive scholarship, but these will not take the place of refereed publications. They include:

1. Edited books and readers;
2. Technical reports, research monographs, and book chapters;
3. Conference papers;
4. Grants – internal and external – which facilitate research;
5. Invited guest lectures – both inside and outside the university – on the candidate’s research;

Again, it is up to the candidates to discuss the quality of their publication outlets.

In terms of **service**, it is expected that candidates for tenure (and promotion) demonstrate “good service” within the university and beyond the university.

Service **within the university** may include:

1. Serving on departmental committees;
2. Holding administrative positions in the department (e.g., graduate coordinator);

3. Serving on College or University committees;
4. Holding administrative positions in the College or University (e.g., director of a program);
5. Serving as a mentor for a colleague;
6. Writing a large number of recommendation letters for students.

Service **beyond the university** may include:

1. Community service;
2. Serving as an editor, associate editor, book review editor, editorial board member, or occasional reviewer for journals or publishing houses (such honors are also indicative of productive scholarship.)
3. Serving and/or holding office in a professional association, task force, or advisory group;
4. Serving on an external review panel for another department or unit;
5. Serving as an external reviewer for candidates under consideration for tenure and/or promotion.

Candidates are responsible for explaining fully their service contributions.

II. Annual Reviews/Evaluations

1. As mandated by University policy, the Department Chair will evaluate the performance of all faculty members each Spring. The Chair will comment on the faculty member's progress in research, teaching, and service, particularly as it relates to requirements for tenure and promotion.
2. The Chair will discuss her/his assessment with the faculty member and place the comments and recommendations in the faculty member's file in the Chair's office. The comments will also be forwarded to the Dean's office.

III. Mid-Tenure Reviews

1. The University mandates mid-term evaluations of all tenure-track faculty. It is designed to provide faculty members with information about the status of their progress toward tenure and promotion. The process mirrors the full tenure process, except that external letters are not requested.
2. As in cases of tenure and promotion, the faculty member is evaluated by both the T & P Committee and the Departmental Chair. The composition of the committee, including selection of a "representative" for the faculty member, is outlined below in Section VII.
3. The faculty member, with assistance from her/his representative, will prepare a dossier that mirrors a full tenure dossier. The faculty member will be provided with a checklist of all documentation required by the Departmental T & P Committee. These requirements will be in line with University and College guidelines for tenure and promotion, excluding external reviews.

4. The faculty member will submit a dossier to the Departmental Chair by February 15th of her/his third year of service. The Departmental Chair and the faculty member's representative will insure that all required items have been submitted and that the dossier is complete. Once the dossier is complete, it will be forwarded to the T & P Committee for consideration.
5. The T & P Committee will convene soon after the dossier is submitted to begin evaluation of the faculty member. The Committee Chair is responsible for insuring that a careful examination of the faculty member's research, teaching, and service is undertaken by committee members. If there are multiple faculty members undergoing a mid-term evaluation, the committee may begin discussions of all faculty members at this meeting. Or they may schedule separate meetings for each faculty member.
6. The T & P Committee will meet a second time to study a **written evaluation** of the faculty member (that has been composed by committee members) and other supporting documentation. The committee will discuss the candidate and finalize a report that assesses the faculty member with respect to her/his progress toward tenure and promotion. The report will discuss strengths, as well as any areas of concern and what must be done to address those concerns. If there are multiple faculty members undergoing a mid-term evaluation, a separate meeting for each faculty member will be held to compose final reports.
7. Only those committee members who have attended all meetings about the faculty member and studied the dossier may provide input into the final report. And, as with tenure and promotion cases, a quorum for all T & P Committee meetings is 2/3 of all eligible voting members of the committee.
8. The Committee Chair will forward to the Departmental Chair the committee's report, which will include a detailed written statement with supporting evidence on the faculty member's research, teaching, and service. A separate report will be written for each faculty member under discussion.
9. The Departmental Chair will forward the committee's report, as well as her/his own assessment and supporting statement based on an independent reading of all materials, to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

IV. Criteria for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

In general, an associate professor with tenure in the Department of Sociology is expected to:

1. Have six years of professional experience as a sociologist;
2. Hold a doctorate in sociology;
3. Demonstrate that he/she is an effective teacher by providing evidence as discussed earlier (section I);
4. Demonstrate that he/she is productive scholar by providing evidence as discussed earlier (section I). Candidates normally should have at least 4-5 refereed publications, as well as evidence of other scholarly activity (e.g., conference presentations);

5. Have at least a regional reputation in her/his field with the clear potential of achieving a national reputation. Reputation is assessed in part through positive evaluations from external referees;
6. Present evidence that they will continue to be productive scholars and effective teachers;
7. Demonstrate “good service” within the university and/or beyond the university.

V. Criteria for Promotion to Full Professor

Promotion from associate professor to full professor is of a different magnitude than promotion from assistant to associate professor. Promotion to full professor occurs when faculty members have achieved national or international recognition in their respective fields. More specifically, a full professor in the Department of Sociology is expected to:

1. Have at least ten years of professional experience as a sociologist;
2. Hold a doctorate in sociology;
3. Demonstrate that he/she is an effective teacher by providing evidence as discussed earlier (section I). Moreover, he/she should make innovative and sustained contributions to teaching beyond effective classroom performance. This could take the form of initiating new courses or seminars, advising a large number of graduate students, publishing in the area of pedagogical development, and/or some other contribution that indicates excellent teaching beyond classroom performance;
4. Demonstrate that he/she has achieved national or international prominence in the area of scholarship as evidenced by numerous high-quality, refereed publications (journal articles, book chapters, and/or books;) that have made a significant contribution to the discipline. Although it is not possible to define precisely the number of required publications, it is understood that there must be a sufficient number to establish the candidate as a national or international leader in her/his field. However, the most important criterion is not quantity of publications, but instead, the reputation that has been generated through the publications. Evidence of a national or international reputation should also be reflected through positive evaluations from external referees;
5. Demonstrate that he/she has maintained high-quality service to the department, College, and University, as well as to her/his profession and the community. Again, some of this service must be at the national level (e.g., editorial boards of journals, holding office in a major sociological association, etc.).

VI. Application Process

1. Faculty members who wish to be considered for tenure or promotion during the next academic year must inform the Departmental Chair in writing by April 15th. The Departmental Chair will then inform the Chair of the T & P Committee.
2. Candidates will be supplied with a checklist of the documentation required by the Departmental T & P Committee. These requirements will be in line with University and College guidelines.

3. Candidates must submit their dossier to the Departmental Chair by August 15th. The Departmental Chair and the candidate's representative will insure that all required items have been submitted and that the dossier is complete. Once the dossier is complete, it will be forwarded to the T & P Committee for consideration.
4. Material included in the dossier is determined by the criteria for tenure and promotion outlined in the University of Memphis Faculty Handbook, the Tenure and Promotion Guidelines of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Department of Sociology's Tenure and Promotion Criteria.
5. By July 1, the candidate will provide the T & P Committee with a list of 4-6 recognized scholars in the candidate's area of study who are outside the University of Memphis. Members of the T & P Committee will provide an additional list of 4-6 recognized scholars in the candidate's area of study who are outside the University of Memphis. The Departmental Chair will select a minimum of four (4) names to act as external reviewers.
6. As stipulated by the College of Arts and Sciences, "Every effort should be made to minimize biases for or against the candidate when selecting qualified peers . . . No more than one of the reviewers may have been a major advisor of or a collaborator with the candidate." It is the responsibility of the Departmental Chair to provide a rationale for the selection of each referee.
7. Outside letters of evaluation will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowed by University policy, the laws of Tennessee, and the candidate's own willingness to sign a release that maintains confidentiality. The potential external referees must be informed of this fact upon being asked to write.
8. External reviewers will be provided with the candidate's CV, a representative sample of her/his scholarly work, the department's tenure and promotion criteria, and any other materials deemed relevant. Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the candidate's scholarship and assess their regional/national visibility and reputation, particularly as it compares to scholars in the same field and at the same stage of their careers.
9. Candidates may include other unsolicited or solicited letters in their dossier.
10. All letters and the larger dossier will be available to members of the T & P Committee and the Departmental Chair. It is expected that all members of the committee will study the candidates' dossier carefully prior to any committee meetings.

VII. Composition and Functioning of Departmental Committee

1. For **tenure** deliberations, the Committee consists of all tenured associate and tenured full professors in the department. For **promotion** (to full professor) deliberations, the Committee consists of all tenured full professors in the department. A quorum must be present to conduct business in any T & P Committee (see below, number 10).
2. According to University policy, the T & P Committee advises the Departmental Chair on tenure and promotion cases, and the Chair then makes an independent

- evaluation and recommendation. Thus, the Departmental Chair does **not** vote in the T & P Committee and does not attend meetings of the T & P Committee.
3. The Departmental T & P Committee will elect a Chair before the end of the Spring semester to serve as its Chair the following academic year. The Committee will also elect a representative to the College of Arts and Sciences T & P committee when necessary.
 4. According to College guidelines, the Departmental representative to the College T & P Committee may vote at the departmental level but must recuse her/himself at the College level when Sociology candidates are discussed.
 5. Each candidate for tenure will select a “representative” from the tenured faculty of the department. The representative will consult with and assist the candidate as the candidate prepares a tenure dossier. The representative will also work with the full T & P Committee and the candidate to insure that the Committee has all the information it needs to make an informed decision. If, for instance, the Committee feels the dossier is missing some information, the representative would inform the candidate and provide the candidate with an opportunity to respond. The representative is not necessarily an advocate for the candidate and it is clearly understood that the ultimate responsibility for the dossier resides with the candidate.
 6. A candidate for full professor may also request a representative, but that is up to the candidate.
 7. The T & P Committee will meet early in the Fall semester to begin the evaluation of candidates. The Committee Chair is responsible for insuring that a careful examination of candidates’ research, teaching, and service is undertaken by committee members. If there are multiple candidates for tenure or promotion, the committee may begin discussions of all candidates at this initial meeting. Or they may schedule separate meetings for each candidate.
 8. The T & P Committee will convene a second time to study a **written evaluation** of the candidate (that has been composed by committee members) and other supporting documentation. The committee will discuss the candidate and, if the committee is ready, vote on the candidate for tenure or promotion. If there are multiple candidates for tenure and promotion, a separate meeting for each candidate must be held for this second meeting. The vote will be by secret ballot.
 9. Only those Committee members who have attended all meetings about a candidate and studied the dossier and external letters are eligible to vote. Absentee votes are not permitted.
 10. A quorum for all T & P Committee meetings is 2/3 of all eligible voting members of a committee (i.e., 2/3 of all tenured faculty members in the case of a mid-tenure review or a case involving promotion from assistant to associate professor, and 2/3 of all tenured full professors in a case involving promotion from associate to full professor). If a faculty member is on any type of leave or professional development assignment, then they are not “required” to vote and therefore they are excluded from consideration in the 2/3 rule.
 11. Faculty spouses are not permitted to participate or vote in any tenure or promotion deliberations, even if they otherwise meet all necessary criteria for doing so.

12. The Committee Chair will forward to the Departmental Chair the committee's recommendation along with a true count of the tenure or promotion vote. The Committee Chair will also provide the Departmental Chair with a detailed written statement supporting its recommendation. This recommendation will comment specifically on the quality of the candidate's research, teaching, and service. In the case of multiple candidates for tenure or promotion, a separate report will be completed for each candidate.
13. All T & P Committee deliberations will remain confidential.
14. The final report on each candidate will be forwarded to the Departmental Chair in sufficient time to meet College deadlines.
15. The Departmental Chair will forward the Committee's recommendation and report, as well as her/his own recommendation and supporting statement based on an independent reading of all materials, to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
16. The candidate may not add or delete anything from the dossier following departmental review.
17. Candidates are evaluated according to the T & P criteria in effect at the time of their application for tenure or promotion.
18. If the Department Chair is being considered for tenure or promotion, the dossier shall be transmitted directly from the Departmental T & P Committee to the Dean of the College.
19. The Department Chair will notify the applicant of progress-to-date at each step of the review process.

VIII. Modification of T & P Guidelines

1. The Department of Sociology will review its T & P requirements and procedures once a year. Any change in policies or procedures can be effected through a simple majority vote of all tenured associate and full professors in the department. Untenured faculty members may participate in discussions related to modifying tenure and promotion standards, but they may not vote on such changes.

IX. Timetable for Tenure and Promotion Cases

April 15: Faculty members who wish to be considered for tenure or promotion inform the Department Chair in writing.

July 1: Candidates provide the T & P Committee with a list of 4-6 recognized scholars in the candidate's area of study who are outside the University of Memphis. Members of the T & P Committee provide an additional list of 4-6 scholars who are outside the University of Memphis. Shortly after receiving the lists, the Department Chair will select a minimum of four (4) names to act as external reviewers.

August 15: Candidates must submit their dossier to the Department Chair.

Early Fall Semester: T & P Committee will meet to begin the evaluation of candidates. After the deliberations are complete, the T & P Committee Chair will forward a detailed report to the Department Chair, who will write her/his own independent report. Both reports will be forwarded to the Dean's Office prior to the deadline imposed by the Dean's Office.