

**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

**CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES  
FOR  
TENURE AND PROMOTION**

Adopted by the faculty June 10, 2013.

*Approved by UCTP - October 30, 2013.*

The tenured faculty of the Department of Physics and Astronomy is responsible for the formulation of the criteria for tenure and promotion in this department. Accepting this responsibility, this tenured faculty has approved the full participation of non-tenured faculty above the rank of instructor in the formulation of these criteria for the award of tenure and promotion.

**I. CRITERIA**

The criteria governing tenure and promotion recommendations are intended to stimulate growth in faculty excellence, to ensure that each decision is made solely on the grounds of professional merit, and to inform candidates what level of performance is necessary for tenure and promotion. Recommendations for the granting of tenure or for promotion represent recognition of past achievement as well as a clear statement of confidence that candidates will continue their professional development.

The criteria for tenure and promotion call for a judgment of the quality of the candidate's record by the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee. Although some quantitative guidelines are given below, qualification is not merely a matter of filling numerical quota, since these cannot be a universally valid measure of a candidate's achievements. All adjectival standards for the assessment of the candidate should be generally consistent with the Faculty Manual's definition of outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable.

**Outstanding:** The candidate's performance is far above the minimally effective level. In regard to research and scholarship, output is of very high quality, and a consistent track record of national and international recognition is evident.

**Excellent:** The candidate significantly exceeds the minimally effective level of performance. In regard to research and scholarship, output is of high quality, and a national and international reputation is clearly possible, if not likely.

**Good:** The candidate's performance is clearly above the minimally effective level. In regard to research and scholarship, the candidate shows promise of high quality in the future.

**Fair:** The candidate meets the minimally effective level of performance.

**Unacceptable:** The successful candidate has accomplished less than the minimally effective level of performance.

All candidates for tenure and promotion must have earned the doctorate or its equivalent. Evaluation of a candidate will generally focus on the record of the five-year period immediately preceding consideration of tenure or promotion. Candidates who join the faculty with prior professional experience may submit

evidence of this prior experience for consideration as part of their record. These candidates are expected to demonstrate that the required performance continues at this institution. Criteria and procedures are also subject to the general policies stated in the Faculty Manual.

The movement of faculty between non-tenure track and tenure track positions is governed by the Faculty Manual.

#### A) Appointment as Assistant Professor

The candidate must present evidence of research ability and scholarly or professional promise. Publication of research conducted during doctoral and post-doctoral periods in refereed journals of international stature is essential. Testimony of research supervisors that the contributions of the candidate were substantial and that he or she has strong potential for independent professional growth is necessary. Evaluations from co-workers and other physicists in the field familiar with the candidate's work may be included to add support.

Ability as a teacher should be demonstrated by evidence of successfully completed teaching assignments, or, if the candidate has not held a teaching position, by evidence of a facility in presenting research ideas and results.

Appointment at this rank normally presupposes at least two years of experience in a postdoctoral position.

#### B) Direct Appointment as Associate Professor or Professor

To be eligible for appointment at the rank of associate professor, a candidate must have a record of strong performance usually involving both teaching and research, or recognized professional contributions. The candidate is expected to hold the earned doctoral degree or its equivalent and must possess strong potential for development as a teacher and scholar.

#### C) Promotion to Associate Professor

The candidate should demonstrate professional growth during the assistant professor period by having established a successful record in research and teaching, with some evidence of service. Candidates may use accomplishments at a previous institution to justify promotion. For tenure at the rank of and promotion to associate professor, a ranking of "Excellent" in scholarship and at least "Good" in the other areas is required.

##### C1) Scholarship

The successful candidate shall have made a substantial contribution in his or her field; a national and international reputation for the candidate's research is clearly possible, if not likely. Evidence that the candidate has satisfied these requirements must include:

##### C1a) Publication of results in major refereed journals

The quality of the published work as judged by the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee and supported by the outside letters is primary. The committee must also judge, in case of joint publication, that the candidate's contribution to the collaboration is substantial. The minimum acceptable number of publications varies from field to field, but in no case should it be less than an average of one per year following appointment as assistant professor.

##### C1b) Presentation of contributed or invited papers at national or international conferences or workshops

An average of one presentation per year is expected.

C1c) A commitment to sustaining a high quality research program

This includes a record of actively seeking external funding in amounts appropriate to support the research activities. Typically, a record of receiving grant funding is expected. For the purposes of tenure and promotion, no distinction is made between participation in the grant as PI, co-PI, or Senior Investigator.

C1d) Evidence that the research is likely to achieve national and international recognition must include at least one of the following

- 1) The judgment of a majority of the external reviewers that the candidate's research is likely to achieve national and international recognition.
- 2) Receiving awards or honors for research accomplishments.
- 3) Giving invited talks at national and international conferences, schools, or workshops.
- 4) Inclusion of the candidate's work in review articles.
- 5) Numerous citations of the candidate's work.
- 6) Assuming a leadership role in a large research collaboration.

The evidence is strengthened by

- i. Published utility patent applications or granted patents.
- ii. Presentation of seminars/colloquia at universities, national laboratories, or research institutes.
- iii. Refereeing for journals, fund-granting, or other research agencies.

Fulfilling the unit criteria for Scholarship leads to a ranking of "Excellent" or better.

## C2) Teaching

The candidate must have a record of effective classroom teaching and a good record as a supervisor or mentor of individual students. Evidence that these criteria are satisfied must include

C2a) An established record of effective classroom teaching

The student evaluations must be consistently in the upper two thirds of departmental evaluations of similar courses. The teaching record during the probationary period should show that deficiencies identified in student and peer evaluations are being actively addressed and corrected.

C2b) A demonstrated ability to educate students for research

This is shown by supervising M.S. or Ph.D. students or by other substantial participation in the training of Ph.D. students.

The record is further strengthened by including other factors that add to the stature and reputation of the candidate as a teacher

- 1) Involving undergraduate students in research.
- 2) Teaching advanced courses or seminars in a specialized research area.
- 3) Writing a textbook.
- 4) Course and laboratory development.
- 5) Innovations in instructional methods including using new technologies.
- 6) Participation in major state, regional, or national physics education organizations.
- 7) Service as a student advisor.
- 8) Supervising M.S. or Ph.D. students to completion.

Fulfilling the unit criteria for Teaching leads to a ranking of “Good” or better.

### C3) Service

The candidate’s record of service must include

C3a) Effective participation in an average of at least one departmental, college, or university committee per year

The following factors enhance the candidate’s service record

- 1) Service to national and international organizations.
- 2) Participation in organization of conferences.

Fulfilling the unit criteria for Service leads to a ranking of “Good” or better.

### D) Promotion to Professor

The candidate should demonstrate continued professional growth during his or her tenure as an associate professor by having established a successful record in teaching, research, and service. The scholarly work should have been sustained over this period and be of sufficient quality to have earned recognition by experts in the field. There should be evidence of leadership in research, teaching, and service. For promotion to professor and for tenure at the rank of professor, a ranking of “Outstanding” in scholarship and at least “Excellent” in teaching and “Good” in service is required.

#### D1) Scholarship

The successful candidate is required to have made a substantial contribution and achieved national and international recognition in his or her field. Evidence that the candidate has satisfied these requirements must include the following.

D1a) Publication of results in major refereed journals

In case of joint publication, the candidate’s contribution to the collaboration must be substantial and should be documented in the candidate’s personal statement. The quality of published work as judged by the department’s Tenure and Promotion Committee and supported by outside letters is primary. The minimum acceptable number of publications varies from field to field, but in no case is it less than an average of two per year over the past five years.

D1b) Presentation of papers at national or international conferences or workshops

An average of more than one conference or workshop per year is expected.

D1c) Ability to sustain a high quality funded program

There should be a steady record of securing funding in amounts appropriate to support the research activities. For the purposes of tenure and promotion, no distinction is made between participation in the grant as PI, co-PI, or Senior Investigator.

D1d) Evidence that the research has gained national and international recognition must include at least three of the following

- 1) An established track record of national and international recognition, as judged by the majority of the external reviewers.
- 2) Receiving awards or honors for research accomplishments.
- 3) Giving invited talks at national and international conferences, schools, and workshops.
- 4) Inclusion of the candidate’s work in review articles.
- 5) High impact publications with numerous citations of the candidate’s work.

- 6) Becoming spokesperson or assuming another leadership role in a large research collaboration.
- 7) Publication of research level books/book chapters or review articles in top-tier review journals.

The evidence is further strengthened by

- i. Published utility patent applications or granted patents.
- ii. Presentation of seminars/colloquia at universities or research centers.
- iii. Refereeing for journals, fund-granting, or other research agencies.

Fulfilling the unit criteria for Scholarship leads to a ranking of “Outstanding”.

## D2) Teaching

The candidate must have a record of effective classroom teaching and a record of leadership as a supervisor of Ph.D. students. Evidence that these criteria are satisfied must include the following.

### D2a) An established record of formal classroom teaching

Student evaluations must be, on average, in the upper half of departmental evaluations of similar courses, and peer evaluations must show that the candidate has achieved excellence in teaching.

### D2b) A commitment to educating students for research demonstrated by production and supervision of graduate students

Supervision as major professor of at least one Ph.D. student to completion is required.

The record is strengthened by including other factors that add to the stature and reputation of the candidate as a teacher

- 1) Writing a textbook.
- 2) Course and laboratory development.
- 3) Participating substantially in the training of graduate students.
- 4) Involving undergraduate students in research.
- 5) Teaching advanced courses or seminars in a specialized research area.
- 6) Innovations in instructional methods including using new technologies.
- 7) Participation in major state, regional, or national physics education organizations.
- 8) Service as an undergraduate student advisor or mentor.

Fulfilling the unit criteria for Teaching leads to a ranking of “Excellent” or better.

## D3) Service

The candidate must show evidence of leadership/effective service to the department, college, university, or outside professional community. Evidence that the candidate has satisfied this requirement must include at least three of the following examples.

### D3a) Service to the department

- 1) Effective service/leadership on departmental committees or in administrative positions.
- 2) Active participation in departmental colloquia, seminars, faculty meetings, and other departmental functions.
- 3) Recruitment and outreach efforts, field trips, or other programs intended to enhance graduate and undergraduate enrollments and educational experiences.

D3b) Service to the college or the university

- 1) Effective service on college or university-wide committees.
- 2) Effective service in an administrative position in the college.
- 3) Effective consulting to support research and training of students, faculty, and staff within the college and/or university.

D3c) Service to the outside professional community

- 1) Election or appointment to committees of professional societies, research consortiums, and other national or international organizations, including the organizing of national or international scientific meetings.
- 2) Editing activities for physics journals or regularly reviewing manuscripts for physics and related journals.
- 3) Service on review panels or reviewing proposals for funding or other research agencies.
- 4) Service to the K-12 education system or the state government or business community.

Fulfilling the unit criteria for Service leads to a ranking of "Good" or better.

## E) Criteria for Tenure

A departmental recommendation for tenure will be based on a two-thirds majority judgment by the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee that the candidate has met the qualifications for the rank at which tenure is to be granted. The candidate must demonstrate sustained performance of the functions of his or her rank in the context of the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the University of South Carolina. Candidates holding the rank of assistant professor will not be recommended for tenure without also being recommended for promotion to the rank of associate professor. It also follows that faculty members appointed at the ranks of associate professor and professor will normally be required to serve a probationary period before being granted tenure.

The probationary period before being granted tenure is governed by the provisions described in the Faculty Manual, according to which faculty members appointed at the rank of assistant professor, who have not previously held tenure-track positions at other institutions of higher learning, normally will not be recommended for tenure until they are in their fourth year and will serve a maximum probationary period of seven years. Under extraordinary circumstances, candidates appointed at the rank of assistant professor may be recommended for tenure in their third year at USC, provided six years have elapsed since their Ph.D.

Under extraordinary circumstances, and as allowed by the Faculty Manual, candidates for associate and full professor appointments may be recommended for tenure on appointment by a two-thirds positive vote of the tenured faculty of equal or higher rank.

## II. PROCEDURES

While the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee is a single committee, its membership is dependent on the individual candidates being considered. As such, when considering tenure, the committee shall consist of all tenured faculty of equal or higher rank. When considering promotion, the committee shall consist of all tenured faculty of higher rank than that of the candidate under consideration. Eligibility to participate at Tenure and Promotion Committee meetings and to vote is further restricted by the Nepotism Policy as stated in the Faculty Manual and any other declared conflict of interest as described by the corresponding Voting Regulations of the Faculty Manual. The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee shall be a tenured full professor to be selected by a simple majority

vote of the faculty as a whole prior to April 15 each year; however, the Chair of the department cannot serve as the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee.

All eligible faculty members will be considered each year for tenure and/or promotion. A faculty member may decline, in writing, to be considered at any time before the department forwards its recommendation except in the penultimate year of their probationary period for tenure in accordance with the Faculty Manual. The Committee Chair shall maintain a two-part personal file for each faculty member who is under consideration for tenure and/or promotion. One part shall be available to the individual faculty member on request and shall contain all materials that can be used to support their candidacy for tenure and/or promotion. Confidential letters of recommendation shall be kept in the second part of the file.

The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee shall give all appropriate faculty members at least three days advance notice of any meeting of the committee. On all procedural questions, a simple majority of members present will be sufficient to decide the issue. For purposes of discussion or procedural action on tenure and promotion matters, 51 percent of all faculty members eligible to vote on the matter under consideration shall constitute a quorum. A favorable recommendation for tenure or promotion requires that the ratio of "yes" to the sum of "yes" and "no" votes be greater than or equal to 2/3. A vote of "abstain" is not counted in this ratio. In all cases, the faculty member must justify their vote. If an otherwise eligible faculty member does not submit a ballot in spite of the good-faith efforts of the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion committee to obtain said ballot, that faculty member will be considered "absent", and will be required to justify their non-participation in the vote. Absent faculty are not counted in the ratio of yes/(yes+no) votes.

The Department Chair shall vote "yes", "no" or "abstain" and shall forward his or her vote with written justification, along with all other recommendations, statements, and endorsements to the Dean. If the Department Chair chooses to vote as a member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, then he or she may not make any further recommendations on cases at other points in the process.

If the Department Chair chooses to make an administrative recommendation, then he or she shall not attend or participate in the discussions of the Tenure and Promotion Committee unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Tenure and Promotions Committee.

Each year, by April 15, the Department Chair will (1) ensure the election of the Tenure and Promotion Committee chair, (2) notify each untenured faculty member, regardless of rank, and each assistant and associate professor of impending tenure and promotion considerations, and (3) ask the candidates to prepare and submit a resume of professional activities and accomplishments, hereafter referred to as the "Tenure and Promotion file". A copy of such notification will also be sent to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Department Chair will inform candidates of a timetable for submission and preliminary review of their files that is in accord with the university calendar for the tenure and promotion process. Should a candidate choose to waive consideration for tenure and/or promotion, the candidate must notify the Department Chair by letter prior to the date for submission of files (with a copy sent to the Chair of the Tenure and Promotions Committee). Otherwise, the candidate shall submit the file to the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee. The individual faculty member may request secretarial assistance in assembling the file if necessary, but it should be understood that it is the individual faculty member's responsibility to insure that the file is complete and submitted on time.

The candidate will follow the standard format set by the university for tenure and promotion. A list of major subject headings is provided below. In some cases, where noted, the department places additional restrictions and/or requests information from the candidate in addition to that stipulated by the university.

- 1) A current curriculum vitae  
A CV includes personal data, education history, employment history, honors and awards.
- 2) A copy of the official offer letter
- 3) Teaching summary of all teaching experience at USC  
The file must include a summary of the student evaluations that are conducted routinely for all of the standard lecture/laboratory courses in the department. The summary is to be prepared by a faculty member designated by the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee. For courses in which student evaluations are not routinely given (e.g. enrollment of less than three students), the candidate will request the Chair of the Peer Review of Teaching Committee to evaluate the his or her performance by privately interviewing students who have recently taken the course. The Chair of the Peer Review of Teaching Committee will submit a letter of evaluation to the candidate who will then include it in the file. As part of the teaching experience involves research training, the candidate will include a detailed list of the supervision of postdoctoral research associates, doctoral students, master's students, undergraduate students, and any other research supervision.
- 4) Scholarly and professional publications  
Publications include books, refereed publications, or published utility patent applications, in print or in press. If a publication is listed as "in press", a copy of the acceptance letter should be presented. The candidate must supply a copy of each reprint or preprint of work performed at the University of South Carolina. Individuals with two or more years of postdoctoral or faculty level experience at other institutions may include copies of work performed at the postdoctoral faculty level in other institutions.
- 5) Grant activity  
The candidate is advised to list all active/submitted grants while at USC, even though the tenure and promotion process only requires those of the last three years. Under "amount", the candidate should further indicate his or her portion and the period covered.
- 6) Other scholarly activity  
The candidate should include lists of invited papers at professional meetings, research seminars and colloquia, publications submitted or under review, abstracts, unrefereed publications, contributed papers presented at professional meetings, book reviews, manuscripts and proposals reviewed or refereed, consulting activities for private and government agencies, review panels, advisory committees for national agencies or national laboratories, and other activities.
- 7) Professional and public service  
The candidate should list all service activities including departmental, college, and university committees, other administrative duties, conference organizing or advisory committees, elective or appointed offices in professional or learned societies, community or other public service. Indicate where applicable any office held (e.g. Chair).
- 8) Personal statement  
The candidate is encouraged to include a personal analysis of his/her achievements, an assessment of his/her research, teaching, and service programs, and strategies for reaching his/her goals.

This list should not be interpreted as placing priorities by the ordering of subjects as shown. The candidate may add material to the file at any time before the meeting of the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee in which the final vote on the candidate is taken. If the candidate wants to add, modify, or delete material contained in the file after the final meeting of the committee, that material will be submitted first to the Committee Chair who will notify the entire committee of the addition, modification, or deletion and will request comments from the committee. All written comments from committee members will accompany the change to the file. The change, with comments, will be forwarded by the Committee Chair along the same administrative path taken by the file.

The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will be notified of the opportunity by the Committee Chair to place a letter in the candidate's file. The Department Chair will forward to the Chair of the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee any other relevant material concerning the candidate. This might include a summary of departmental and university research support and any additional information received from the Dean. In the case of a joint appointment, the tenure and promotion criteria outlined in the candidate's memorandum of understanding apply

If Physics and Astronomy is the primary unit and the decision is made to seek external reviews, each of the secondary units will be solicited for the names of external reviewers. At least one reviewer suggested by each secondary unit will be selected. The candidate's file will be made available to the tenure and promotion committee of each secondary unit at least two weeks prior to the meeting of the primary Tenure and Promotion Committee. The report of each secondary unit will be included in the file at least five days prior to the meeting.

Notice of all meetings of the tenure and promotion committee will be given to the administrator of the secondary unit, who has the right to attend all meetings and participate in the discussion of the candidate, but not to vote. If the secondary unit administrator is not of equal or higher rank than the candidate, the administrator will designate a faculty member of such rank from the secondary unit to attend the meetings.

The Tenure and Promotion Committee will receive the assembled files for consideration in closed preliminary session before the end of the spring semester for cases on the regular calendar and before the end of the Fall semester for cases to be considered on the mid-year calendar. Each session will include only those members empowered to vote on the candidates being considered. Due to the separation of tenure and promotion decision, this may require separate meetings for each issue. If the committee judges that the candidate has clearly not met the criteria, it may decide via a simple majority by secret ballot not to seek outside letters of recommendation supporting the candidate. The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, in consultation with the Department Chair, must notify the candidate by letter of the negative decision within one week. The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee shall advise the candidate of the results of the committee's discussions and the basis for its recommendations without compromising the confidentiality of these discussions. The candidate has a period of seven calendar days after being formally notified of this recommendation during which a request may be made in writing to the Chair of the Committee for a complete review. If so requested, the committee will then proceed with a complete review in the same way as files receiving a positive recommendation.

For a complete review, the department will proceed to solicit advisory letters from no fewer than five external reviewers who are considered to be experts in the candidate's field of study. Persons who have co-authored publications, collaborated on research, or been colleagues or advisors of the applicant normally should be excluded from consideration as outside evaluators. To assure objectivity, letters should not be solicited from those with close personal or professional ties to the candidate. The timelines of the selection of external reviewers, solicitation of advisory letters, and their receipt shall be in accordance with the tenure and promotion calendar. Each external reviewer should be provided with a letter requesting the evaluation and informing the evaluator of the unit's relevant criteria for tenure or promotion, the candidate's vita and publications, and other materials evidencing the candidate's research or such portion of the candidate's research as the evaluator is being asked to evaluate. The evaluator will be asked to evaluate the quality of the research and scholarship, including the quality of publication venues. It will be the responsibility of the external reviewers to provide their personal analysis of the candidate's productivity and achievements with respect to scholarly work. The external reviews will be included in the candidate's file. To the extent allowed by law, the names of all external reviewers shall not be revealed to the candidate.

After receipt of the external reviewers' letters, a final session of the committee will be held before the voting deadline stated in the tenure and promotion calendar but not less than one week after all external

letters have been received and the committee has been notified that the file is complete. This final session is to recommend tenure and/or promotion. A favorable recommendation for tenure or promotion requires that the ratio of “yes” to the sum of “yes” and “no” votes be greater than or equal to 2/3. A vote of “abstain” is not counted in this ratio. In all cases the faculty member must justify their vote. If an otherwise eligible faculty member does not submit a ballot in spite of the good-faith efforts of the chair of the tenure and promotion committee to obtain said ballot, that faculty member will be considered “absent”, and will be required to justify their non-participation in the vote. Absent faculty are not counted in the ratio of yes/(yes+no) votes.

If the committee votes to recommend tenure and/or promotion, the Committee Chair will prepare an evaluation of the candidate to be forwarded with the candidate’s file. The ballots will go into the candidate’s file and will be forwarded to the Department Chair by the Committee Chair with other relevant materials. To guard against lost documents, the prepared file must include a listing of documents in the file. This file, with the supporting letters, will be forwarded as prescribed in the general university regulations (see Faculty Manual).

Each member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee is encouraged to write a letter directly to the Dean either concurring or not concurring with the recommendation. Faculty members not authorized to vote will be notified of each of the committee’s recommendations by the Committee Chair and may also write directly to the Dean concerning the recommendation. All such letters shall become part of the candidate’s file.

If the committee does not recommend tenure and/or promotion, the Committee Chair must prepare a summary of the reasons for the decision so that the Department Chair may discuss them with the candidate. The information given to the candidate shall be the committee’s reasons and should not include any of the details of the deliberations. It is intended that it be offered in a constructive manner with hope that it will be helpful to the candidate in improving future performance or level of professional achievement. Failure to recommend favorably is without prejudice with respect to future consideration.

A list of those persons considered for tenure and/or promotion but not recommended and a list of faculty not wishing to be considered will be forwarded via normal administrative channels to the University Committee on Tenure and Promotion. The numerical result of the ballots (including abstentions) for each person will be included.

A candidate who is dissatisfied with the recommendation of the department’s Tenure and Promotion Committee may write a letter to the Committee Chair requesting that the file go forward for consideration following the same procedures as for those who have been given a favorable endorsement by the committee. This request cannot be denied.