3.7.2 Faculty evaluation

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative

The University of Alabama’s mission is to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the State through quality programs of teaching, research, and service. Faculty are critical to this mission, as indicated by a central strategic goal of the University: To recruit and retain outstanding faculty and staff to support the teaching, research, and service mission of the University.

Faculty Appointments

The policies and processes related to faculty appointments are included in the Faculty Handbook. [1] Faculty members who have not been awarded tenure have one of two types of appointments: probationary or temporary. Probationary faculty members are employed with the understanding that performance at appropriate levels during a probationary period may result in the award of tenure. Employment as a temporary faculty member conveys no right or expectation of continued employment beyond the period specified in the letter of appointment.

Probationary and tenured ranks for new appointments are, in ascending order, Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Titles for temporary appointees vary from division to division; they include Lecturer in addition to the four academic ranks listed above, each rank being prefixed by one or more of the words Adjunct, Temporary, Visiting, and Clinical. Eligibility for promotion is limited to probationary, tenured, and clinical faculty.

Expectations of Faculty

It is incumbent upon faculty members to be active, consistent, and energetic contributors to the University’s academic programs. Expectations of faculty members are provided in the Faculty Handbook. [2] In particular:

- All faculty members with teaching responsibilities, whether on campus, online, or distance teaching, are expected to be effective teachers, to demonstrate a level of teaching performance commensurate with their rank and experience, and to make substantive contributions to the overall instructional effectiveness of the academic programs in which they have assigned duties.

- All tenured or probationary faculty members having the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor are expected to engage in an ongoing program of research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly effort that is appropriate to their appointment, discipline, and fields of specialization.

- All faculty members are expected to engage in responsible outreach/academic citizenship activities appropriate to their appointment, rank, length of service and discipline. Outreach activities are those which
extend the influence and expertise of the faculty to areas and populations external to the University.

Evaluations of Faculty

The University of Alabama has in place a multi-layered system of evaluation processes to assess the quality and effectiveness of the faculty. All faculty, including tenured, probationary, full-time temporary, and part-time temporary, are evaluated annually to insure their performance is consistent with the mission of the institution. There are four types of faculty evaluations that occur at the university.

- Annual evaluations – mandated evaluations of all faculty regardless of their job-status or rank
- Retention evaluations – annual evaluations of probationary faculty
- Tenure evaluations – evaluation of applications for tenure
- Promotion evaluations – evaluation of applications for promotion to associate and full professor

**Annual Evaluations.** As delineated in the Faculty Handbook, faculty members are subject to evaluations throughout their careers since decisions must be made about matters such as salary increases and workload assignment. The criteria and standards used in these evaluations are similar to those used in formal reviews for retention, tenure and promotion, except that these annual reviews concentrate on whether or not the individual has maintained or improved the level of performance which justified hiring, earlier promotions, and/or tenure. The following procedures are designed to ensure that these evaluations are based on factual information, that the faculty member has a timely opportunity to discuss the evaluation, and that a written record will be available in case the faculty member chooses to contest the evaluation.

*Faculty Activity Report Submittal and Evaluation.* Each full-time faculty member submits a Faculty Activity Report (FAR) to the departmental chairperson by the end of the spring semester of the year under review (the year just completed). The FAR is a comprehensive inventory of activities in the areas of teaching, research, service, and administration. Faculty members use an online or a similar paper version of a FAR template developed by the University.

The departmental chairperson reviews each faculty member’s FAR and rates his/her performance separately on teaching, research, service and administration using the following evaluation key.

**Evaluation Key:**

- 1 - Unsatisfactory. Quality and quantity of work unsatisfactory. Immediate corrective action imperative.
- 2 - Needs Improvement. Individual not performing at adequate level. Corrective action required.
- 3 - Satisfactory. Tasks and goals are being accomplished in a timely and competent manner.
- 4 - Good. Tasks and goals are being accomplished with some meritorious elements of performance.
- 5 - Excellent. Quality and quantity of work is meritorious; goals exceeded, highly productive; individual recognized beyond the unit.
- 6 - Preeminence. Preeminent distinction resulting from outstanding meritorious accomplishments. (It is expected that the performance of no more than 3% of the faculty would fall into this category.)

The chairperson then provides a written statement within the online system comparing that faculty member’s performance to the criteria and standards described above and making recommendations for improvement prior to the next evaluation.

**Discussion of Evaluation with Departmental Chairperson.** Each faculty member has an opportunity to meet privately with the departmental chairperson to discuss the chairperson’s evaluation, the faculty member’s goals for the coming year, and the workload assignment for the next year. This opportunity occurs before the performance evaluation or any salary recommendation is submitted to the dean.
Faculty Response to Review. The online system requires a response by the faculty to either approve the evaluation as is or respond in writing to the review. The FAR and evaluation are then sent electronically to the dean who reviews the FARs, evaluations, and responses, and submits recommendations for merit raises (if available) to the Provost.

In cases where there are no departments within a college or school, the FARs are submitted directly to the dean or an associate dean, who completes the evaluation.

Part-Time Faculty have very focused assignments (typically to teach specific courses) and are evaluated by the departmental chairperson or his/her designee. The evaluation involves review of the faculty member’s students’ opinions of instruction, comparison of the individual’s scores with departmental norms, and examination of the written comments. The evaluator then discusses the review with the faculty member either orally or in writing (if problems are observed).

Some colleges and schools use the percentage of time expected to be spent in each area of teaching, research and service to guide faculty members’ activities, and list it on the FAR. Some colleges and schools do not use the FAR template to track this data. One of the examples provided has this data on the FAR and two of the examples come from divisions that do not use the FAR to track this data. Annual Reviews of tenured, probationary, temporary full-time and temporary part-time faculty are provided to illustrate the review process.

Retention Evaluations. It is University policy to conduct a review of each probationary faculty member’s performance during each year prior to his/her tenure decision. This review process is described and published in the Faculty Handbook. A primary purpose of this review is to identify strengths and weaknesses in the faculty member’s performance and to insure that the individual is making adequate progress toward a successful tenure and promotion application. If weaknesses in the faculty member’s performance are identified, the review is used to identify these weaknesses and to make suggestions for improvement. This review also leads to an annual decision concerning retention.

The retention review process is similar to annual review except it focuses on the faculty member’s cumulative accomplishments since appointment rather than those for a single year. For colleges using an online Faculty Activity Report for retention evaluation, this involves review of multiple annual reports. For colleges not using the online Faculty Activity Report for retention evaluation, the process requires the annual submission of a dossier that outlines the faculty member’s cumulative accomplishments in teaching, research, service, and administration. The steps in the review process are explained below.

- Evaluations of the FAR/dossier by a departmental retention committee. The committee reviews the record of each probationary faculty member and recommends whether to continue the individual’s appointment. The committee’s recommendation must include a discussion of evidence in the FAR/dossier showing the person’s progress toward meeting the criteria and standards for tenure. The recommendation also includes any suggestions for improvement that the committee considers appropriate.

- Independent recommendation by the departmental chairperson (or by the dean in divisions without administrative subunits). This recommendation is based on a review of the FAR/dossier and of the recommendation of the faculty committee. The departmental chairperson’s recommendation includes a discussion of evidence in the FAR/dossier showing the person’s progress toward tenure and may include any suggestions for improvement that the chairperson considers appropriate.

- Transmittal to the dean. The FAR/dossier, together with the recommendations from the departmental committee and departmental chairperson, is then transmitted to the dean. Except in cases where there is an automatic review by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (see next step “Review by the Executive Vice President and Provost”), a review by the dean is the last step in the annual progress review of probationary faculty members. The dean notifies the departmental chairperson and the faculty member of his or her decision and may include suggestions for improvement.

- Review by the Executive Vice President and Provost. This review is mandated in two cases: (1) the dean decides that the probationary faculty member’s appointment should not be continued; and (2) the review process occurring two years before the mandatory tenure decision. In these cases the dean makes a recommendation which is forwarded to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs for the final decision. The dean notifies the departmental chairperson and the faculty member of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs’ decision. If the decision is that the faculty member is not to be retained,
then the faculty member is no longer eligible to apply for promotion or tenure.

Two examples of a fourth-year retention review are included to illustrate the full retention review process. [11] [12]

Tenure Evaluations. As noted in the Faculty Handbook, the decision to award tenure to a probationary faculty member is an affirmative act based upon an individual’s performance, accomplishments, and potential for ongoing contribution to the University’s academic programs and teaching, research, and outreach/academic citizenship missions. [13]

To merit the award of tenure, a probationary faculty member must satisfy the following criteria and standards of performance:

- A successful candidate must present convincing evidence of good instructional performance and effectiveness; each candidate’s record must be judged sufficient in quality to demonstrate continuing and substantial progress toward an outstanding level of performance.

- A successful candidate must present a strong, continuing record of productive research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly achievement appropriate to his/her discipline and fields of specialization; this record must be sufficient in both quantity and quality to demonstrate substantial progress toward an outstanding level of performance. In appraising the quantity and quality of a candidate’s scholarly and creative contributions to his/her discipline, emphasis is placed upon
  - whether the amount of productive research, publication, and creative activity the candidate presents is commensurate with what should be expected of someone applying for tenure,
  - evidence as to the substantive and consistent nature of the candidate’s scholarly or creative efforts,
  - the quality of the refereed journals in which manuscripts have been published (or the quality of invited or juried or reviewed exhibitions, presentations, or performances),
  - the caliber of the publications in which the candidate’s works (other than refereed journal articles) have appeared,
  - any evidence of the impact which the candidate’s works have had on the discipline and of the extent to which the candidate’s publications have been recognized or cited by others,
  - the emerging professional stature of the candidate,
  - the quality of any invitations to consult or lecture,
  - the quality of any participation by the candidate in research contract or grant activities.

- Each successful candidate must show evidence of a continuing record of responsible academic citizenship appropriate to the candidate’s area. The absence of responsible academic citizenship on the candidate’s part detracts from what otherwise may be a strong set of qualifications for tenure.

- Each successful candidate must have made substantial progress toward achieving a professional status which will enhance the stature of the University’s faculty and must be judged to have the potential to make a continuing contribution to the University’s mission in teaching, research, and outreach/academic citizenship.

The decision to award tenure and the decision to promote are not necessarily linked. An example of a faculty member’s tenure review is provided. [14]

Promotion Evaluations. Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. [15] To merit promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, candidates must possess a strong record of performance at the Assistant Professor rank. Decisions to promote an Assistant Professor to the rank of Associate Professor are based upon the caliber of the faculty member’s teaching effectiveness and overall contribution to the quality of the instructional programs in which he/she has assigned duties; and the caliber of the faculty member’s record of research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly efforts in his/her discipline and fields of specialization. These two areas of performance are equal in importance and are predominant in the evaluation of candidates for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor.
To meet the criteria and standards of performance for promotion to Associate Professor, a candidate’s record of academic performance and accomplishments must satisfy the following requirements:

- A successful candidate must present convincing evidence of good instructional performance and effectiveness; each candidate’s record must be judged sufficient in quality to demonstrate continuing and substantial progress toward an outstanding level of performance.

- A successful candidate must present a strong, continuing record of productive research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly achievement appropriate to his/her discipline and fields of specialization; this record must be sufficient in both quantity and quality to demonstrate substantial progress toward an outstanding level of performance. In appraising the quantity and quality of a candidate’s scholarly and creative contributions to his/her discipline, emphasis is placed upon:
  - whether the amount of productive research, publication, and creative activity the candidate presents is commensurate with what should be expected of someone applying for tenure,
  - evidence as to the substantive and consistent nature of the candidate’s scholarly or creative efforts,
  - the quality of the refereed journals in which manuscripts have been published (or the quality of invited or juried or reviewed exhibitions, presentations, or performances),
  - the caliber of the publications in which the candidate’s works (other than refereed journal articles) have appeared,
  - any evidence of the impact which the candidate’s works have had on the discipline and of the extent to which the candidate’s publications have been recognized or cited by others,
  - the emerging professional stature of the candidate,
  - the quality of any invitations to consult or lecture, and
  - the quality of any participation by the candidate in research contract or grant activities.

- Each successful candidate must show evidence of a continuing record of outreach/academic citizenship appropriate to the candidate’s area and expertise.

Associate Professor to Professor.[16] To merit promotion to the rank of Professor, candidates must possess a strong record of performance at the rank of Associate Professor. Decisions to promote an Associate Professor to the rank of Professor are based upon (1) the caliber of the faculty member’s teaching effectiveness and overall contribution to the quality of the instructional programs in which he/she has assigned duties and (2) the caliber of the faculty member’s record of research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly efforts in his/her discipline and fields of specialization. These two areas of performance are equal in importance and are predominant in the evaluation of candidates for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor.

To meet the criteria and standards of performance for promotion to Professor, a candidate’s record of academic performance and accomplishments must satisfy the following requirements:

- A successful candidate must present convincing evidence of outstanding instructional performance and effectiveness; each candidate’s record should be judged sufficiently consistent in quality to warrant the expectation of continued performance at this level.

- A successful candidate must present an outstanding record of productive research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly achievement appropriate to his/her discipline and fields of specialization; this record should be sufficiently consistent in both quantity and quality to warrant the expectation of continued performance at this level. In appraising the quantity and quality of a candidate’s scholarly and creative contributions to his/her discipline, emphasis is placed upon
  - whether the amount of productive research, publication, and creative activity the candidate presents is commensurate with what should be expected of someone applying for the rank of Professor,
  - evidence as to the substantive and consistent nature of the candidate’s scholarly or creative efforts,
  - the quality of the refereed journals in which manuscripts have been published (or the quality of invited or juried or reviewed exhibitions, presentations, or performances),
• the caliber of the publications in which the candidate’s works (other than refereed journal articles) have appeared,

• evidence of the impact which the candidate’s works have had on the discipline and of the extent to which the candidate’s publications have been recognized or cited by others,

• the professional stature of the candidate,

• the quality of any invitations to consult or lecture, and

• the quality of any participation by the candidate in research contract or grant activities.

• Each successful candidate must show evidence of a continuing record of outreach/academic citizenship appropriate to the candidate’s area and expertise.

An example of a complete faculty promotion review is provided. [17]

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**Supporting Documents**

1. Criteria for Appointment; Faculty Handbook Ch. 2, II (PDF)
   Full Document (PDF)

2. Expectations of Faculty; Faculty Handbook Ch. 2, I (PDF)
   Full Document (PDF)

3. Policy and Guidelines on Faculty Evaluation; Faculty Handbook Ch. 2, X (PDF)
   Full Document (PDF)

4. Paper FAR Template (PDF)

5. FAR Evaluation Template (PDF)

6. Tenured Annual Review (PDF)

7. Probationary Annual Review (PDF)

8. Temporary Full Time Annual Review (PDF)

9. Temporary Part Time Faculty Evaluations (PDF)

10. Progress Reviews of Probationary Faculty; Faculty Handbook Ch2, VII (PDF)

11. 4th Year Review 1 (PDF)

12. 4th Year Review 2 (PDF)

13. Criteria for Awarding Tenure; Faculty Handbook Ch2, IV (PDF)
    Full Document (PDF)

14. Tenure Review (PDF)

15. Criteria for Promotion Assistant Professor to Associate Professor; Faculty Handbook Ch 2, III B (PDF)

16. Criteria for Promotion Associate Professor to Professor; Faculty Handbook Ch 2, III C (PDF)

17. Promotion Review (PDF)