IV. Criteria and Standards for Awarding Tenure to Probationary Faculty

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.

A. Criteria and Standards

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

1. 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.

Documentation of a candidate’s instructional performance should include at least the following:

(a) Evidence of effective performance by the candidate in the classroom and/or other instructional settings and evidence of the degree of the candidate’s commitment to instructional excellence, including judgments by members of the departmental tenure committee and the departmental chairperson.

(b) Student opinions regarding the candidate’s instructional performance together with their opinions concerning the quality of the course.

(c) Any available evidence that the candidate has made contributions (beyond those included in responsible academic citizenship) to improving the quality of the instructional programs in his/her academic area. Such contributions may include improving the presentation of course materials, developing effective instructional aids, developing new courses or programs, strengthening the content of existing courses, preparing useful and current course syllabi, participating effectively in the supervision of research efforts of graduate students, assisting in student recruitment and career placement, performing meritoriously in adult and professional continuing education programs, providing distinguished curricular or instructional leadership, and obtaining or participating effectively in grants and contracts which enhance the University’s instructional efforts.

2. 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.

Although there are obviously many ways for a candidate to establish a strong, continuing record of productive research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly achievement, each successful candidate is expected to have published a number of substantial articles in recognized refereed journals in his/her discipline (or the equivalent in the case of candidates whose disciplines are in the creative, visual, or performing arts). In evaluating the totality of a candidate’s record, consideration is given to all appropriate types of original scholarship, creative effort, and professional activity relevant to the candidate’s discipline. The weight placed on each scholarly and professional activity necessarily varies according to the contribution it makes to the discipline and to the professional stature of the candidate. The following are examples of the
types of scholarly and professional contributions which are considered:

(a) articles published in refereed journals in the candidate’s discipline;

(b) books and book-length research monographs;

(c) invited or juried or reviewed exhibitions, presentations, or performances;

(d) chapters in books and edited collections of readings;

(e) research reports submitted in connection with research grants or contracts;

(f) participation in research contract or grant activities;

(g) papers published in the proceedings of meetings of professional associations;

(h) articles in non-refereed periodicals;

(i) papers presented at professional meetings;

(j) appointment as a referee, as a member of an editorial board, or as an editor of a scholarly academic or professional journal;

(k) any other type of scholarly publications and creative efforts which contribute to the candidate’s fields of specialization;

(l) important professional activities which contribute materially to the individual’s professional stature and to the University’s mission.

In appraising the quantity and quality of a candidate’s scholarly and creative contributions to his/her discipline, emphasis is placed upon (1) 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, (2) evidence as to the substantive and consistent nature of the candidate’s scholarly or creative efforts, (3) 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), (4) the calibre of the publications in which the candidate’s works (other than refereed journal articles) have appeared, (5) 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, (6) the emerging professional stature of the candidate, (7) the quality of any invitations to consult or lecture, and (8) the quality of any participation by the candidate in research contract or grant activities.

3. 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.

4. 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.

### B. Duration of Probationary Status

The appointment letter for a probationary faculty member should specify the last academic year during which a tenure decision can be made (the mandatory tenure decision time). This mandatory tenure decision time is the academic year preceding the last full academic year of the probationary period. The probationary period for a faculty member whose appointment begins during an academic year normally will be considered to have begun at the start of the academic year while faculty members whose appointments begin between May 15 and August 16 will not start their probationary period until August 16; exceptions to this rule must be approved by Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and must be described in the appointment letter.

The probationary period includes all full-time service at a faculty rank after earning an appropriate terminal degree and may include full-time service prior to receiving a terminal degree. However, time spent in appointments prior to beginning a probationary appointment at the University may be excluded. The decision as to whether to count time spent in prior appointments or service prior to receiving an appropriate terminal degree will result from negotiations between the individual and the dean, with concurrence by the Executive Vice President and Provost, and will be reflected in the mandatory tenure decision time specified in the appointment letter conferring probationary faculty status. Factors to be considered in the decision concerning credit for prior appointments include the extent to which the appointment permitted normal professional progress and the possibility that moving to the University can be expected initially to cause some delay in normal professional progress. If a person holding a probationary faculty appointment at the University participates in a faculty exchange, takes leave for no more than six months, or takes leave for scholarly purposes, the time spent on exchange or leave will count as part of that person’s probationary period unless the individual and the Executive Vice President and Provost agrees in writing to an exception to this provision at the time the exchange or leave is approved.

The total period of full-time service in a probationary status normally will not exceed seven years (with a final tenure decision made during the sixth year), except that the probationary period will normally extend for four years at this University (with a final tenure decision made during the third year), even if the total full-time service in the profession thereby exceeds seven years. Faculty members appointed at advanced ranks may have shorter probationary periods as specified in their original appointment letters.

Normally, candidates do not apply for tenure until the year before their probationary period ends. In exceptional circumstances, decisions to award or deny tenure may be made sooner.

At any time preceding August 16 of the mandatory year for tenure decision, a probationary faculty member may request an extension of the probationary period. An extension, if granted, normally will not be for more than one year. Application for extension must be made by the probationary faculty member through the department chair to the dean of the college. A positive response to the application must be approved by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### C. Initial Appointment with Tenure

It is the policy of The University of Alabama not to award tenure at the time of initial appointment to faculty rank. Exceptions may be made at the ranks of Associate Professor and Professor provided candidates have a record of substantial experience and accomplishments and provided they possess the professional stature and abilities to merit the award of tenure without a probationary period for evaluation. In making a decision to award tenure at the time of initial appointment, the candidate’s record and credentials are examined from the standpoint of (1) teaching experience and evidence of instructional effectiveness; (2) quantity and quality of research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly achievements; (3) professional stature in the discipline;
and (4) potential for making an ongoing contribution to the University’s mission in teaching, research, and outreach/academic citizenship.