# Standards for Promotion and Tenure

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Overview:
This document provides guidelines for the determination of promotion and tenure recommendations for faculty members in the Nicholson School of Communication (NSC). The school has four separate undergraduate programs; they are advertising-public relations, human communication, journalism, and radio-television. Each offers individual B.A. degrees. The school also offers a M.A. in communication with tracks in mass communication and interpersonal communication. NSC faculty represents a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise.

For all NSC tenure-earning faculty, substantial research or creative activity, quality teaching, and appropriate service are the three, essential standards for promotion and tenure. In light of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary composition of the school, this NSC ‘Standards for Promotion and Tenure’ document reflects a commitment to honoring diverse patterns of activity and productivity.

The primary purpose of this NSC ‘Standards for Promotion and Tenure’ (SPT) document is to describe how candidates will be evaluated in decision-making concerning promotion and tenure. This document presents the ‘basic core’ and ‘expanded core’ as teaching, research, and service profiles that should be demonstrated by candidates seeking promotion. The requirements in the ‘basic core’ pertain to candidates seeking tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. All requirements in the ‘basic core’ must be satisfied by candidates. Candidates seeking the rank of Professor must consistently continue to satisfy the requirements of the ‘basic core’ as well as to demonstrate a pattern of meeting many, but not necessarily all, criteria in the ‘expanded core.’ At a minimum, candidates seeking the rank of Professor must demonstrate they have achieved a national reputation and have had an impact on the field through consistent peer-reviewed publication in prestigious academic outlets. In addition, candidates must continue to demonstrate excellence in teaching and mentoring. Finally, candidates must demonstrate a record of service in the academic profession as well as at various levels in the University.

The NSC ‘Annual Evaluation Standards and Procedures’ (AESP) document is separate from the ‘Standards for Tenure and Promotion’ document and does not necessarily translate into satisfactory progress toward tenure and promotion. The purposes of the Standards for Promotion and Tenure (SPT) and the AESP documents are different and candidates should attend to the descriptions of the ‘basic core’ and ‘expanded core’ in the SPT document for specific guidelines in developing appropriate profiles for promotion and tenure. The NSC Tenure and Promotion Committee relies on the criteria in the ‘basic core’ and ‘expanded core’ in its assessment of candidates’ progress.

The Tenure and Promotion Committee provides Cumulative Progress Evaluations (CPE’s) of tenure-seeking candidates. Hence, the most appropriate measure of a candidate’s progress toward promotion and tenure is the feedback provided through Cumulative Progress Evaluations. The CPE is more comprehensive than the annual
evaluations and candidates for promotion and tenure are advised to use the CPE feedback as a barometer of their progress.

The University has outlined promotion and tenure criteria in UCF Regulation 3.017 - Promotion of Tenured and Tenure-Earning Faculty, located on the University’s regulations website. The regulation explains the process and provides general guidelines that would prove helpful to candidates seeking promotion and tenure. This NSC document, “Standards for Promotion and Tenure,” supplements Regulation 3.017 by providing specific ‘basic core’ and ‘expanded core’ criteria to assist candidates as they prepare for the promotion and tenure process.

According to the 2012-2015 UCF Board of Trustees - UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement, “Article 15.4, Modification of Criteria, “… if an employee has at least four (4) years of tenure-earning credit as of the date on which the tenure criteria are adopted under Section 15.4(a), above, the employee shall be evaluated for tenure under the criteria as they existed prior to modification unless the employee notified the University at least thirty (30) days prior to commencement of the tenure consideration that he/she chooses to be evaluated under the newly adopted criteria.” (p. 43, 15.4(b)).

**Standards for Tenure:**
According to Article 15.2 of the 2012-2015 UCF Board of Trustees - UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement “An employee shall normally be considered for tenure during the sixth year of continuous service in a tenure-earning position, including any prior service credit granted at the time of initial employment. An employee’s written request for early tenure consideration is subject to the University’s written agreement (p. 425, 15.2(a)).

Tenure is awarded to faculty who show promise of sustained significant professional contributions to the University and the academic community as a whole. A strong record of successful teaching, research and service shall be taken as evidence of the likelihood of making continued significant professional contributions. An appropriate amount of activity in service also is required. Outstanding performance in any one of the three categories alone is insufficient for tenure. To earn tenure, faculty members must demonstrate their past contributions and continued potential for making significant contributions to NSC, the College of Sciences and the University.

Expectations for tenure-seeking faculty are described in the College of Sciences’ Criteria for Promotion and Tenure document, “Tenure represents a life-long commitment to teaching, scholarship, and service. It is incumbent upon faculty to demonstrate that they have established a strong record in all three areas that will be sustained throughout their academic careers. Faculty must demonstrate commitment to and effectiveness in classroom teaching, and, as appropriate, mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students. Tenure requires a viable research program that is producing scholarly work of quantity and quality likely to have impact within the discipline. As appropriate to the discipline, faculty should demonstrate the ability to obtain the funding necessary to establish and maintain a research program. Faculty must demonstrate appropriate
service by contributing actively to the University; also valued are professional service and public service that uses professional expertise (pp. 1-2)

Furthermore, as stated in Article 14.1 of the 2012-2015 UCF Board of Trustees - UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement -- “Promotion decisions are not merely a totaling of an employee’s annual performance evaluations. Rather, the University, through its faculty, professional employees, and administrators, assesses the employee’s potential for growth and scholarly contribution as well as past meritorious performance” (p. 40, 14.1).

In sum, tenure should be granted only to those who demonstrate individual excellence and expertise corresponding to the needs of the University, College and NSC.

Promotion and Tenure:
UCF Regulation 3.017 Promotion of Tenured and Tenure-Earning Faculty, states “A faculty member shall normally become a candidate for promotion to Associate Professor prior to or at the same time that tenure is recommended. It is advised that the vote for promotion precede the vote on tenure at the department, or unit, college, and university levels” (p. 1, 1(c)). Although there is no specific timeline that must be met for consideration for promotion to Professor, College of Sciences standards for promotion to Professor states “To qualify for promotion to professor, faculty members must demonstrate sustained excellence in research that establishes them as nationally or internationally recognized leaders in their field, excellence in teaching, and leadership in service. As a general guideline, faculty promoted to professor should have served seven years in the rank of associate professor.” It is not a binding rule, but candidates should be aware of it.

Promotion to Associate Professor:
NSC recognizes three basic categories of activities as essential to the promotion and tenure process. Regardless of the candidates’ assignment or load, these three categories are teaching, research and service. At the Assistant Professor, tenure-earning rank, research and teaching are the most important factors in the awarding of tenure. NSC aspires to achieve national prominence as a research school and consistent with this aspiration, tenure-earning junior faculty members have been recruited because of their potential to establish a productive and visible research program. Promotion and tenure of these faculty members requires that they achieve an outstanding record of research and clear evidence they have the potential to develop a nationally visible research program.

An excellent record of teaching success is expected for tenure-earning faculty. Evidence that an instructor is an ineffective teacher is likely to lead to denial of promotion and tenure even if the candidate has an outstanding research record. Excellence in teaching will normally be demonstrated through a record of teaching
effectiveness, student learning, and rigor. Along with a strong record of student evaluations, evidence of student learning and student success should be documented.

A candidate’s record also should demonstrate an appropriate level of service to NSC as well as one’s professional community (e.g., reviewing for academic journals, work for national or international academic associations, holding office in a national or international academic organization, etc.). A record of appropriate service includes evidence of sustained, ongoing involvement in professional service to NSC, the University, the college of Sciences, one’s profession, state, and/or community.

Excellence in research requires evidence that the candidate has developed a program of research and that the candidate’s research is on a clear trajectory leading to national impact and recognition as evidenced by publication in national or international blind, peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Alternatively, candidates who are being evaluated on their creative activity should demonstrate productivity, external recognition of their creative works and a clear trajectory leading to regional or national impact or recognition. Candidates who wish to include creative activity as a component of their promotion and tenure dossier must have negotiated the evaluation of creative works as a component of performance evaluation at the time of hire, and the establishment of this component must be confirmed in the faculty member’s annual assignments.

The judgment of whether a clear trajectory leading to regional or national impact or recognition is present is complex and cannot be communicated as a simple number of publications or creative works. Major research products to be evaluated include procurement of significant external funding, journal articles, scholarly books, scholarly book chapters and significant, competitively selected scholarly presentations. Each of the research products must be evaluated in terms of the quality of the work and its impact. Major creative works to be evaluated will likely be contingent on the specific nature of the creative activities.

The ‘Standards for Promotion and Tenure’ document specifies that at the time this document was created, the current general expectation for faculty research productivity is one to two double-blind, peer-reviewed (refereed) publications per year averaged across the entire evaluation period. However, it must be stressed that quantity of publications is not the sole determinant of the significance of a candidate’s research productivity. This general expectation for number of publications is accompanied by the stipulation that these will be of high quality such that they demonstrate significant contributions to the discipline and their significance can be established through evidence such as impact factors, acceptance rates, and citation rates. Publications of lower quality will not be evaluated as favorably as those publications of documented significant quality.

Typically, a refereed publication (also called a peer-reviewed publication or double-blind peer review publication) is one that is blind-reviewed and has at least two external reviewers. The blind-review process means that the author of the manuscript is not
made known to reviewers. The names of the reviewers for a particular manuscript are not made known to the author. This anonymity within the process is what creates the double, blind-review.

Double-blind, peer-reviewed, publications are more highly valued than non-peer-reviewed publications and editor-selected publications. The international, national, and regional profiles of the journals must also be considered. For example, double-blind peer reviewed international or national journals are valued more highly than state journals. In addition, journals such as the *Western Journal of Communication, Communication Quarterly, and Communication Studies* may be affiliated with significant regional professional associations but nonetheless are considered national in scope due to the strong national reputation of the journals, their importance to the discipline, their impact factors and acceptance rates. Thus, the number of publications deemed acceptable for promotion and tenure will vary depending upon the nature of the review process, quality and impact of the publications, the pattern of publication activity across the years prior to seeking promotion and/or tenure, whether the candidate can provide evidence of significant intellectual leadership in his/her research, and that the research efforts indicate a clear trajectory toward national recognition.

Although submissions to journal publication outlets are an indication of research effort, it is understood that articles that have been accepted formally by a journal and are “in press” as well as published products should be the foci of evaluation. To confirm the status of the accepted piece, an “in press” article should be accompanied by a dated letter of acceptance provided by the journal’s editor/editorial staff. To qualify as “in press,” the letter must indicate that the article is in the queue for publication in a subsequent issue of the journal. Articles that are “accepted pending further revisions” may not be declared as “in press.”

In addition to establishing a record of high quality publications, candidates also should report their record of work toward obtaining external funding (grants, contracts, awards, endowments, and fellowships) from competitive sources to support research and creative activity. External funding administered through UCF’s Office of Research and Commercialization (ORC) is highly valued and is likely to enhance the research or creative activity profile of the candidate, although it is not required for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Research conducted for a client such as a corporation or the government that is “for profit” should not be included in the category of external funding for research. In order to be valued in a candidate’s dossier, the external funding must advance the goals of NSC, the college, and/or the University. Candidates will be asked to justify consideration of “for profit” research.

The ‘basic core’ outlines those accomplishments that must be demonstrated to achieve promotion to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure. The ‘expanded core’ describes those accomplishments that are highly desirable but are not necessary to achieve promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. It is expected that candidates for Associate Professor will focus primarily on outcomes on the ‘basic core.’ It is not
expected that a candidate for Associate Professor will have many of the specific indicators on the ‘expanded core.’ However, the ‘expanded core’ identifies sources that can be used for evidence of impact and quality of research and creative activity when used in conjunction with those on the ‘basic core’ list.

**Basic Core:**

It should be understood that the specific methods for documenting excellence in research or creative activity will differ due to nature of the processes and products of the research or creative activity.

1. Candidates must demonstrate excellence and rigor in teaching. Documentation must include student perceptions of instruction (SPI’s) that are consistent with the COS and NSC norms that are published each semester and distributed with the SPIs.

2. Candidates must supply evidence of student learning and success. Specific documentation of effective student mentoring is likely to include evidence such as chairing successfully defended theses, conference presentations and/or publications with students, mentoring students through independent studies, or placement of students in good jobs.

3. One to two high quality, double-blind, peer-reviewed (refereed) publications per year averaged across the entire evaluation period is the current expectation for faculty productivity. However, it must be stressed that the quality of the publications must be considered. Simply meeting the expectation for quantity of publications is not the sole determinant of the significance of a candidate’s research productivity. The establishment of a significant research program and commensurate contributions to the discipline’s body of knowledge as well as the quality of the publications and the publication outlets must also be considered. It is the responsibility of the candidate to provide evidence of the quality and the impact of the research in the field of Communication.

4. Quality of scholarly publications, including the reputation of the journals and other publication outlets, or quality of outlets for creative activities, is central to the evaluation process. Specific documentation about the quality of the publication outlets along with the impact factor of the journals must be provided to demonstrate the significance of the scholarly publication. When journal impact factors are unavailable, the acceptance rate or some other measure of the quality of the research should be provided, such as citations of the article or use of the research as a foundation for the research of others. Similar evidence that attests to the quality and impact of venues for creative activity should be reported.
5. The creative activity of candidates will be evaluated according to professional standards and the impact the candidate’s work makes on his or her area of specialization. (See 4 above)

6. Candidates must supply evidence that publications or creative activities were obtained fairly consistently throughout the years leading up to promotion (or that breaks in publications or creative activities are easily explained by the nature of the research or creative activity). The expectation is approximately 2 peer-reviewed publications each year.

7. Candidates must offer evidence to demonstrate that the candidate is the intellectual leader of a major part of the research or creative activity (e.g., order of authorship, coauthoring with graduate students, descriptions of contributions to co-authored or multi-authored publications or creative activities).

8. Candidates must document significant presentations at national or international scholarly conferences or venues of creative exhibition.

9. Candidates must document appropriate service to NSC, the University, the College of Sciences, one’s profession, state and/or community. This must include satisfactory performance of assigned service in NSC and should also include professional service to the academic discipline, such as reviewing for journals and/or conferences and/or service in academic organizations (e.g., AEJMC, NCA, ICA, BEA, AAA, etc.).

**Note:** The pursuit of external funding for research is consistent with the goals and values of NSC, the college, and the University. Though not a requirement within the ‘basic core,’ the pursuit of external funding is highly valued. If applicable, candidates should document their efforts in pursuing external funding for research or creative activities. Documentation could include the candidate’s written proposals for external funding targeted to specific agencies, written feedback on unsuccessful submitted proposals, etc.

**Promotion to Professor:**
Candidates seeking promotion to Professor must demonstrate they consistently meet all criteria for promotion and tenure to the rank of Associate Professor as described in the ‘basic core.’ In addition, candidates seeking promotion to the rank of Professor must demonstrate consistent and increasingly significant achievements as described in the ‘expanded core.’ There are no specific criteria for the number of items that must be met in the ‘expanded core’ in order to be promoted to Professor. There is no specific time period required for the establishment of a pattern of performance consistent with achievement of the rank of Professor. The hallmark suggesting readiness for the submission of a promotion file is a record of sustained excellence in teaching, research, and service and nationally (and preferably
internationally) recognized contributions to the field. The candidate must demonstrate through his/her pattern of research activity that national or national and international recognition has been achieved.

The establishment of a record of excellence in teaching, research and service is again documented and evaluated according to ‘basic core’ and ‘expanded core’ criteria presented in this document. The candidate should demonstrate substantial accomplishments in a majority of the ‘expanded core’. Additionally, promotion to the rank of Professor typically requires that the faculty member not only has demonstrated a sustained pattern of excellence across the primary teaching, research/creative activity and service areas, but that she/he has specifically demonstrated leadership both within the school and University community and has been recognized by professional peers as a nationally recognized contributor to one’s field. The candidate also should document efforts toward obtaining external funding (grants and contracts) from federal agencies, state agencies, and private foundations. This includes funding for both research and creative activity. Though success in obtaining external funding is not required for promotion to Professor, the procurement of external funding enhances the research or creative activity profile of the candidate.

**Expanded Core:**
It should be understood that the specific methods for documenting excellence in research and creative activity will differ due to nature of the processes and products of the research or creative activity.

1. Candidates should demonstrate success in obtaining external funding for research that is administered by an appropriate UCF administrative office, such as the Office of Research and Commercialization (ORC).

2. Candidates should document invited articles in prestigious journals and/or invitations to exhibit, present, write or direct a creative work at a national or international level. The prestige of a journal or creative outlet can be established by documenting its quality and impact on the discipline. Candidates also should explain and justify how the invitation is a sign of recognition of their program of research or past creative works.

3. Candidates should document authorship (including authoring by invitation) of a chapter in highly prestigious work such as a peer-reviewed handbook, annual review, etc. in the area of specialization, participating in important invitational or juried venues, successfully produced scripts, teleplays or screenplays at a national or international level. Candidates also should explain and justify how the invitation is a sign of recognition of their program of research or past creative works.

4. Candidates should demonstrate influence on the field. This includes influence on other researchers (excluding the candidates’ own graduate students or graduate students in the candidates’ program) and/or researchers basing their research on
the candidate’s work; (e.g., a theory or an original approach to research that the candidate developed) and/or others unaffiliated with the candidate basing their creative activity on the candidate’s work.

5. Candidates should demonstrate international and/or national visibility and the reputation of one’s work (invited addresses, joint grants, other universities using your work, etc.). This also includes demonstrating the national or international visibility of creative activities.

6. Being asked, because of one’s national or international reputation, to be a discussant on symposia at high-level national and international conferences or invitations to discuss creative works at high-level national and international exhibitions or conferences is highly valued in establishing the candidate’s reputation. The candidate should explain and justify how the invitation is a sign of recognition of their program of research or past creative works.

7. Candidates should demonstrate a sustained record of service to the academic community by serving as editor and/or on the editorial boards of significant nationally- or internationally-recognized and highly rated journals (i.e., those with a high impact factor) or review committees for creative work.

8. Candidates should document invited addresses at other universities and/or national and/or international meetings that stem from the candidate’s research profile.

9. Candidates should report membership on a panel of a significant granting agency, such as a private philanthropic organization, a non-governmental organization, a federal, a national, or an international panel.

10. Candidates should report international, national, or regional awards or recognition for research or creative activities. The significance of the award is determined by the importance of the awarding organization.

11. Candidates should document recognition and/or awards from significant professional organizations affiliated with candidate’s area of academic expertise or creativity activity.

12. Candidates should provide citation data or other data that provides evidence of the significance and quality of the published research. This may include information such as the number of citations and the number of citations compared to other scholars, comparative number of citations in major, prestigious publications covering a broad area such as handbooks, journal citations studies and high level scholarly books commissioned by national organizations. NSC acknowledges the limitations of citation data as the sole means of evaluating the significance of published research. Hence, candidates are advised to submit additional evidence that can explain and justify the significance of the research.
13. Candidates should demonstrate a sustained record of teaching effectiveness and rigor, including evidence of student learning and student success (e.g., chairing successfully defended theses/dissertations, conference presentations and/or publications with students, mentoring students through independent studies or other research, or placement of students in good jobs).

14. Candidates should demonstrate leadership in the curriculum development of their area and their school (e.g., developing courses to meet the needs of industry, developing service learning programs, creating online courses that can be taught by other teachers, etc.).

15. Candidates should document evidence of a sustained record of effective professional service on the national level and/or the international level.

In conclusion, the preceding sections of the SPT document describe the teaching, research/creative activity, and service profiles required for pursuing promotion and tenure to the rank of Associate Professor and for promotion to the rank of Professor. The descriptions of the ‘basic core’ and the ‘expanded core’ offer profiles that candidates should aspire to as they engage in activities and evaluate their progress. In addition, feedback from Cumulative Progress Evaluations (CPE’s) should help candidates to gauge their progress toward tenure and promotion.