

TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES: Criteria for Promotion to Full Professor

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This document provides both an overview of the criteria for earning promotion to the rank of full professor at George Mason University and detailed suggestions about the kind of materials and information that would provide clear and compelling evidence that the candidate has successfully met those criteria.

Overview of the Criteria for Earning Promotion to the Full Professor Rank

From the Mason *Faculty Handbook* (section 2.4):

Candidates for renewal, promotion and tenure will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching; research and scholarship, both theoretical and applied; and service... Although candidates are not expected to have equal levels of commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these areas, high competence is expected. Genuine excellence must be exhibited either in teaching or in research/scholarship. High competence must be exhibited in both areas. The primary consideration in the evaluation of the candidate's achievements will be the extent to which these continue to improve the academic quality of the University... Appointment without term should leave no doubt about the candidate's value to the University over an extended period.

Candidates seeking promotion to the rank of full professor must maintain high competence in teaching, research and scholarship, and service while also maintaining genuine excellence in teaching and/or research and scholarship. In addition, evidence of significant impact beyond the boundaries of the University must be much more substantial than in cases involving tenure or promotion to the rank of associate professor. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation in the primary field, based on consequential achievements in teaching, research and scholarship, or professional activities directly related to teaching and research and scholarship.

The *Faculty Handbook* makes it clear that the *sine qua non* of the Genuine Excellence concept is "impact beyond the boundaries of the University." In that spirit, full professors are expected to manifest either:

1. Substantially greater breadth with respect to Genuine Excellence than would be required for promotion to the associate rank (i.e., Genuine Excellence in at least 2 of the 3 areas of evaluation, with at least High Competence in the remaining area), *or*

2. Substantially greater depth with respect to Genuine Excellence than would be required for promotion to the associate rank (i.e., Genuine Excellence in research or teaching at a level that is far beyond the threshold required for this designation, with at least High Competence in the remaining areas).

Another way in which the criteria guiding tenure and promotion decisions must appropriately vary based on academic rank relates to the concept of *leadership*. This is a “meta-criterion” cutting across all three areas of faculty work that is particularly relevant to decisions regarding the appropriateness of promoting a faculty member (whether in a term or tenured position) from the associate rank to the full professor rank. For example, whereas promotion to the associate rank might focus on evidence regarding whether one is teaching courses well and having an impact on students, full professor evaluations might also be attuned to evidence that the faculty member is playing a leadership role in program development, in facilitating the program’s resource base and reputational strength, and in mentoring the next generation of faculty leaders. Similarly, whereas tenure-track faculty might earn promotion by publishing with increasing frequency in well-regarded venues, full professor candidates would be expected to have widely cited signature scholarly products and already established recognition for their research contributions that demonstrate their leadership role in the field.

Criteria for Achieving High Competence/Genuine Excellence in Teaching

All instructional faculty are expected to fulfill their contractual teaching load and to teach at a high level of effectiveness. Provided below are relevant sections of the *Faculty Handbook* as well as a document provided by the Office of the Provost. These are followed by information specific to achieving Genuine Excellence and High Competence in Teaching in CEHD, including possible artifacts for inclusion in a portfolio. For additional information and resources, please refer to the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning website (<http://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/>).

Faculty Handbook: 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

2.4.1 Teaching

Effective teaching is demonstrated by the clarity, appropriateness, and efficacy of course materials, methods and presentations, and by successful learning outcomes. Contributions to teaching include the development and implementation of new courses and programs; the development of instructional materials, including applications of new technologies; the training and supervision of teaching assistants; mentoring graduate students; clinical and field supervision of students; and student advising.

Faculty Handbook: 2.5 Procedures for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

2.5.1 Teaching

Local academic units regularly evaluate the teaching effectiveness of their faculty. In doing so, they are expected to incorporate data from both peers and students. Whatever additional methods may be used to gather information from students, the process should provide for their anonymous participation in course evaluations

and should allow for comparisons among faculty teaching similar courses. Peer evaluation is expected to include, at a minimum, data on the development and implementation of new courses and programs, the appropriateness of course materials currently used, the level and quality of student advising, and learning outcomes. Additional forms of peer evaluation are expected. These may include, but are not limited to, peer observation of classroom teaching, evaluations by mentors, assessments of teaching performance by colleagues, and teaching portfolios.

Recommended Criteria for Evaluating Genuine Excellence in Teaching

<https://provost.gmu.edu/administration/department-chairs/recruitment/evaluating-excellence-teaching>

1. **Outstanding classroom teaching and learning outcomes, as evidenced by the usual measures, including but not limited to student evaluations.** Other evidence of teaching effectiveness includes peer observations; letters of support from students, alumni, and colleagues (solicited and unsolicited); student comments based on the whole population, not selected samples; and/or student focus groups. Thoughtful reflection on teaching will be sought in the teaching statement.
2. **Effective teaching is demonstrated by the clarity, appropriateness, and efficacy of course materials, methods and presentations, and by successful learning outcomes.** Example syllabi, other course materials created by the candidate, and student work used with permission can be used as sources of evidence.
3. **When applicable, evidence of educational work with students outside the classroom.** For example, supervising undergraduate research, master's theses, and dissertations; advising and mentoring activities; and/or clinical and field supervision of students.
4. **Faculty leadership in promoting student learning and teaching excellence.** For example, developing successful and innovative curricula and programs; developing instructional materials; teaching-related training, supervising, and mentoring of other faculty and graduate students; developing teaching innovations (e.g., the use of technology); leading team-teaching initiatives; and/or building support for educational partnerships within and across institutions.
5. **Teaching excellence across a variety of classes, e.g., large and small, face-to-face and hybrid or online, undergraduate and graduate, while maintaining a consistent and appropriate teaching load.**
6. **Maintenance of at least highly competent research,** evidenced by the usual measures, including outside letters.
7. **Evidence of teaching and learning impact beyond the classroom.** This involves some combination of conference presentations, workshops, performances, or exhibitions; invitations to other places; texts or teaching materials, including electronic; or articles on teaching and/or learning outcomes (see also #3 above). External funding for curricular development, piloting teaching methods, or advising could serve in this category also.

“Note that building a case for Genuine Excellence in Teaching and steps toward appropriate evidence usually emerges over the career of the professor and is not a last minute event. Outside evaluative letters should be based on a holistic evaluation of all of the above criteria. Very occasionally, exceptions to these criteria can be made, based on truly unusual and evidenced classroom impact and impact on other faculty members on campus.”

Judgments of Genuine Excellence and High Competence in Teaching

Consistent with the documents provided above, teaching in CEHD is seen as multifaceted, to include teaching of classes and mentoring as well as participation or leadership in other teaching-related activities such as curriculum development, accreditation tasks, and scholarship related to teaching. In CEHD, a rating of “High Competence” is achieved by receiving average or above average student evaluations of teaching and positive peer evaluations; participating appropriately in curriculum development, assessment, and accreditation tasks; and showing evidence of versatility (in teaching assignments, mentoring and supervision, the use of innovative methods, and so forth). A rating of “Genuine Excellence” is achieved when accomplishments in the above areas are at a higher standard and provide evidence of impact beyond the classroom—specifically, course ratings must be superior, consistency and versatility must be greater, and there must be additional evidence of teaching excellence and impact. This could take a variety of forms, including increased mentoring and supervision activity, leadership in curriculum and program improvements/innovations, evidence of alumni success, scholarship of teaching, providing workshops on field of specialization to the community, presentations at national conferences related to teaching innovations, and so forth. The reflective statement from the faculty applicant should be consistent with theory and research on student learning and address how the faculty member has learned from student and colleague feedback.

Considerations for Achieving Genuine Excellence

There are several important considerations with respect to meeting the standard of *genuine excellence*.

1. One critical issue is the quality of the evidence provided to document claims of excellence. A single data point does not provide a convincing case. An example of how to provide a more compelling case would be to couple student evaluations with strong peer observation information or performance data to show that the students are meeting the course goals.
2. The focus should be on student outcomes, not just professor activities. Evidence should show, for example, how students expanded their disciplinary knowledge and/or skills, or became more willing to engage in difficult concepts, or learned new ways to approach questions. If teaching does not produce significant learning, it will not be considered excellent.
3. There also should be evidence of continued faculty learning and evolution. If there is attention to fostering learning, then teaching will necessarily evolve over time, because students themselves evolve over time. Also, genuinely excellent teachers actively seek to incorporate new knowledge and skills into their teaching.
4. Evidence for excellence in teaching ought to come from independent multiple sources which provide a pattern of data consistent with the concept of “genuine excellence” over time. Such evidence may reasonably accommodate periods of challenge and growth in the face of new and different teaching opportunities (i.e., variability in performance should be clearly linked to contextual influences).

Possible Artifacts for Inclusion

The following represent possible artifacts for inclusion in a portfolio of teaching accomplishments for CEHD faculty members:

Teaching of courses

- Teaching evaluations (numerical analysis per instructions)
- Peer observations
- Letters of support from students, alumni, and colleagues (solicited and unsolicited)
- Student comments (from teaching evaluations or another source) based on the whole population, not selected samples; and/or student focus groups
- Thoughtful reflection on teaching (will be sought in the teaching statement)
- Example syllabi, other course materials created by the candidate, and student work used with permission

Educational work with students outside the classroom (where applicable)

- Evidence of effective supervision of students conducting research
- Evidence of effective supervision of theses and/or dissertations as well as effective guidance provided as a member of PhD advising and dissertation committees
- Evidence of effective supervision of internships, independent studies, and field experiences (not already included in course evaluation data)
- Other effective advising and mentoring activities

Faculty leadership in promoting student learning and teaching excellence

- Examples of the development of new and successful and innovative curricula and programs, instructional materials, and/or teaching-related training programs
- Evidence of supervising and mentoring of other faculty and graduate students in relation to teaching; leading team-teaching initiatives; serving as a course leader for a program
- Revising/developing syllabi and course related materials and assessments for program improvement based on student achievement data and accreditation requirements
- Developing teaching innovations (e.g., the use of technology)
- Leading team-teaching initiatives; and/or building support for teaching-related partnerships within and across institutions

Evidence of teaching excellence across a variety of classes, e.g., large and small, face-to-face and hybrid or online, undergraduate and graduate, while maintaining a consistent and appropriate teaching load

Evidence of teaching and learning impact beyond the classroom

- conference presentations (related to teaching innovations or research on teaching)

- workshops, performances, or exhibitions
- invitations to teach at other places
- texts or teaching materials, including electronic
- articles on teaching and/or learning outcomes
- external funding for curricular development, piloting teaching methods, or advising

Aggregating Evidence to Form a Conclusion about High Competence/Genuine Excellence

Because the operational meaning of (i.e., evidence required to document) genuine excellence and high competence is dynamic and multifaceted, faculty and administrators should resist the temptation to try to quantify the teaching, research and scholarship, and service accomplishments, along with amplifying evidence related to leadership and multidisciplinary accomplishments, that equate to “genuine excellence” or “high competence” in artificially precise terms. Teaching excellence can be manifested in many different ways depending on the person, context, and discipline. Extraordinary accomplishments in research and scholarship can take many forms, both within and across disciplines and academic units. Exceptional service may similarly stand out on dimensions that are more qualitative than quantitative (e.g., breadth or magnitude of impact, timeliness or uniqueness of a particular contribution, reputational consequences for the individual and Mason). Perhaps most notably, there are many different types of leadership roles and venues that may support a full professor promotion evaluation. This *equifinality* principle (i.e., the same end state can be reached through many different means) is at the core of what it means to celebrate (rather than punish) diversity and innovation in faculty accomplishments.

Criteria for Achieving High Competence/Genuine Excellence in Research and Scholarship

Faculty who have research as part of their assigned role are expected to engage in consequential research and scholarship on a continuous basis. Faculty who only have teaching and service assignments are still expected to engage in “scholarship of teaching” activities as appropriate to their areas of expertise and specific teaching assignments.

Provided below are relevant sections of the Faculty Handbook (2011) as well as information specific to achieving Genuine Excellence and High Competence in Research and Scholarship in CEHD, including possible artifacts for inclusion in a portfolio.

Faculty Handbook: 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty 2.4.2 Research and Scholarship

Scholarly achievement is demonstrated by original publications and peer-reviewed contributions to the advancement of the discipline/field of study or the integration of the discipline with other fields; by original research, artistic work, software and media, exhibitions, and performance; and by the application of discipline- or field-based knowledge to the practice of a profession.

Judgments of Genuine Excellence and High Competence in Research and Scholarship

Evaluations of faculty accomplishments are based on holistic judgments made by integrating evidence related to quantity (productivity), quality (e.g., publication venues), impact, and developmental trajectory. High competence is awarded for good productivity and a trajectory demonstrating continuity and scholarly coherence and growth. In addition, genuine excellence requires “signature scholarly products” (i.e., things you are known for) that are of high quality and high impact, as demonstrated by favorable assessments by leaders in the field of study. For tenure-track faculty, genuine excellence is often associated with an accelerating trajectory of scholarly activity and accomplishments.

To earn a designation of high competence or genuine excellence, candidates must provide evidence of an established line of inquiry which demonstrates increasing breadth and depth over time. The accomplishments may be of a theoretical and/or applied nature, but they must be consequential and merit positive regard by experts in the field.

Criteria for genuine excellence include, but are not limited to:

- Sustained and demonstrated ability to provide leadership in the acquisition of extramural funding
- Conducting research and scholarship that has a demonstrated and substantive impact on the field as judged by experts in the field
- Recognized and replicated innovations in the conduct and delivery of research and scholarship
- Advancing the field through the development of new constructs and/or theoretical models
- Recognized expertise in the field of study among scholars, practitioners, and/or policy makers
- Participation in, and leadership of, multidisciplinary/transdisciplinary projects and initiatives

Considerations for Achieving Genuine Excellence

There are several important considerations with respect to meeting the standard of *genuine excellence*.

1. One important consideration is the quality of the evidence provided to document claims of genuine excellence. A single publication or grant, even if impressive as a stand-alone accomplishment, does not provide a convincing case. Coupling multiple publications of high impact with a pattern of strong external funding or high-visibility scholarly presentations can be convincing.
2. The evidence presented should represent accomplishments as part of an overall plan or trajectory within the individual’s research agenda (as explained, for example in the research and scholarship statement). For tenure-track faculty, these accomplishments should demonstrate substantial progress toward becoming a consistently productive scholar whose work is “making a difference” in terms of creating new knowledge and ideas and/or expertly addressing applied problems.
3. Another consideration is the type of venues in which publications appear and presentations are made. Research and scholarship addressed to national and international audiences will be regarded as more consequential than publications and presentations in regional and state-level venues. While collaboration is strongly valued, peer-reviewed articles in which one serves as the

lead or sole author provide a particularly convincing way to demonstrate leadership and impact. Invited presentations or publications based on public acknowledgment of professional expertise and leadership in the field of study can also provide evidence of excellence. Books, chapters, and monographs can also be used to demonstrate genuine excellence in the field of study; however, the context of these publications should be described in sufficient detail that reviewers can appropriately assess specific individual contributions as well as the quality of the publication itself. Quality might be indicated, for example, by favorable reviews, frequent citations, low acceptance rates, or adoption of a text or publication by other universities or schools/agencies.

4. Finally, external experts in the field of study will contribute to the review process for promotion and tenure. In planning, it is important to remember one's professional connection to leaders in the field (as this evolves personally). Through publications and presentations, through work in professional organizations, and through leadership in the field it is important to plan thoughtfully and strategically for professional growth from assistant professor, to associate professor, and ultimately to full professor.

If research and scholarship does not have a demonstrated significant impact it will not be deemed genuinely excellent.

Possible Artifacts for Inclusion

The following represent possible artifacts for inclusion in a portfolio of research and scholarship accomplishments for CEHD faculty members:

- Publishing in peer-reviewed journals recognized in the field or discipline
 - Sole author
 - Lead author
 - Collaborative
- Book/book chapters/edited book volumes that are invited based on expertise and/or peer reviews
- Publishing in non-traditional formats/venues (e.g., web-based documents, films, creative productions)
- How others have used the research and scholarship
- Ways in which professional efforts have influenced policy and programmatic decisions
- Discussion of research findings and recommendations in media (newspaper, magazine, radio, television)
- Election to prestigious national organizations that recognize excellence in a discipline
- Research awards and honors granted by professional societies, government agencies, and industry
- External research funding from sources outside the university that are peer-reviewed (state, national, or international)
 - Funding for grants and contracts clearly linked to the field of study
 - The candidate's specific role in writing the proposal for funding
 - The candidate's role, activities, and accomplishments with the activities

- Documentation of products and noteworthy accomplishments emanating from the funding
- Patents, inventions, and other such developments of a significant nature for the field or discipline
- Development of creative resources (e.g., computer-based modules, curricula, products)
- Preparation of technology-grounded or technology-infused research strategies
- Publication of scholarly research-based monographs
- Publication in peer-reviewed proceedings—international or national
- Peer-reviewed presentations in recognized conferences for the field or discipline
- Innovations in delivery of research and scholarship, building constructs and new theoretical models
 - Ways in which the research and scholarship are presented, including use of standard and cutting edge technology
- Media attention to research and scholarship
- Citations in recognized databases
- Appointments to state, national, international commissions and/or study groups
- Invitations to present at conferences (e.g., keynote presentations based on recognized expertise)

Aggregating Evidence to Form a Conclusion about High Competence/Genuine Excellence

Because the operational meaning of (i.e., evidence required to document) genuine excellence and high competence is dynamic and multifaceted, faculty and administrators should resist the temptation to try to quantify the teaching, research and scholarship, and service accomplishments, along with amplifying evidence related to leadership and multidisciplinary accomplishments, that equate to “genuine excellence” or “high competence” in artificially precise terms. Teaching excellence can be manifested in many different ways depending on the person, context, and discipline. Extraordinary accomplishments in research and scholarship can take many forms, both within and across disciplines and academic units. Exceptional service may similarly stand out on dimensions that are more qualitative than quantitative (e.g., breadth or magnitude of impact, timeliness or uniqueness of a particular contribution, reputational consequences for the individual and Mason). Perhaps most notably, there are many different types of leadership roles and venues that may support a full professor promotion evaluation. This *equifinality* principle (i.e., the same end state can be reached through many different means) is at the core of what it means to celebrate (rather than punish) diversity and innovation in faculty accomplishments.

Criteria for Achieving High Competence/Genuine Excellence in Service

The assigned part of a faculty job typically labeled “Service” can be separated into three distinct components: (1) *required* university service (called “citizenship” within the CEHD context); (2) university service that goes beyond minimum job requirements; and (3) professional service (which typically occurs outside the boundaries of the university).

Faculty Handbook: 2.4.3 University and Professional Service

Annual evaluations and decisions on reappointment, promotion and tenure will be influenced by the extent of the candidate's service to the University. All full-time faculty are expected to participate as part of their professional responsibilities in governance and operational activities outside the classroom. Required university service includes, but is not limited to, such activity as attendance at faculty meetings and participation in faculty personnel matters and curriculum development. University service beyond that which is required of all faculty members will be given positive weight in personnel decisions. Each local academic unit will make known in a timely manner its requirements concerning the minimum acceptable level of university service and its policies concerning positive weight to be given for intramural service in excess of that minimum requirement.

Professional service is demonstrated by contributions to recognized societies and associations that promote research and scholarship and by consultancies and cooperative projects that make the faculty member's discipline of field-based knowledge and skills available to individuals, groups or agencies outside the University. Local academic units will develop and disseminate in a timely manner (i) specific discipline- or field-based expectations regarding the types of professional service that will be considered appropriate as evidence in annual evaluations and for reappointment, promotion and tenure cases; and (ii) the criteria to be used in assessing the quality of this service.

Judgments Regarding Required University Service (Citizenship)

Required Service in CEHD is defined as **Citizenship** and encompasses the following expectations:

- (1) regular attendance at appropriate program, division, and college-wide meetings;
- (2) appropriate participation in course and curriculum development;
- (3) appropriate participation in accreditation and program review functions;
- (4) appropriate participation in student advisement;
- (5) appropriate participation in program recruitment and admissions processes;
- (6) essential work with adjunct faculty (e.g., course lead); and
- (7) other program duties as assigned by program coordinators, division directors, or college administrators.

All CEHD faculty must meet minimum citizenship requirements. When minimum citizenship requirements are not met, no service points will be awarded in the annual evaluation process, resulting in an unsatisfactory evaluation in service *and* in the faculty member's overall evaluation. Faculty with unsatisfactory evaluations are not eligible for salary increases or for contract renewals. Tenured faculty with consecutive or multiple unsatisfactory evaluations are subject to post-tenure review, which can lead to a variety of sanctions, including dismissal.

Service expectations will vary based on rank and tenure status.

Judgments Regarding University Service Beyond Minimum Requirements

In CEHD service includes significant contributions beyond required citizenship responsibilities and includes, for example, contributions such as:

At the CEHD (college/school/division/program) level:

Leadership in program curriculum development; leadership in accreditation and program review; leadership in academic advising and student services; coordination of clinical or field-based aspects of a program; leadership in professional development activities (e.g., related to teaching, research, technology, etc.); service as division director, academic program coordinator, or professor-in-charge of a specific subunit; chair/member of a college or school governance committee; chair/member of a search committee, first-tier promotion/tenure review committee, or other ad hoc committee; leadership of efforts to enhance college resources through gifts, external grants and contracts, and revenue activities; active participation in marketing, alumni relations, and school partnership activities.

At the university level:

Member/chair of governance committees (e.g., Faculty Senate), search committees or other university-level committees; task force assignments and other special assignments from central administration (e.g., HSRB); participation in university accreditation-related activities; participation in cross-unit collaborative activities and partnerships.

Judgments Regarding Professional Service

In CEHD professional service includes significant contributions to the faculty member's profession beyond the boundaries of George Mason University, and includes, for example, contributions such as:

Reviewing for professional conferences, journals and publications; serving as a member/leader in professional organizations; serving on state, national, and international committees or advisory boards; sharing expertise (e.g., through presentations) with local and regional audiences; serving as editor or assistant editor of a journal or edited volume; serving as session chair or discussant at professional meetings; advising/supporting educational organizations using professional experience and expertise.

Please note that community service unrelated to one's profession or position at George Mason University should not be included as part of a professional service portfolio. It is incumbent upon the faculty to make the case for seemingly unrelated items.

Aggregating Evidence to Form a Conclusion about High Competence/Genuine Excellence

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(e.g., breadth or magnitude of impact, timeliness or uniqueness of a particular contribution, reputational consequences for the individual and Mason). Perhaps most notably, there are many different types of leadership roles and venues that may support a full professor promotion evaluation. This *equifinality* principle (i.e., the same end state can be reached through many different means) is at the core of what it means to celebrate (rather than punish) diversity and innovation in faculty accomplishments.