

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 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, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty 2.4.2 Research and Scholarship

Scholarly achievement is demonstrated by original contributions to the advancement of the discipline/field of study, or to the integration of the discipline with other fields, or 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, is insufficient. 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 a coherent plan/trajectory within the individual's research agenda (as explained in the research and scholarship narrative). 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 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). 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.