General Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

Department of English
University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center

General Considerations Regarding Promotion and Tenure

The objective of tenure and promotion in the Department of English at UCDHSC is to develop an outstanding faculty with a demonstrated commitment to academic excellence in research, teaching, and service and in administration when determined by the candidate’s contract. The criteria outlined below are intended to elaborate upon the general criteria found in the University Systems Administrative Policy Statement # 1022, “Standard, Processes and Procedures for Comprehensive Review, Tenure and Promotion” (https://www.cu.edu/policies/aps/academic/1022.pdf) and the procedures outlined in the Denver Campus’ online publication, Strategies for Success http://www.ucdenver.edu/faculty_staff/faculty/faculty-affairs/reports/Documents/Final%20SfS%20print2.pdf. The English Department’s criteria for tenure and promotion are intended to be clear, consistent, and equitable. Each faculty member’s contract determines the evaluative percentage in each of the categories to be considered for tenure and promotion. Although candidates in the Clinical Teaching Track position are ineligible for Tenure, the process for promotion that guides tenure-track faculty pertains to the promotion of candidates in the Clinical Teaching Track category.

The English department acknowledges and rewards teaching, research/creative work, and service in its role and mission as part of an urban research university. Faculty members are active contributors to research and/or creative work in their particular sub-disciplines and specialties within English Studies. Their scholarship and/or creative work serves the public and informs undergraduate and graduate inquiry inside and outside the classroom. Thus, in addition to conducting scholarly and creative work, the candidate who merits promotion and tenure should demonstrate commitment to teaching relevant to the needs of the Denver Campus’ diverse student body and should contribute to ensuring student success.

While affirming the central role of quality scholarship to the mission of a public urban university, the criteria explained below also recognize the integral relation among the categories and their combined importance to a vibrant departmental, campus, and university community. A successful department depends on the accessibility, accountability, and responsibility of its faculty. The English Department appreciates and encourages citizenship—the willingness to assume responsibility for the whole—and believes that successful faculty members are citizens in a variety of environments.
The same general criteria described below shall apply generally to both tenure and promotion. However, tenure decisions shall also take into account the likelihood of professional success. A tenure review committee, comprised of resident tenured faculty within the Department of English, and occasionally including faculty from other departments as required, will review all cases for tenure and promotion. Tenure-track faculty will participate in the committee’s deliberations in accordance with Regental Policy. The Department of English will adhere strictly to a policy of non-discrimination towards all faculty in tenure and promotion decisions. The department will not discriminate based upon race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status.

Departmental Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

Research and Creative Work

Evidence: Publications in media of quality are expected as evidence of scholarly work for all of the various sub-disciplines represented in the Department of English (Literary Studies, Creative Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, Linguistics, and Film Studies). These media may vary significantly—in terms of professional reputation, percentage of acceptance, and visibility—from journal to journal, press to press, conference to conference. It is the responsibility of candidates to make the case for the quality of the outlets in which they publish, taking into account rates of acceptance and distribution, and it is the responsibility of their review committees and the department to verify that quality. Journals and presses are ranked by tier and are in general expected to be peer-reviewed, while conferences are ranked international, national, regional, and local. Some examples of journals ranked by tier are as follows; this list is suggestive rather than inclusive and will inevitably change as the status of some journals shifts:


Third Tier, Regional, and Local: RMMLA and other regional publications, Victorian Newsletter and other newsletters, Dry Creek Review and similar journals of limited circulation.
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**Quality and Quantity:** The Department of English evaluates both the cumulative quality and the quantity of research and creative publications. While reasonable factors may explain the ebb and flow of productivity, and quality remains more important than quantity, we are aware of the importance of generating scholarship in a timely fashion. External reviewers will be asked to measure both the quality and the quantity of research and creative work in relation to that of scholars at similar institutions and at similar stages of their careers.

Whereas a book of creative work placed with a reputable publisher or a peer-reviewed scholarly book placed with a top-tier publisher constitutes **excellence** in research and/or creative activities, the department maintains flexibility in evaluating a candidate’s record. The fluctuating publishing market compels the department to outline alternate criteria as recommended by the Modern Language Association (see Greenblatt's recommendations, 2001; report on tenure and executive summary, 12/7/2006: http://www.mla.org). To meet the standard of excellence, we expect that a candidate’s cumulative record approach an average yearly level of productivity commensurate with one of the following models. These criteria assume work placed in upper-tier venues and page lengths in manuscript pages:

- a 20 to 30-page article or book chapter and a 10 to 12-page conference paper
- 1 story or creative non-fiction essay (approx 15 mss pages) in a top tier venue and 1 significant reading/presentation OR 1-2 stories (approx 30 mss pages) in 2nd tier venues and 1 significant reading/presentation OR 1 story in a 2nd tier venue and two readings/presentations; 4-5 poems/ flash fiction pieces or 5-10 pp in top tier journals or 8-10 poems/ flash fiction in 2nd tier or 4-5 pages or 5-10 in 2nd tier + 2 readings (less than 2.5 acceptance rate is considered a top tier journal in Creative publications)

**N.B. Other combinations are acceptable** and might also include grants, textbooks, book reviews, abstracts, short stories, and plays, depending on the specific professional goals of the candidate. In short, the measurement is by design a flexible one. The value of research production should be determined on the basis of its impact on a field of study and on its potential to advance the goals of the University of Colorado Denver.

To meet the standard of **meritorious**, a candidate’s overall record should meet an average yearly level of productivity that is quantitatively at least half that for excellence. This expectation also assumes work placed in upper-tier venues. A record that falls below this level will not be considered meritorious, except in cases where the candidate’s record both demonstrates truly extraordinary quality, as attested to by external reviewers, and promises strong, sustained future productivity.

Demonstrated professional distinction is recognized as one of the considerations for promotion and tenure in the Department of English, which scrutinizes candidates’ records for evidence of achievement, leadership, citizenship, and the development of new ideas. Collaboration in the broadest sense—with colleagues here and at other institutions and with professional and community groups and organizations—is a mark of citizenship. In the case of co-authorship or collaboration on specific scholarly projects, evaluations of such work should carefully weigh the
degree of the candidate’s contribution. A record not meeting the standards outlined above is not considered meritorious.

**Teaching**

**Scope of Duties:** Teaching embraces both classroom instruction and a variety of faculty-student interactions, including but not limited to independent studies, internships, thesis and project advising, general academic advising, and course and program development. Excellent teachers are well aware of the variety of teaching duties and, however proficient they may be in any one area, seek to maximize their effectiveness across the board. The English Department also believes that excellent teachers—in addition to having an extensive knowledge of their subject and field—have an ongoing concern that students enjoy an optimum teaching experience. As a result, the department values courtesy, clarity, responsibility, fairness, and professionalism as well as knowledge of the material.

**Evidence:** The Department of English considers the following evidence when evaluating a candidate’s teaching record in compliance with the APS on “Multiple Means of Teaching Evaluation”:

1) pedagogy as represented in syllabi, exams, teaching materials, innovative exercises, etc.
2) student evaluations (both departmental narrative evaluations and University FCQs)
3) class observation
4) contributions to an expanded curriculum (i.e., course and program development)
5) variety of courses taught
6) variety of course levels taught (i.e., 1000, 2000, 3000, etc.)
7) number of students taught
8) flexibility in accommodating the department’s teaching schedule and needs
9) participation in cooperative education, special examination committees, and thesis and project direction
10) participation in teaching workshops and colloquia
11) opinions of graduating seniors expressed in exit interviews
12) availability to students (days on campus, number of office hours, etc.);
13) academic advising

**Quality:**

The English Department requires that all tenured, tenure-track and clinical track faculty maintain an ongoing awareness of developments in their fields. Excellent teachers refresh their teaching by incorporating the latest advances in their fields of study and materials from current scholarship. Excellent teachers also refresh their teaching by experimenting with and being aware of innovative pedagogies. The department values teachers who explore how different methods and technologies may improve the experience of their students. Teachers who have experimented with online education provide one example of such innovation. Teachers who have made use of active learning techniques may provide another. Excellent teachers also make class objectives and deadlines clear; they set high standards for performance and hold students to
those standards; they provide high quality feedback about students’ work; and they are available to address the work presented and/or problems that arise from its presentation. In all interactions with students, excellent teachers are courteous, open-minded, and professional.

The English Department awards the designation of **excellence** to teachers who excel at most if not all of the teaching duties outlined above. The department recognizes as well, however, that occasionally individual faculty may find their teaching duties restricted by the department’s own needs in certain areas. In those cases, candidates should not be penalized for teaching in those required areas. The department considers FCQ data carefully but does not base its evaluation of the teaching record exclusively—even primarily—upon the FCQs. Although student satisfaction is extremely important to the department, the candidate’s teaching record is broadly conceived but no less carefully considered. The department believes that excellent teachers consider themselves as citizens in a teaching community that extends well beyond the walls of the classroom.

The designation of **meritorious** is awarded to teachers whose record indicates quality in many of the categories above but falls below excellence either in quality or quantity of activities. A record that falls below these standards is not considered meritorious.

**Service**

**Scope:** Service is an important but often undervalued part of the faculty workload. The English Department considers service at the five, traditional levels: 1) departmental; 2) college; 3) university (i.e., campus); 4) system; 5) profession; and 6) community. Although tradition has it that responsibility and required knowledge increase as one moves out from the department, the English Department recognizes that excellence in service is attainable at the departmental level and that junior faculty should be extremely wary of overextending their service duties.

**Evidence:** Reappointment committees will consider the following as evidence of service accomplishments:

1) number of committees served  
2) level of the committees  
3) workload of the committees  
4) degree of participation of the candidate  
5) flexibility and willingness of the candidate  
6) effectiveness of the candidate  
7) number of students advised  
8) professional duties (reviewing essays, organizing conferences, editorial boards, etc.)  
9) community service

**Quality:** The English Department insists that all faculty members participate in the routine activities of the department (faculty meetings, yearly retreats, salary increment, program development, hiring, reappointment, etc.). For these activities, attendance is mandatory, participation is expected, and leadership is appreciated. **Meritorious** service may be earned by active membership on two or three departmental committees. **Excellence** in service is usually
reserved for those candidates who provide valuable leadership to the department and may represent the department on college and university committees. Examples include chairing an important committee, serving as the ongoing spokesperson for a departmental interest group (e.g., film or creative writing), or volunteering expertise for other kinds of departmental initiatives (web page design, visiting speakers, computer classrooms, etc.).

The English Department recognizes how difficult it is to build a community on a commuter campus and deeply appreciates efforts by its faculty to serve student and faculty needs and to involve the Denver community. The department values professional service because it promotes the department’s profile but not in exclusion of departmental service. Service that excludes participation in the department and in the profession falls below meritorious.

Tenure and Promotion Procedures

Clinical Teaching Track: Candidates in the Clinical Teaching Track must undergo review every three years. Reappointment to and promotion in the position depends on meeting the same standards as Tenure-Track and Tenured faculty, but the evaluation is based on the percentages of the contract and on the criteria set out in the English department “Criteria for the Clinical Teaching Track.” Whether for reappointment or promotion, the candidate compiles a dossier similar to that prepared for Comprehensive Review. External letters are required for promotion to the ranks of Assistant and Associate Professor CTT (3 letters with 1 external to the department) and for the rank of Professor (5 letters with 2 external to the department). No letters are required for reappointment. The Chairs of the Standing Committees within the English department, which constitutes the Executive Committee, evaluate the dossier. Its recommendations are presented to the voting faculty in accordance with eligible rank and with the requirements of a voting quorum. After departmental review, the dossier passes to college review.

Tenure Track: Comprehensive Review: Candidates for tenure must undergo a comprehensive review prior to review for tenure. Just as that for tenure, comprehensive review involves a detailed departmental examination of a candidate’s research, teaching, service, and administrative record if applicable. Comprehensive review also requires that a candidate’s research record be evaluated by outside evaluators and that the candidate’s dossier pass through six tiers of approval: 1) departmental; 2) Dean’s Advisory Committee; 3) Dean; 4) VCAC; 5) Provost; and, 6) Chancellor.

Recommendation for Reappointment based upon a positive Comprehensive Review: Reappointment subsequent to comprehensive review is based on evidence of progress toward a viable research program that is expected to have an impact on the candidate’s area of scholarship. Evidence for this progress will be based on refereed/reviewed publications, including publications in progress. Special consideration will be given to indicators of progress and of future success: publications in press or under review, grant proposals submitted and/or funded, and evidence of an active and/or ongoing research agenda. The candidate must also demonstrate effective teaching skills and show promise of continuing and/or developing a meritorious-to-excellent teaching record. The candidates who are also administrators will be evaluated on the effectiveness of their contributions to their respective programs. The candidate should show promise of continuing and/or developing a meritorious-to-excellent administrative
record. Although service will be given less emphasis than research/creative work and teaching, candidates should have made positive contributions to the academic community that amount to a meritorious record.

Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor: Tenure and promotion are based upon 1) demonstrated meritorious performance in teaching, research/creative work, and service; and 2) demonstrated excellence in either teaching or research/creative work. Scholarly research/creative achievements should be substantiated by refereed publications or substantiated by a notable outlet for creative work. Both external reviewers and tenured members of the department will evaluate the quality and quantity of the scholarship/creative work. A teaching dossier that includes the types of evidence cited above substantiates the award of either meritorious or excellence in teaching. Administrative records require similar documentation coordinated with the evidence cited above and as appropriate to the respective programs. The service record should be similarly documented. Details of dossier construction are to be found in Strategies for Success.

Post-Tenure Review: The criteria for post-tenure review are based upon the continuation of scholarly and professional achievement in research/creative work, teaching and service and administration, if applicable. The successful candidate maintains the quality of professional endeavors and presents the types of evidence listed above under the appropriate category. Assessment occurs every five years, and it is based on work done since the previous review. The online APS on Post-tenure review outlines the causes and procedures for a ‘triggered’ review should the post-tenure review be unsuccessful. The English department by-laws describe the process for post-tenure review.

Promotion to Full Professor: The criteria for promotion to the rank of Full Professor are based on an overall record of excellence. Successful candidates will demonstrate outstanding contributions to both research/creative work and teaching, and will have made significant contributions to department, college, and university governance and goals since receiving tenure and promotion to associate professor. Six external letters are required for the dossier.