

Department of Philosophy and Religion
Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion
Last Updated September 2016

American University and the Department of Philosophy and Religion require innovative and careful scholarship, effective teaching, and significant service to the Department and University from faculty members seeking to qualify for reappointment, promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, and promotion to Professor. The Department follows the general standards, timetable, and procedures for reappointments, promotion, and tenure laid down in the *American University Faculty Manual* and supplemented by instructions from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Dean of Faculty, and the Committee on Faculty Actions. The present document seeks to make these criteria more useful for faculty members in Philosophy and Religion applying for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure, as well as for the Department's Rank and Tenure Committee (RTC) and Chair in maintaining the Department's high standards for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure.

Scholarship

The American Philosophical Association's *Statement on Research* explains that "[r]esearch in philosophy . . . often takes the form of efforts to refine analyses, develop and advance or criticize interpretations, explore alternative perspectives and new ways of thinking, suggest and apply modified or novel modes of assessment, and, in general[,] to promote new understanding." Research may be "conceptual and methodological critique, involving the scrutiny of the basic concepts and methodologies of other disciplines, scientific as well as humanistic. Other cases involve interpretive and evaluative inquiry contributing to the enhancement of our comprehension of ourselves and our world. All of these forms of endeavor contribute significantly to the philosophical and academic enterprise."

The American Academy of Religion's *Statement on Responsible Research Practices* describes how scholars of religion "engage in diverse research practices, including but not limited to: interpreting and translating texts; excavating archaeological sites; exploring archival sources; constructing historical narratives; generating theoretical frameworks; producing philosophical, theological, and ethical reflections; gathering statistical data; utilizing new media; doing participant observation; and conducting in-depth interviews."

The Department of Philosophy and Religion regards evidence of innovative scholarship that advances the boundaries of knowledge in one's discipline normally to consist of published books, articles, chapters, reviews, and papers and lectures for scholarly organizations. For reappointment, candidates must demonstrate progress toward meeting the standards for tenure and promotion as outlined in the following sections. They may submit for consideration books, journal articles, book chapters, and drafts of work in progress.

To be recommended for tenure and promotion, candidates must demonstrate that prior to their appointment at the University (as applicable) and especially while at the University they have made significant scholarly accomplishments in one or more fields and show promise of greater future impact. High-quality intellectual production is a fundamental criterion for tenure

and promotion. Publications and other work will be read closely and carefully evaluated. A significant proportion of each candidate's scholarly publications should be in the form of refereed articles and books.

Within philosophy and religious studies, the usual format of innovative scholarship is the book. The norm in the Department, before tenure is recommended, is publication of a high-quality, refereed book (usually a monograph) with a well-respected publisher, typically a university press, that submits book manuscripts to blind outside review. Also crucial are articles in refereed scholarly journals and edited volumes. Solicited book chapters and journal articles, review essays, edited and co-authored publications, and presented papers and invited lectures are important contributions to the profession as well, as are translations and critical editions. Indeed, some subfields in philosophy and religious studies view translations as scholarship. Candidates submitting co-authored works for consideration should clarify their roles in these projects by using the categories present in the Faculty Activity Reporting System to detail the extents of their contributions. Works in any category will be considered as published if editors have accepted them in final form, with letters from the editors indicating as much.

The American Philosophical Association's *Statement on Research* specifies, "The American Philosophical Association does not rank philosophical journals nor does it sponsor or endorse any rankings of philosophical journals that are compiled by others." While this policy is sound for many reasons, it requires that candidates for tenure and promotion thoroughly explain their publication venues' standing and impact. As citation indexes are rarely used in any fields of philosophy and religious studies, qualitative measures may be employed to convey the significance of scholarly work, such as the selectivity of journals, peer-review reports, published reviews, invitations to present work at conferences and academic institutions, and the assessments of colleagues in the field, both those in the Department and those from whom outside evaluations are solicited.

Outside fellowships and grants are not plentiful in philosophy and religious studies, but winning such an award generally speaks to the significance of a scholar's work in the humanities. Because fellowships and grants in philosophy and religious studies are few, such awards are not required for tenure or promotion, but candidates for tenure are normally expected to have applied for at least one external fellowship or grant.

Finally, to be recommended for tenure and promotion, a candidate should provide evidence of an ongoing research agenda beyond the work completed by the time of tenure review. This agenda could include conference papers presented, lectures invited, article manuscripts drafted, grant applications, and/or a compelling description of the next book-length research project.

To be promoted to the rank of Professor, candidates must demonstrate substantial post-tenure records of excellence in scholarship and be nationally or internationally respected in their fields. Each candidate for promotion to Professor will normally be expected to have published a book (usually a monograph) beyond the book written for tenure. The book written for promotion to Professor should be complemented by additional evidence of continued scholarly productivity, such as an edited book, a scholarly edition, articles, and chapters in edited volumes. Especially for candidates for promotion to Professor, invited presentations, articles, and chapters often carry as

much weight as or more weight than uninvited versions of the same, since the invitations represent the recognition of the significance and influence of the scholarship of the invitees. Moreover, candidates advancing to the rank of Professor generally will have played significant roles in shaping their fields, in addition to having made considerable scholarly contributions to their subfields. Candidates should provide evidence of being recognized leaders in their fields, as supported by awards, invited lectures, editorships of volumes, collaborations with other scholars, and/or engagements with other institutions or organizations.

Normally, two of the six external letters are from scholars who are not in the candidate's primary subfield. External reviewers are selected by the Chair, in light of relevant information offered by each candidate for action. Because the Department values the analyses of external reviewers, their letters are assured confidentiality so as to encourage prospective reviewers to accept the Chair's invitations to evaluate the Department's candidates.

Teaching Effectiveness

The result of all effective teaching is that students learn, that they achieve competence in the content of the material covered, and that they improve their critical faculties not only for further study of philosophy or religion but also for work in other areas.

All professors should be effective in lower- and upper-level courses and should be sufficiently perceptive, flexible, and knowledgeable to educate a range of students—from beginning undergraduates to advanced graduate students. The level of engagement that takes place in the classroom should be high. All professors should have a thorough, up-to-date mastery of a subfield or subfields in philosophy or religious studies, and should be able and willing to teach a variety of courses within their ranges of competence. All professors should endeavor to provide substantial written comments on students' work; should criticize constructively rather than simply express satisfaction or dissatisfaction; and should provide timely, fair, and objective assessments of student performance.

Evidence of good teaching can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. Standardized student evaluations of teaching can be useful indicators. If evaluations indicate widespread dissatisfaction with a course and with its instructor, there is likely to be a serious teaching problem. However, no instructor is likely to be able to satisfy all students, and the instructor with the highest teaching evaluations may not be the best teacher. The Department values intellectually rigorous courses even if they do not achieve popularity as measured by student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Other sources of evidence of an instructor's teaching effectiveness include students' narrative comments on teaching evaluations and colleagues' classroom visits. Course syllabi, readings on Blackboard, assignments, and instruments of evaluation can serve as further evidence of a candidate's well-organized, rigorous, and professional approach to teaching.

For promotion to Professor, candidates should have developed one or more new courses since tenure. They must provide evidence of continued or greater effectiveness in the form of attending workshops or conferences, publishing articles about pedagogy, or otherwise working to improve teaching skills.

Service

Faculty involvement in Department and University service is essential, and the RTC and Chair will evaluate faculty service in reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions. While too much time devoted to service by tenure-track faculty may hamper their completion of scholarly projects or development of courses, so too will too little service (particularly in the Department) constitute a deficiency.

The Department expects its members to participate and share in its activities, including meetings and committee and other administrative tasks, in a constructive, effective, and responsible manner. In addition, the Department expects each candidate for action to demonstrate good academic citizenship, which includes such things as being in one's office during one's posted office hours, submitting accurate reports on one's scholarship and other matters related to personnel decisions, and making sure that one's classes are covered in the event of being unable to cover them oneself. The Department values committee and organizational work in professional or scholarly associations and in the editing of scholarly journals. Members of the Department are encouraged to participate in such activities.

For promotion to Professor, candidates are expected to have increased their levels of responsibility and leadership in the Department and to have participated in wider ranges of service activities at the College and University levels. Customarily, candidates must have served the Department as Chair, RTC Chair, and/or Advisor (Undergraduate; Graduate; Ethics, Peace, and Global Affairs; Philosophy Honor Society; or Philosophy Club). Moreover, they must present strong records of having mentored junior faculty.