

# **Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion**

## **Department of Mechanical Engineering University of South Florida**

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### **Preamble**

The Tenure and Promotion Committees of the Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME) at the University of South Florida (USF) follow the USF tenure and promotion guidelines and policies when evaluating faculty tenure and/or promotion cases (see <https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty/tenure-promotion.aspx>). The following information is intended to help guide faculty in the department regarding the factors that are taken into consideration when evaluating a candidate for tenure and/or promotion. Candidates for tenure and/or promotion within the faculty of the department are also encouraged to seek out mentors both inside and outside the ME Department and to discuss their progress towards tenure and/or promotion with the ME Department Chair.

This document shall not be construed in any manner so as to conflict with the Laws of the State of Florida, the policies of the State University System Board of Governors, the rules, regulations, and policies of the University of South Florida, the regulations and policies of the University of South Florida College of Engineering, or the UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The Department of Mechanical Engineering is not currently a multi-campus unit. If future faculty are hired by the Department at branch campuses, we will modify our Tenure and Promotion procedures and documents, including those in these departmental governance documents, to ensure that those faculty are included in matters of Tenure and Promotion and to ensure they have a voice in promotion issues.

We recognize the principles of equity of assignment, resources, and opportunities of faculty across a multi-campus university.

### **Introduction**

The Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of South Florida is a research-intensive, nationally-ranked department. We are judged as a department by our peers and other stakeholders based upon many factors, but two particularly important factors are: (1) the research productivity of the department and its faculty, and (2) the quality of the preparation of our graduates at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is the responsibility of each faculty member to contribute towards the productivity, national and international reputation and visibility, and ranking of the department. Granting of tenure within the department is a privilege that carries with it enormous responsibility within the department, including the continued maintenance of the highest academic standards, continued and increasing levels of scholarly productivity, sustained teaching excellence, and ongoing substantive service to the department, college, university, community, and profession. Likewise, granting of promotion in academic rank to a faculty member is a privilege that recognizes an individual faculty member's continued growth in their academic career and the achievement of increasing levels of accomplishment in research, teaching, and service activities. The following broad guidelines reflect the expected performance requirements for faculty seeking promotion and/or tenure within the department.

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### 1. General Criteria and Procedures

- 1.1. The procedures for the appointment of the Tenure and/or Promotion Committees within the ME department and the rules on voting on tenure and promotion cases are specified in the ME Faculty Governance Document.
- 1.2. Evaluation criteria regarding tenure and/or promotion are based upon USF guidelines. Candidates should also familiarize themselves with the University Tenure and Promotion Guidelines, the College of Engineering Tenure and Promotion Procedures, and the relevant sections of the faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement. The guidelines in this document are in addition to those specified in the university guidelines.
- 1.3. Tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty members submit annual reports each year and are given annual evaluations based on their performance with regard to research, teaching, and service. During tenure and/or promotion deliberations, the Department Chair and the relevant tenure and/or promotion committees will carefully consider these annual evaluations, but they are not bound by them since a holistic evaluation of each candidate for tenure and promotion will be conducted.
- 1.4. In accordance with university and college requirements, candidates for tenure and/or promotion are expected to demonstrate excellence in research, excellence in teaching, and substantive service. It is recognized that due to the diverse research, teaching, and service contributions of faculty, the specific criteria for evaluation of a particular faculty member could vary, and each case must be assessed individually. It is the candidate’s responsibility to provide convincing evidence of quality in each portion of the tenure and/or promotion portfolio.
- 1.5. The College of Engineering has a probationary period of 6 years for tenure. Tenure-track faculty members are eligible to apply for tenure at the end of their fifth year. The process begins with the selection of external reviewers towards the end of the spring semester of the candidate’s fifth year of service. Earlier eligibility may be considered for exceptional candidates or prior service. Exceptions to the tenure clock may be considered under extenuating circumstances approved by the university in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

- 1.6.** An extensive mid-tenure review will be conducted, typically during the third tenure-earning year, for tenure-track faculty. The mid-tenure review is similar to tenure review except that external letters are not utilized. For individuals credited with tenure-earning service at the time of initial appointment, the review will be conducted at the approximate mid-point of the probationary period. The mid-tenure review will be conducted by the department's Faculty Evaluation Committee, the Department Chair, the College Faculty Governance Committee, and the College Dean.

All mid-tenure reviews shall address the candidate's performance in the areas of research, teaching, and service occurring during the preceding tenure-earning years. All reviews will utilize the department and college criteria for tenure and promotion and will assess overall performance in light of mid-point expectations.

The materials required for this review will consist of the same types of materials used for tenure review including, but not limited to, a current vita; annual evaluations; products of research/scholarship/creative activity; student/peer evaluation of teaching; selected examples of teaching-related activity; service commitments and accomplishments; and a brief self-evaluation by the faculty member.

The mid-tenure review is intended to be informative: to be encouraging to faculty who are making solid progress toward tenure, and instructional to faculty who may need to improve in selected areas of performance. Where progress is significantly lacking and appears unlikely to improve going forward, nonrenewal may result.

- 1.7.** The awarding of tenure is a long-term commitment by the department. Recipients of tenure are expected to have clearly demonstrated the ability and drive to levels worthy of such a commitment.
- 1.8.** Candidates for tenure and/or promotion are expected to be collegial within the department, college, and university.

## **2. Criteria for Tenure**

### **2.1. Research Criteria for Tenure**

- 2.1.1. Faculty members in the ME department are expected to conduct high-quality research and produce scholarly works from that research with excellence recognized at national and international levels.
- 2.1.2. The candidate for tenure can provide evidence that they can meet these research expectations at the level appropriate to the faculty's rank through the following research products including (but not limited to):
- a. Publications in peer-reviewed journals
  - b. Publications in peer-reviewed conference proceedings
  - c. Review articles in peer-reviewed journals
  - d. Books, book chapters, and monographs
  - e. Publications in other forms such as non-refereed conference proceedings and published abstracts

- f. Presentations at national and international conferences
- g. Invited seminars and talks
- h. Patents or other technology transfer for research-related inventions
- i. Scientific software, codes, and/or databases
- j. Scientific instruments
- k. Being awarded a teaching-related, peer-reviewed grant(s)
- l. Scholarly papers published on teaching and engineering education
  - 2.1.3. Research productivity of a candidate should be consistent with the expectations of faculty members at the same rank at other leading departments in peer institutions who are in the relevant field(s) of research in which the candidate engages and conducts their research work. Research productivity can be demonstrated by a significant number of peer-reviewed journal articles published with a USF address and with the candidate as a senior or corresponding author during their tenure earning years (e.g., an average of 2 or more peer-reviewed journal publications per year over the tenure-earning time period being considered would be considered typical, thus equating to an approximate minimum of 10 peer-reviewed publications for faculty hired at the Assistant Professor level with a tenure earning period of 5 years). To be considered as a high-quality, peer-reviewed journal during evaluations of tenure and/or promotion cases, a peer-reviewed journal must be indexed by ISI (Institute of Science Index) and/or Scopus.
  - 2.1.4. A candidate needs to establish a clear record of independent research effort. While collaborations are encouraged, it is expected that a substantial number of publications over the tenure-earning years would result from research efforts led by the candidate and for whom the resulting scholarly products would have the candidate as a principal author, defined as being either first author or the recognized driver of the work (often corresponding, senior or last author). It is expected that a candidate will publish most of their articles in the tenure-earning period with a USF address and with their students and post-doctoral trainees as co-authors.
  - 2.1.5. A candidate may submit evidence of the relevance and importance of published work in the form of citation data, journal impact factors, highlights in the popular press, or other similar such measures and data.
  - 2.1.6. The letters of external reviewers provide independent judgments of the quality and importance of a candidate's research and will be carefully considered.
  - 2.1.7. A candidate should secure extramural funding at a level sufficient to sustain the candidate's research and should demonstrate the ability to continue to sustain their research program at a nationally competitive level into the future. Nationally competitive peer-reviewed research grants as PI or co-PI are expected during the tenure-earning years. Two or more such grants as PI are expected. Examples of nationally competitive grants are from federal agencies such as NSF, NIH, DOD, DOE, etc.
  - 2.1.8. A candidate for tenure should provide evidence of a significant and sustained effort to secure funding through the submission of grant proposals, applications, and white papers. The maximum number of attempts at the NSF CAREER award is expected.

- 2.1.9. Active dissemination of research results through regular presentations at national and international professional meetings is expected.
- 2.1.10. Invited talks at peer institutions and departments, invited presentations and talks at major conferences, and prizes from professional societies and other organizations recognizing the scholarly work of a candidate bring prestige to the candidate, the department, and to the university and will be viewed as an additional demonstration of research productivity and impact.

## **2.2. Teaching Criteria for Tenure**

- 2.2.1. The goal of teaching in the department is to promote students' learning, intellectual development, and career preparation. Towards this goal, candidates for tenure and promotion are expected to achieve excellence in teaching, as evidenced by a successful track record of classroom teaching, mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students, and active participation in curricular development and/or innovation in engineering education.
- 2.2.2. All faculty are expected to demonstrate their proficiency in classroom teaching. Materials evaluated may include:
  - a. Course syllabi and samples of instructional materials (e.g., tests, lectures, etc.)
  - b. Numerical student evaluations and narratives of students' comments
  - c. Evidence of student learning outcomes
  - d. Peer evaluations
  - e. Teaching awards and other recognitions of teaching accomplishments
  - f. Documentation of innovative teaching methods, and attendance at teaching workshops. Documentation of incorporating educational research findings in courses taught
  - g. Publishing a textbook(s)
  - h. Developing and teaching a new course(s)
- 2.2.3. A candidate should have taught one required undergraduate course and one graduate course in the department.
- 2.2.4. During the tenure-earning period, the candidate is expected to have acted as the major professor for a certain number of Ph.D. students. This number should be commensurate with the rank of the candidate during the tenure-earning period and should be consistent with the average number of Ph.D. students advised and graduated by that candidate's peers in similar research fields at their same professorial rank at leading peer departments and institutions. For example, for faculty hired as an Assistant Professor and who complete their tenure-earning years at that rank, it would be expected that the candidate would advise and support a minimum of 2 graduate students as the major professor and have them successfully defend or be close to completion of their Ph.D. degrees by the point in time at which tenure would be granted.
- 2.2.5. Although the emphasis is on training Ph.D. students, mentoring, and support of thesis option MS students will also be recognized.

- 2.2.6. In addition to the supervision of graduate students, candidates are encouraged to have also supervised undergraduate research students and post-doctoral researchers.
- 2.2.7. It is also expected that candidates will have served on thesis and dissertation committees.

### **2.3. Service Criteria for Tenure**

- 2.3.1. The service component of a successful tenure package should be commensurate with the activities and performance expected of the current rank of the candidate. It is expected that all successful tenure packages will have substantive service at the national and/or international level, with the appropriate amount and stature of such service external to the university increasing with the rank of the candidate.
- 2.3.2. The types of service activities expected of a candidate for tenure who have completed their tenure-earning years as an Assistant Professor include:
  - a. Active participation in departmental committees.
  - b. Regular reviews of manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals.
  - c. Membership on review panels for grant proposals to external funding agencies.
  - d. Service to national and international professional societies in fields relevant to mechanical engineering (e.g., American Society of Mechanical Engineers). Types of service appropriate at this level include participation in national level conferences as meeting organizers, session chairs, and other similar early leadership positions.
- 2.3.3. The types of service activities expected of a candidate for tenure who have completed their tenure-earning years as an Associate Professor include:
  - a. Active participation in departmental, college, and university committees.
  - b. Regular reviews of manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals.
  - c. Membership on review panels for grant proposals to external funding agencies.
  - d. Service to national and international professional societies in fields relevant to mechanical engineering (e.g., American Society of Mechanical Engineers). Types of service appropriate at this level are expected to go beyond early leadership roles (e.g., such as participation in national level conferences as session chair) to include roles such as major officer positions and other similar high-level leadership positions within such professional societies.
  - e. Membership on journal editorial boards.
- 2.3.4. The types of service activities expected of a candidate for tenure who have completed their tenure-earning years as a Full Professor include:
  - a. Active participation in departmental, college, and university committees.
  - b. Regular reviews of manuscripts for peer-reviewed journals.

- c. Membership on review panels for grant proposals to external funding agencies.
- d. Service to national and international professional societies in fields relevant to mechanical engineering (e.g., American Society of Mechanical Engineers). Types of service appropriate at this level are expected to go beyond mid-level leadership roles (e.g., such as participation as Technical Committee Chairs within Divisions of ASME) to include roles such as major officer and board positions (e.g., ASME Division Officer, ASME Executive Board Member, etc.) and other similar high-level leadership positions within major professional societies in fields related to mechanical engineering.
- e. Membership on journal editorial boards and/or holding the position of Chief Editor or the equivalent of such boards.

### **3. Criteria for Promotion**

#### **3.1. Standards for Promotion to Associate Professor**

- 3.1.1. It is typical for an Assistant Professor to apply for promotion to Associate Professor coincident to applying for tenure. An Assistant Professor is generally eligible to apply for promotion to Associate Professor after 5 years at the current rank. Earlier eligibility may be considered for exceptional candidates or prior service.
- 3.1.2. A record of excellence in research, teaching, and substantive service that has led to significant national recognition for the candidate and their work amongst their peers at leading institutions and departments around the country is the overarching requirement for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. This record of excellence should support and predict a further increase in the productivity of the candidate and the impact and recognition of their work in the years ahead.
- 3.1.3. A record of excellence in research and scholarship is signified by a track record of continued research funding through extramural research funding (e.g., externally peer-reviewed grants from federal agencies such as NSF, NIH, DOE, etc. and/or industrial grant funding of work leading to the publication of scholarly products), a significant list of invited presentations (e.g., at conferences, other academic departments, etc.), and a strong record of peer-reviewed publications (e.g., an average of at least 2 peer-reviewed publications per year as an Assistant Professor with the candidate as a senior or corresponding author would be considered a typical publication record). Patents and commercial licensing of such patents will also be viewed positively in terms of demonstration of research productivity if such patents result from extramurally funded research, and the underlying research work leads to other scholarly products. National recognition of the research excellence and scholarship of a candidate for promotion to Associate Professor may be demonstrated through a variety of means including citations of their work, invitations to present at major national scientific meetings and/or national research laboratories or academic departments, funding of peer-reviewed and/or industrial grants, and receipt of awards from journals, professional societies, conferences, industry, and/or other scholarly bodies (e.g., early and mid-career awards for research). Letters from

external reviewers who are highly distinguished in the candidate's field(s) of research and who can comment on the importance and impact of the candidate's scholarly work are a critical element to supporting and justifying the award of promotion for a candidate.

- 3.1.4. A record of excellence in teaching can be demonstrated through a variety of means including student teaching ratings of the candidate on par with the average ratings within the Department and/or College of Engineering, peer evaluations of teaching, data demonstrating that students are achieving learning outcomes of the courses which the candidate has taught, receipt of awards by the candidate for their teaching and/or pedagogical work and innovations, receipt of research awards by undergraduate and graduate students whom the candidate serves as a mentor/advisor for their research, and creation of new courses and/or course products such as textbooks.
- 3.1.5. The candidate should show a substantive level of initiative to serve their professional community and the university beyond their assigned duties. These initiatives may be demonstrated through, for example, taking leadership roles within the department; taking the role of an Associate Editor and/or Guest Editor in a respected scientific or engineering journal; organizing regional and/or national meetings and workshops; standing for election in committees in national professional organizations, etc. Service activities that aid in further establishing the national reputation and visibility of the candidate and the Department are particularly encouraged at this level. One example that is common for candidates being promoted to Associate Professor within the Department is that they will have served as session chairs or in similar positions of leadership within professional societies such as ASME at this point in their careers (or other similar organizations which have significant involvement by faculty from the mechanical engineering community). Building relationships with local industry and engaging the local community, including the K-12 school districts in the area are also highly encouraged.

### **3.2. Standards for Promotion to Full Professor**

- 3.2.1. An Associate Professor is generally eligible for promotion to Full Professor after 5 years at the current rank. Earlier eligibility may be considered for exceptional candidates or prior service.
- 3.2.2. A record of sustained excellence in research, teaching, and substantive service that has led to significant national and international recognition for the candidate and their work amongst their peers at leading institutions and departments around the world is the overarching requirement for promotion to the rank of Full Professor.
- 3.2.3. A record of sustained excellence in research and scholarship is signified by a track record of continued research funding through extramural research funding (e.g., externally peer-reviewed grants from federal agencies such as NSF, NIH, DOE, etc. and/or industrial grant funding of work leading to the publication of scholarly products), a significant list of invited presentations (e.g., at conferences, other academic departments, etc.) and keynote/plenary presentations (or their equivalent), and a strong record of peer-reviewed publications (e.g., an average of at least 2 high-quality peer-reviewed publications with the candidate as a senior or corresponding author per year as an Associate Professor would be considered a typical publication record).

Patents and commercial licensing of such patents will also be viewed positively in terms of demonstration of research productivity, if such patents result from extramurally funded research and the underlying research work leads to other scholarly products. National and international recognition of the research excellence and scholarship of a candidate for promotion to Full Professor may be demonstrated through a variety of means including citations of their work, invitations to present at major national and international scientific meetings and/or research laboratories and academic departments around the world, continued funding of peer-reviewed and/or industrial grants, and receipt of major awards from journals, professional societies, conferences, industry, and/or other scholarly bodies (e.g., significant mid-career level awards for research from national and international organizations, being recognized as a Fellow of professional societies such as ASME, AAAS, etc.). Letters from external reviewers who are highly distinguished in the candidate's field(s) of research and who can comment on the importance and impact of the candidate's scholarly work are a critical element to supporting and justifying the award of promotion for a candidate.

- 3.2.4. A record of excellence in teaching can be demonstrated through a variety of means including student teaching ratings of the candidate on par with the average ratings within the Department and/or College of Engineering, peer evaluations of teaching, data demonstrating that students are achieving learning outcomes of the courses which the candidate has taught, receipt of awards by the candidate for their teaching and/or pedagogical work and innovations, receipt of research awards by undergraduate and graduate students whom the candidate serves as a mentor/advisor for their research, and creation of new courses and/or course products such as textbooks.
- 3.2.5. The candidate should show substantive service to their professional community and the university beyond their assigned duties. These initiatives may be demonstrated through, for example, volunteering for committee assignments and substantial involvement in committees that contribute meaningfully to the overall missions of the department, college, and university; taking leadership roles at the department, college or university levels; taking the role of an Editor or Associate Editor in one or more respected scientific or engineering journals; organizing international meetings and workshops; standing for election in high-level committees and leadership positions within major professional organizations, advising student organizations, etc. One example that is common for candidates being promoted to Full Professor within the department is that they will have served as a Division Officer or similar position of major leadership within ASME (or other similar organizations which have significant involvement by faculty from the mechanical engineering community) at this point in their careers. Sustained community engagement through relationships with industry and engaging the local community, including the K-12 school districts, is encouraged, and mentoring of junior faculty is expected at this level.

### **3.3. Standards for Promotion to Instructor II**

- 3.3.1. To qualify for promotion to Instructor II, a non-tenure track Instructor I is generally expected to have 5 or more consecutive years of experience as a Level I Instructor. Earlier eligibility may be considered for exceptional candidates, but a minimum of 3 years of experience as a Level I Instructor is required. After

the appropriate period of service, Instructors may apply to the department to be considered for a promotion on the basis of meritorious performance.

- 3.3.2. In evaluating a candidate for promotion from Instructor I to Instructor II, the departmental Promotion Committee for the candidate will consider and rate all portions of the candidate's assigned duties during the evaluation period. In addition to the review of annual evaluations in making decisions about the overall rating assigned to an assigned duty area, a comprehensive review of evidence provided by the candidate that demonstrates their performance in the assigned duty areas will be considered to assess the individual's holistic contributions to the department.
- 3.3.3. Excellence in the principal assigned duty for the Instructor applying for promotion is required. Such excellence can be demonstrated by various information supplied by the candidate, but this evaluation should be in concert with (though not solely determined by) the last five years of annual evaluations (or the total number of yearly evaluations available if being considered early). If the applicant has multiple areas of assignment, substantive contributions are also required in proportion to the assignment(s). If an individual has equal primary FTE assignments over the time period being considered, one must be designated as the primary area and ratings assigned accordingly.

#### **3.4. Standards for Promotion to Instructor III**

- 3.4.1. To qualify for promotion to Instructor III, a non-tenure track Instructor II is generally expected to have 5 or more years of experience as a Level II Instructor. Earlier eligibility may be considered for exceptional candidates, but a minimum of 3 years of experience as a Level II Instructor is required. Promotion to Level III recognizes not only continuing progress as an Instructor, but may also consider leadership and contribution to teaching, scholarship, community engagement, or institutional success and acclaim. It is expected that for an Instructor II to be promoted to Instructor III that the individual will have achieved significant efforts and accomplishments in areas relevant to their assigned duties or which otherwise contribute to the mission of the department, college, and/or university. Examples of such accomplishments that recognize excellence in the candidate's efforts include, but are not limited to, receiving awards concerning their relevant efforts, publishing material in professional outlets (especially when receiving positive external attention), and developing innovations that have had a demonstrably positive effect in promoting the mission of the university. After the appropriate period of service, candidates at the rank of Instructor II may apply to the department to be considered for a promotion on the basis of meritorious performance.
- 3.4.2. In evaluating a candidate for promotion from Instructor II to Instructor III, the departmental Promotion Committee for the candidate will consider and rate all portions of the candidate's assigned duties during the evaluation period. In addition to the review of annual evaluations in making decisions about the overall rating assigned to an assigned duty area, a comprehensive review of evidence provided by the candidate that demonstrates their performance in the assigned duty areas will be considered to assess the individual's holistic contributions to the department. However, for purposes of promotion, the primary focus of the review must be the contribution made by the candidate in the area of teaching.

- 3.4.3. Excellence in the principal assigned duty for the Instructor applying for promotion is required. Such excellence can be demonstrated by various information supplied by the candidate, but this evaluation should be in concert with (though not solely determined by) the last five years of annual evaluations (or the total number of yearly evaluations available if being considered early). If the applicant has multiple areas of assignment, substantive contributions are also required in proportion to the assignment(s). If an individual has equal primary FTE assignments over the time period being considered, one must be designated as the primary area and ratings assigned accordingly.

#### **4. Amendments**

Any faculty member may propose amendments to these departmental Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion. A proposed amendment must be submitted in writing (or via email) to the Department Chair, who will place it on the agenda within the next three scheduled departmental faculty meetings. The ME faculty may refer the amendment for review by a departmental committee. Upon completion of the review of the amendment within a reasonable time, the proposed change will be placed on the agenda of the next faculty meeting, where after a discussion, a vote will be taken. Upon request by any faculty, the vote must be by secret ballot. A 2/3 vote of all voting faculty members in residence plus those on leave, but present, is necessary to pass such amendments.