

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GUIDELINES CONCERNING PROMOTION AND TENURE

(approved March 15, 2006; revised November 27, 2006; substantially revised April 1, 2018)

I. PREAMBLE

The promotion and tenure guidelines of the Department of Religious Studies elaborate upon the standards set forth in the “College of Arts and Sciences Guidelines on Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion” (henceforth, CAS Guidelines). The Religious Studies’ guidelines are supplementary to all College and University documents governing reappointment, tenure, and promotion. In the case of any conflict, the College and University documents take precedence.

Per the mandate of the CAS Guidelines, this document provides clear and “specific” descriptions and explanations of the expectations, standards of achievement, and practices in the recommendation for promotions and tenure. As a department, however, we hold that the “specific criteria” specified must be interpreted in light of the UNC Policy Manual, Section 101.3.1, which states: “Within the University, important faculty personnel decision are based on evaluations of performance rendered by a candidate’s immediate colleagues and supervisors, who are in the best position to make such judgments. These assessments are not the product of mechanically applied checklists, criteria or formulas; there is no simple litmus test for outstanding teaching, research or service.”

Tenure-track and tenured faculty have participated in discussions regarding these Departmental guidelines.

II. REAPPOINTMENT REVIEW

The Department of Religious Studies follows the “College of Arts and Sciences Reappointment Review Guidelines” (henceforth, CAS Reappointment Guidelines) for the process to be followed for the reappointment reviews of tenure-track faculty during the third year of the initial four-year probationary term. During the spring semester of a tenure-track faculty member’s second year, the Department Head will discuss the upcoming reappointment review with the faculty member and will go over the CAS Reappointment Guidelines with the faculty member.

1. Standards for Reappointment:

- A) Teaching: Per Section II.1 above, candidates should demonstrate that they are effective teachers. Such demonstration may come from some combination of student evaluations, self-assessments, peer evaluations, participation in teaching workshops, course syllabi, and assignments.

- B) Research: Per Section II.2 above, candidates should demonstrate that they have an active research agenda and that they are making the kind of progress with their research program that will allow them to satisfy the Department's requirements in this area for promotion to associate professor and tenure. Evidence of such progress may include some combination of participation in and presentation of research at meetings of professional organizations; receipt of internal or external research grants or fellowships; drafts of work in progress; and scholarly publications.
- C) Service: Per Section II.3 above, although candidates may have had little opportunity for service, they should have demonstrated a willingness, when possible, to participate in some service for the Department, the Profession, the community, and/or the College.

III. PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTION

For each tenure and/or promotion case, the Promotion and Tenure Committee will consist of all faculty members above the candidate's rank. The following is a typical timetable for steps in the review process, beginning in the spring term before the review year. For types of documentation for the portfolio see Section II above.

1. March

- A) In cases of mandatory review, the Department Head will appoint a member of the tenured faculty to chair the probationary faculty member's departmental promotion and tenure committee and to assist the candidate for promotion and tenure in preparing the dossier that is to be submitted to the College in the fall.
- B) In cases of non-mandatory review, the Department Head, after consultation with the department's Professors and the Dean of the College, may begin the formal process of reviewing a tenured Associate Professor for promotion to Professor at any time. A candidate who has not been formally reviewed for promotion to Professor has the right to a formal review after his or her sixth year as a tenured Associate Professor at UNCG. To exercise this right, the candidate shall write to the Department Head by March 1 of that year requesting review and providing a current vita. If a formal review of an Associate Professor does not culminate in promotion of the candidate to Professor, the candidate may next request a review during the third year following his or her unsuccessful previous attempt by writing to his or her Department Head as described above.

2. May

Once a determination has been made to proceed, the candidate will give the Head a detailed CV and supporting materials, including publications and works in press or under submission.

3. May-June

The Head will solicit letters of evaluation from external reviewers (typically 5) to assess the quality of the candidate's scholarly contributions. A list of possible external reviewers will be solicited from the candidate. Materials will be sent to reviewers by early June.

4. June-August

- A) The Head will solicit letters from students and former students to help assess the candidate's teaching, and from others to assess the quality of the candidate's service. A summary of student course evaluation data will be prepared in the department office.
- B) The candidate will submit a portfolio and will work with the Head or committee chair to prepare factual sections for the promotion dossier.
- C) The promotion and tenure committee will meet to parcel out responsibility for drafting sections of the dossier. The Head or the committee chair will have responsibility for assembling the dossier.

5. September

- A) The candidate's entire package will be available for review by all faculty members above the candidate's rank.
- B) During the second half of September, the faculty members will convene to discuss and evaluate the candidate's dossier. The chair of the tenure and promotion committee will preside over a vote of the senior faculty, report the vote to the Department Head, and write a summary of the committee's evaluation.
- C) The Department Head will write his/her evaluation of the candidate.

6. October

In accordance with the College calendar, the Department will forward the entire package to the office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, usually in early October.

IV. PROMOTION FROM ASSISTANT PROFESSOR TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND TENURE

1. Teaching

Successful candidates must show effective teaching as outlined above in Section II.1 and in Part I of the CAS Guidelines. To be promoted to Associate Professor and to receive tenure, the candidate's portfolio must demonstrate teaching competence and a commitment to teaching including the ability to teach students at various levels of knowledge in a variety of formats and to incorporate instructional technologies where appropriate. As outlined in Section II.1 effective teaching will be measured by a variety of instruments and include both in class instruction and out of class activities.

2. Research/Scholarship

In evaluating a candidate for Promotion to Associate Professor and tenure, the Department of Religious Studies gives scholarship a high priority. As such, a major criterion (as outlined above in Section II.2) for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure is scholarly achievement, and the demonstration of (or the clear potential for) prominence and recognition in the candidate's field.

Successful candidates for tenure the Department of Religious Studies will have published a significant peer-reviewed monograph or a series of significant articles in refereed journals or refereed edited volumes. In this context "significant" means that a candidate's research/scholarship should be demonstrably original, peer reviewed, publicly disseminated, recognized and sustained (see CAS Guidelines Part I "Research"). High quality, originality, and significance are more important than either volume or type of scholarship (see CAS Guidelines Part I "Research"). The published research may have been developed from the candidate's dissertation research. Web-based publishing should be in refereed journals or websites with rigorous standards of peer-review, and may include articles or work that does not normally appear in print, such as videos. Typically, successful candidates have sought internal funding and external grants and fellowships to support their scholarship. Conference papers and invited lectures offer additional evidence of an active scholarly life.

Per the CAS Guidelines (Section II.2.e), the criteria for a candidate to have successful promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure ought to show promise of achieving a level of distinction that will eventually lead to promotion to the rank of Professor. As such, scholarly achievement should be demonstrated via a pattern of research across the probationary period that suggests the potential for continued research accomplishment. As described above in Section II.2, this evidence may include presentations at scholarly conferences, invited lectures, and/or receipt of internal or external research grants or fellowships. Ordinarily, successful candidates have also demonstrated promise of a second significant project. (Examples of "demonstrated promise" might include published articles, conference papers, well-received grant applications, etc.)

3. Service

A candidate for Promotion to Associate Professor and tenure needs to show evidence of satisfactory service contributions. In addition to active participation in department meetings, where the faculty operates as a committee of the whole, all members of the department are expected to serve at various times on departmental, college, and university committees. Typically, Assistant Professors, however, will need to devote the majority of their time during the probationary period to their teaching and research/scholarship agendas. As such, it is expected that the service duties of Assistant Professor will be relatively light. Generally, Assistant Professors will be expected to perform Departmental duties assigned them by the Head, as well as show evidence of efforts to establish a pattern of service to the College, the University, the Profession, and/or the community. Whatever service responsibilities a candidate undertakes must be performed satisfactorily and responsibly. Evidence used to evaluate an Assistant Professor's service will include assessment of a range of documentation, including letters solicited by the Department from committees or organizations to which service has been rendered.

V. PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TO PROFESSOR

Promotion to the rank of Professor is based on an individual compiling a substantial and sustained record of achievement in each of the three areas of evaluation (research/scholarship, teaching, and service). While the Religious Studies Department places substantial weight on research/scholarship, particularly in the production of a pattern of peer-reviewed scholarship appropriate to disciplinary expectations, it also expects a candidate to demonstrate achievement, distinction, and impact in the areas of teaching and service. The Religious Studies Department embraces the point made in the CAS Guidelines that promotion to Professor is based on a balanced overall record of achievement, distinction and impact, and not merely on time in rank (see Section Part II.3). That said, time in rank may well prove to be a salient feature in helping to determine the impact of an individual's contributions and the impact to each of the three areas of evaluation.

1. Teaching

The Religious Studies Department requires that candidates for promotion to Professor demonstrate their accomplishments as teachers and their continual efforts to improve their teaching. As described above in Section II.1, teaching embraces activities related to instruction and learning that occur both inside and outside the classroom, including instructing students; leading workshops and seminars; advising, supervising, guiding, and mentoring students; developing learning activities; sustaining teaching effectiveness; and participating in community engaged teaching.

As described above in Section II.1, documentation of pedagogical effectiveness may include, but is not limited to, descriptions of teaching activities, including a summary of responsibilities and activities and a portfolio of course materials; evidence of student achievement, publications, awards, fellowships, and scholarships; judgments about teaching, including student reviews and peer reviews; teaching recognition, including honors for meritorious teaching, invitations to teach at other institutions; receipt of grants, contracts, or external funding related to teaching; and self-reflection and appraisal, including self-reviews and evidence of steps to improve one's teaching. Peer review on the Associate Professor level is not required by the department but is strongly encouraged as a measure of teaching effectiveness.

Candidates seeking promotion to full professor under the Distinguished Teaching Profile must provide evidence of unusually high quality teaching, teaching responsibilities that extend significantly beyond department expectations and boundaries, and contributions to the teaching of religious studies more broadly.

2. Research/Scholarship

Research/Scholarly achievement is demonstrated via a sustained pattern of research that has resulted in an individual achieving distinction in his or her field. Candidates for promotion to Full Professor under the Standard Profile may be put forward on the basis of the publication of a second monograph or on the basis of a sustained record of publishing significant articles and/or book chapters in refereed venues (or some combination of these—i.e. book chapters, monograph under contract, etc.). In either case these should be sufficient evidence of a significant national or international reputation. While it acknowledges the scarcity of funding in the humanities, the Department expects a candidate for promotion to Professor to have made reasonable efforts to secure external grants or fellowships where appropriate.

3. Service

The Department of Religious Studies requires that candidates for promotion to Professor make significant service contributions. As outlined above in Section II.3, a candidate's service contributions will include Departmental service, as well as evidence of service to the College and University. Examples of the scope of service should include providing leadership in or making significant contributions to Department, College, or University committees or other appointed or elected groups, developing and revising major policies, participating in campus governance, and mentoring other faculty or staff. Service can also include assisting in the development of international programs and exchanges, advising student groups, and recruiting students.

As outlined above in Section II.3, a candidate's service contributions will also include service to the scholarly profession through peer review of grant

applications, articles, books, and other creative works for journals and presses; participation in academic conferences; service to and leadership in academic organizations, professional boards, task forces, or committees organizing and managing conferences; scholarly editorial work, and writing external reviews of the works of colleagues for promotions and tenure or other professional awards and acknowledgments.

Evidence used to evaluate an Associate's service will include assessment of a range of documentation, including letters solicited by the Department from committees or organizations to which service has been rendered and/or faculty colleagues and other peers describing responsibilities and activities and analyses of work accomplished.