The University’s guidelines on tenure and promotion provide a generic framework. They are necessarily broad because they have to accommodate procedures that can be embraced by all disciplines and departments of the institution. The challenge for each entity within the university is to operationalize these guidelines by offering more specific criteria and benchmarks which adhere to the generic standards, but are consistent with excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service as they are defined within a specific field. Thus, this document is specifically oriented to the context of RPTS decisions relating to tenure and promotion to associate and full professor.

The RPTS faculty is eclectic both in areas of subject interest and in disciplinary focus. This means that benchmarks and criteria have to be adaptable so they respect these differences. Given this, it is not considered feasible to establish benchmarks and criteria that are fixed, immutable norms which apply to every situation. Thus, it is emphasized that the benchmarks and criteria in this document are intended to be guidelines and not norms. The document consists of two sections: (1) tenure policy, and (2) performance standard guidelines.

Some faculty have joint appointments exclusively with the AgriLife Extension Service and/or Agrilife Research. They are expected to fulfill their responsibilities in both areas in proportion to the levels of their appointment.

For purposes of promotion and tenure decisions relating to assistant professors, the Tenure and Promotion Committee consists of all members in the Department holding the rank of associate professor, full professor or above, except the Department Head. For promotion relating to faculty at the rank of associate professor and above, the Tenure and Promotion Committee consists of all members in the Department holding the rank of full professor or above.

The Department Head is invited to be present at all meetings of the Promotion and Tenure Committee as an observer and as a resource person to whom the Committee members can direct informational questions if they so wish, but the Head will not participate either in the discussions or in voting.

TENURE

Tenure is the assurance to a faculty member who has successfully performed during an agreed upon probationary period of service that he/she may be expected to continue that service in an academic appointment unless funds are no longer available or a convincing cause for dismissal is proven through established procedures of due process.

In general, a faculty member is a full-time employee of the Texas A&M University system and the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences who holds the rank of instructor,
assistant professor, associate professor, professor or distinguished professor. Part-time or temporary members of the teaching staff such as lecturers, senior lecturers, graduate students serving as teaching assistants, postdoctoral fellows, etc. are specifically not entitled to tenure. Full-time research associates are normally considered to have term appointments and thus are not considered for tenure.

The probationary period for a tenure-track faculty member of the Department of Recreation, Park and Sciences normally shall not exceed seven years. Included within this period are years credited from full-time service in another institution of higher learning. This decision to credit service from elsewhere is made by the Department Head at the time of the initial hiring, and is subject to approval by other senior university administrators. Faculty members who join the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at the rank of professor normally would become eligible for tenure after two years of satisfactory service. All faculty appointments are made on a year-to-year probationary basis until tenure is granted.

When a faculty appointment is extended to an individual in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, a tenure agreement form signed by the appropriate academic officer is forwarded to the prospective faculty member, who then signs this form to indicate acceptance of the position. The form specifies the number of years of probationary service in accordance with the provisions of the policies stated above.

During the probationary period, faculty members are employed annually and subject to annual reviews. This review process requires completion of a written Annual Report by both the Department’s Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Department Head. These revisions must be completed before June 15 of each year. Both the Committee and the Department Head will then notify the faculty member of his or her progress in writing. Especially close attention will be given to the review of non-tenured faculty in their first three years of probationary service by engaging them in a discussion of their review.

Since the probationary period consists of a series of one-year contracts, a decision not to reappoint an individual who is on probation can be made any time up to the year of the mandatory review. Non-reappointment is considered if performance is unsatisfactory to the point that it is unlikely the person will qualify for tenure, as neither party benefits from prolonging an unsatisfactory situation. Such a decision is made only in compelling circumstances. (Rule 12.01.99.M2, http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/12.01.99.M2.pdf)

A comprehensive mid-term review of a candidate’s record will be undertaken between March and December towards the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth year of employment by both the Department’s Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Department Head. This will be a summative evaluation of the first three years of employment. The dossier submitted by the candidate at that time should follow the university guidelines for submitting tenure and promotion dossiers. The only difference between the third year review and the submission at the beginning of the sixth year is that external reviews will not be sought and that the mid-term review package goes only to the Dean’s level (it is not forwarded to the Provost, President, Chancellor or Board of Regents). A recommendation regarding the candidate’s employment status is made during this review.
Towards the end of the fifth year, the candidate’s dossier will be sent to a set of external reviewers who will be requested to evaluate the candidate’s performance. The solicitation letter should request specific examples of the candidate’s current and potential scholarship and/or impact of teaching and service.

The candidate will be asked to provide a list of names of possible reviewers. The candidate may also provide a list of those who should not be consulted. The Tenure and Promotion Committee will also be asked to provide a list of possible reviewers. From the two lists, a group of at least three are selected and contacted by the Department Head or the Committee Chair. It is preferable to secure between six and eight letters for the final packet, some suggested by the candidate and some by the department. Care should be taken to secure outside referees (a) whose objectivity is not open to challenge (i.e. avoid co-authors, longtime personal friends, former students or former mentors unless more than the minimum of three letters are presented); whose rank at their institution is equivalent to or better than the one for which the candidate is being considered; and c) who do not appear on the candidate’s do not contact list (http://dof.tamu.edu/admin/tp/tenure_guide.pdf)

A formal recommendation is made both by the Department’s Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Department Head regarding tenure for each candidate no later than the date specified by the college. This final Promotion and Tenure recommendation should be consistent with the cumulative annual evaluations. Recommendations are forwarded via College and University channels to the Board of Regents, which has the authority to confer tenure. Tenure notification will be made in writing under procedures developed by the Chancellor of the System.

In exceptional circumstances, a person considered for tenure in the mandatory year who is not successful may be reconsidered in the terminal year, at the discretion of the Department Head and with the agreement of the Dean and the Provost that reconsideration seems appropriate. The sole ground on which a Department Head may propose making such an exception to general practice is that the case has substantially changed since the mandatory consideration. The Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost will discuss procedures should such a case arise. Reconsideration does not entail an additional terminal year.

The service of a faculty member during the probationary period maybe terminated by giving notice in writing under procedures in University Rule 12.01.99.M2, and approved by the Chancellor of the System according to the following minimum periods of notice:

1. No later than March 1 of the first year of academic service.
2. No later than December 15 of the second year of academic service.
3. No later than twelve months prior to the completion of any subsequent full academic year.
PERFORMANCE STANDARD GUIDELINES

Performance Areas Evaluated for Tenure and Promotion

Texas A&M University aspires to become a national and international center of academic excellence. In pursuit of this goal over the past two decades, it has consistently raised the standards of performance expected from faculty. It seems likely that these rising expectations will continue in the future and that they will be reflected in performance standards for tenure and promotion.

Seven areas of performance are evaluated in RPTS for tenure and for promotion decisions at both the associate and full professor ranks, they are:

1. A high standard of scholarship
2. A high standard of teaching
3. Professional integrity and responsibility
4. Acquisition of funds from sources external to the department.
5. Establishment and effective mentoring of a cadre of graduate students
6. National/international reputation
7. Service to constituents external to the university.

The first three standards are core performance areas which must be met before tenure and promotion can be considered. They are: (i) excellence in scholarship; (ii) excellence in teaching and (iii) professional integrity and responsibility. It is unlikely that performance which does not meet expectations in any of these areas can be compensated for by a high level of performance in another area. While attainment of the expected standards in these three areas is a necessary condition, it is not in itself sufficient for an individual to be recommended for tenure and promotion. Evidence of good performance in all four of the remaining performance areas also is expected for tenure and promotion to associate professor, but it is recognized that individuals have different strengths so there are likely to be some compensatory weightings within these four areas. That is, exceptional performance in several of the latter four areas could compensate to some extent for lower performance than the expected standard in another area.

Benchmark Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

The decision regarding promotion from assistant professor to associate professor is tied to the tenure decision (i.e. if an individual is deemed promotable, he/she must be qualified for tenure. Similarly, if an individual is deemed tenurable, he/she must be qualified for promotion).

1. Scholarship. The expectation for most faculty is that the record will show a minimum of 12 to 15 papers in refereed publications by the end of their fifth year of the probationary period when documentation is submitted to initiate the tenure and promotion process. Of these a preponderance of publications should be in Tier I journals. It is emphasized that this quantification range is a guideline and not a norm, since it is recognized that quantity of publications is not necessarily an accurate indicator of scholarship contributions.
Given the diversity of specializations and disciplinary backgrounds of RPTS faculty, it is recognized that some will publish in interdisciplinary/cross-disciplinary journals, and in journals in other fields and disciplines. Publications recognized in those disciplines are considered to be equally as meritorious as those in the “mainline” RPTS journals. In those cases, the ranking of journals (Tier I etc.) will be that used by the department on the Texas A&M campus most closely associated with that discipline.

In some disciplines, (e.g. Anthropology, History) the convention is that good scholarship is published in monograph or book form in addition to the traditional research journal. In these cases, a determination will be made of the contribution’s “research article equivalence.” Counsel will be solicited from senior scholars in those disciplines when making that determination and in ascertaining guidelines for the quality and quantity of published scholarship expected at this career stage.

Some of the published work is likely to emanate from a dissertation. Also, the move to a new context and different culture at Texas A&M may result in a shift in research focus and some exploration in developing a program of research. Thus, the CV at the end of the five-year period may show some diversity of topic areas. However, there should be evidence that a coherent research program is emerging by the end of the fifth year.

2. Teaching. A high quality of teaching is expected in the formal setting of the undergraduate and graduate classroom. Four criteria are used to measure teaching quality.

(i) Student Evaluations. By the end of the five-year period, the expectation is that student scores should, attain a minimum average of 4.0 (good) on the 5-point scales used to measure teaching effectiveness on the Department’s evaluation form. Some faculty may have had relatively little teaching experience before being hired by Texas A&M, so their scores may be lower than 4.0 in the early years. It is expected that all faculty at the assistant professor level will take advantage of the assistance the university offers to improve their teaching performance. This assistance, and five years of experience in the classroom, are the vehicles through which low performance may be raised to meet the expected standard.

(ii) Peer Evaluation. Each semester, one member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee will attend a class of each non-tenured faculty member and provide him/her with a written evaluation of the performance. The written evaluation will become part of the faculty member’s personnel file.

(iii) Teaching Portfolio. The portfolio will include the outlines, structures, and proceedings of each course taught. These materials will be sent to external reviewers with expertise in the content area to evaluate the appropriateness and relevance of what is being taught. The portfolio will not be forwarded to the Dean’s office with the tenure and promotion package.

(iv) Innovative Classroom Materials. Creative materials that contribute to academic programs beyond the context of an individual’s teaching. These may include textbooks if
their quality is demonstrated to be superior to that of other available materials. An awarded grant for curriculum development, student development or academic programming may be another example which extends the teaching contribution beyond the specific teaching program of the individual.

3. **Professional Integrity and Responsibility** are exemplified by showing respect for colleagues; professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment; adhering to expected standards of academic integrity; and being a “good citizen” of the department, college, and university by serving on committees, task forces etc. Section 3 of the university’s “Statement on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, Tenure and Promotion” offers an expanded, more detailed description of the expectations associated with this criterion.

4. **Acquisition of funds from sources external to the department.** The acquisition of funds is an integral part of an individual’s scholarship contribution. Funds may be from competitive fellowships, grants or contracts, and should be used to support graduate students. A faculty member’s transition to Texas A&M University may make it difficult to acquire external funds in the first two years. This is a period in which networks have to be created, a research program defined, and an understanding of the state and university culture has to be nurtured. However, by the end of the fifth year, an emerging and growing record of external funds is expected. As a guideline, the expectation is 3-4 successful external funding submissions, and a record of supporting at least one graduate student a year in at least the last two probationary years. In the case of a project involving multiple principal investigators, the proportion of the project for which the candidate is responsible should be identified. It is recognized that external funding is more accessible to those working in some areas of the field than in others so metrics should be regarded as guidelines and not as norms.

5. **Establishment and effective mentoring of a cadre of graduate students.** The university’s guidelines indicate that outstanding direction of graduate research, mentoring, and chairing graduate research committees are key criteria that should be used to evaluate teaching performance. Accordingly, there should be evidence that graduate students are attracted to the candidate’s research program and recognize his/her mentoring talents. Thus, by the end of the fifth year, the guideline expectation is that a candidate will be chairing, or have successfully chaired, four or more graduate committees, and will be a member of two or three others.

6. **National/International Reputation.** An emerging national/international reputation in an area of expertise is expected. Evidence of a national/international reputation is based on receipt of honors and awards, invitations to participate in national/international symposia, editorship of scholarly journals, serving in positions of leadership in professional societies, and importance ascribed to scholarly publications by colleagues and senior faculty members at other peer institutions. 

7. **External Service.** External service refers to responsively serving the needs of constituents external to the university. This may be exemplified by publications in popular magazines, textbooks, technical publications, or contract reports; by presentations and workshops to professional constituent or general citizen groups; or similar activities. It does not include service to a community in a citizen, rather than in a professional, role. For example, personal (as
opposed to professional) involvement with political, commercial, religious, non-profit, et al institutions is not relevant to the evaluation of service performance.

Benchmark Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor

Many of the benchmarks listed in this subsection as criteria for promotion to the full professor rank are extensions of those listed in the above section as criteria for tenure and promotion to associate professor. Thus, the above section should be reviewed first in order to fully comprehend the benchmarks listed in this section.

1. Scholarship. The guideline expectation for most faculty is that the record will show at least 35-40 publications in refereed publications, with a preponderance of them in Tier 1 journals. In the case of faculty members from disciplines where the convention is to publish good scholarship in other types of outlets, counsel will be solicited from senior scholars in those disciplines to ascertain guidelines for the quality and quantity of published scholarship expected for promotion to the full professor rank.

The publication record will reflect a coherent, long-term research program. It will be the manifestation of major accomplishment in enhancing the state of knowledge in a defined research area in which the candidate has earned a national/international reputation.

The candidate will be a senior author on most of the publications. This does not necessarily mean he/she will be the first author listed. Often the first author will be a graduate student, and when cross-disciplinary faculty teams are involved credits have to be shared appropriately. Senior authorship means that an individual played a central role in conceptualizing, funding, guiding, implementing, interpreting and writing-up the work.

2. Teaching. The high standard of teaching exemplified at the time of promotion to associate professor has been continued and is manifested by average student scores exceeding 4.0 (good) on the 5 point scales used to measure teaching effectiveness on the department’s evaluation form.

3. Professional Integrity and Responsibility is exemplified by showing respect for colleagues and this respect being reciprocated; professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment; adhering to expected standards of academic integrity; and being a “good citizen” of the department, college, and university by serving on committees, task forces etc.

4. Acquisition of funds from sources external to the department. A consistent on-going record is expected in acquiring external resources from multiple sources. These efforts should have resulted in the support of at least one graduate student a year on a consistent basis and support money to carry out research projects. The guideline expectation of total amount acquired is that it is likely to exceed $500,000.

5. Establishment and effective mentoring of a cadre of graduate students. The guideline expectation is that the candidate would have successfully chaired and seen to completion a minimum of 10-12 graduate students, with a representation of both master’s and doctoral
candidates. At the master’s level, these students would be placed in good managerial positions, while at the doctoral level a preponderance of them would hold university professorial positions. The quality of former students’ research work would be manifested in it being published in peer-reviewed research outlets.

6. National/International Reputation. A national/international reputation in an area of expertise is expected. Evidence of a national/international reputation is based on receipt of honors and awards, invitations to participate in international symposia, editorship of scholarly journals, serving in positions of leadership in professional societies, appointment or election to professional and/or honorary societies, importance ascribed to scholarly publications by colleagues and senior faculty at other peer institutions.

7. External Service. External service refers to responsively serving the needs of constituents external to the university. This may be exemplified by publications in popular magazines, textbooks, technical publications, or contract reports; by presentations and workshops to professional constituent or general citizen groups; or similar activities. It does not include service to a community in a citizen, rather than in a professional, role. For example, personal (as opposed to professional) involvement with political, commercial, religious, non-profit, etc institutions is not relevant to the evaluation of service performance.

AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

Extension appointments are not tenure accruing for promotion. There are five main differences in the expectations for faculty whose primary responsibilities are associated with the AgriLife Extension Service:

i) A core requirement is that there will be a strong record of service to constituents external to the university. This service should have a long-term impact on programs or clientele groups that can be readily documented and explained.

ii) The faculty member should demonstrate evidence of contributions to Extension programs. The development of creative educational programs and/or materials which are widely accepted and used are examples of professional contributions. Applied or translational research and comprehensive and intensive program evaluations are important components for Extension faculty. Publication of creative and scholarly work is expected.

iii) Scholarship is likely to be more applied than theoretical. Nevertheless, it is expected that a preponderance of publications will appear in refereed outlets. It is expected that levels of external financial support will be similar to those of non-extension colleagues. The expectations associated with mentoring graduate students are lower, but graduate student committee membership is encouraged as appropriate Educational materials which have been developed for Extension bulletins, factsheets, production videos, instructional manuals, handbooks, and computer software programs will be considered in the evaluation of those with a Texas AgriLife Extension Service appointment. The evaluation is not limited to traditional materials, but also will consider the quality and originality of thought and the integration of educational concepts that have led to demonstrable increases in awareness, changes and/or adoption.