

## Religious Studies Department Tenure and Promotion Criteria and Guidelines

for faculty in the Tenure-Tenure Stream

Draft adopted by department 1/15/2025

New draft revised in response to comments and suggestions from Associate Dean Reeser; adopted 2/5/2025

### TENURE AND PROMOTION TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR (TTS)

General Dietrich School guidelines at <https://www.as.pitt.edu/tenure-criteria>

Excerpts of key language with key phrases bolded:

Within the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, tenure is awarded for **demonstrated excellence together with the promise of continued excellence in scholarship**, in whatever form that scholarship takes. Teaching and research (or creative activity), the two principal functions of the University, are also the two principal forms of scholarship. The relationship between the two is complex, and no single formula could serve as an adequate guide in every tenure case. All departments in a University school of arts and sciences should be concerned with advancing knowledge as well as teaching students, but the balance between research and teaching need not be the same for every department, nor for every faculty member. Although the balance may be shaped over time by the faculty member and the department, it must be justified to the University when the faculty member stands for tenure. Excellence in research should not excuse incompetence in teaching, and teaching that is not founded in scholarship can make no claim to excellence.

In judging excellence, **the indispensable ingredient for promotion to tenured rank should be creative or intellectual vitality as reflected in the candidate's teaching, and in the candidate's contribution to the advancement of knowledge** or in his or her artistic activity. Vitality is best revealed through the candidate's activities—classroom performance, research, writings, artistic creations. These should be assessed for the evidence they reveal of intellectual power and originality. Quantitative measures of productivity and popularity, however useful, are no substitutes for qualitative judgments. Evaluations of the candidate's record of achievement will be used primarily to judge future promise. Elements of this evaluation shall include the quality and originality of the candidate's contributions to the advancement of knowledge, the candidate's status with respect to the standards of excellence in the discipline, and performance as a teacher. Tenure is not a reward for past services, but a kind of contract, a lifetime of security in exchange for a lifetime of continued creative scholarship.

Special care should be taken to establish achievement expectations for tenure for candidates whose work is interdisciplinary, collaborative, multidisciplinary or translational in character, or whose intellectual contributions and innovation are registered in part through significant societal impact, and evaluation processes should take account of unusual aspects of those expectations. For some cases, departmental tenure evaluation committees may need to bring in additional expertise and/or calibrate expectations for external references to ensure that a candidate's full breadth of achievements is evaluated.

The determination of excellence is basically a peer judgment, the responsibility of the faculty. The procedures set forth in this document provide a framework wherein all aspects of creative scholarship are to be evaluated, both by the tenured members of the department concerned and by the faculty at large through the Tenure Council.

### **Department-Specific Guidelines and Interpretations**

If school-wide guidelines change, the department will review department-specific guidelines to see if they need revision to bring them into compliance with new policies.

#### Research and Scholarship

- 1) **“Demonstrated Excellence” in research:** Candidate will have published a peer-reviewed monograph (or had it accepted and in production) which normally represents a significant revision of the dissertation. We also expect that this monograph will represent an original and innovative contribution to the candidate’s subfield. If appropriate in the candidate’s subfield, a series of peer-reviewed journal articles may substitute for a peer-reviewed monograph if agreed upon at the time of hire. This should be indicated in the offer letter.

Note: The Department considers “in production” to mean that the work has been peer reviewed, accepted for publication, and revised by the author and sent back to the press to begin copy-editing and typesetting. If the work is not in proofs, the department may request that the editor or representative of the publisher send an attestation that the work is scheduled for production.

- 2) **“Promise of continued excellence” in research:** Candidate can present evidence of significant progress on a second major research project, normally indicated by publications, conference presentations, and/or external fellowships.

Note: Community-engaged research, public-facing publications, and digital/multi-media publications are not required for tenure and promotion in our department but may be viewed favorably as part of the evidence for the promise of continued excellence in research.

#### Teaching

- 3) **“Creative or intellectual vitality” in teaching:** Candidate has demonstrated quality in teaching consistent with university norms. If the quality of teaching is not already excellent, the candidate shows steadily improving progress. Candidates will show “creative and intellectual vitality” through a mix of measures including (but not limited to) peer teaching reviews, OMETS, participation in pedagogy workshops and activities; revisions of teaching materials over time in response to feedback, and self-reflection.

#### Service

- 4) Candidate should be active and engaged at Pitt and beyond. The exact mix of this will vary depending on the needs of the department and interdisciplinary programs and centers at Pitt and the ways that service in a candidate’s subfield intersects with research and teaching.

### **How/when these guidelines are this communicated to faculty:**

- At the time of hiring and during the onboarding process. (If an agreement is made for journal articles rather than a monograph, this should be indicated in a written agreement at the start of employment.)
- As part of mentoring in the first year.
- As part of the third-year review process.
- In year 5 as preparation for the tenure dossier begins.

### **The Third Year Review**

- Progress toward the first criteria above (“demonstrated excellence in research”) is critical to the third-year review. The candidate will demonstrate progress toward a publishable monograph (or a series of journal articles) with evidence of publications, conference presentations, research activities needed for completion of the project, and/or external fellowships. The third-year review evaluation will also recognize that different projects may progress differently depending on the nature of the project and contingent factors.
- Progress toward the third criteria above (teaching) will be measured using a mix of evidence about teaching ability indicated in the guidelines for tenure, with a particular emphasis on progress and improvement.

### **Department tenure procedures:**

- Religious Studies operates as a “committee of the whole”; that is, tenured faculty as a group serve as the tenure committee and the department-level review at the same time. We do not appoint a separate tenure committee to report to the department.
- Our departmental expectation is that these guidelines will be conveyed to referees in tenure and promotion cases.

### **PROMOTION TO FULL PROFESSOR**

**General Dietrich School guidelines:** <https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/governance/review-dean-departmental-recommendations-promotion-professor> )

Excerpts of key language with key phrases bolded:

The rank of Professor recognizes the **attainment of authoritative knowledge and reputation in a recognized field of learning and the achievement of effective teaching skill**. In arriving at a recommendation, the Review Committee shall be governed so far as possible by uniform standards of excellence as established from time to time by the University as a whole and by the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. Applications of these standards shall take account of the special characteristics of the several academic disciplines and the peculiar needs of the individual departments.

### **Department-Specific Guidelines and Interpretations**

## Research and Scholarship

- 1) Research: Candidate will have published a second peer-reviewed monograph making an original and innovative contribution to candidate's subfield or the equivalent contribution in peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters if appropriate to the candidate's subfield.

Note: As there is no clock or mandatory timeline for promotion to full professor, the Department expectation is that the book will be published prior to departmental review in the fall term. However, we recognize that in some cases, the book will be in galley proofs long before publication. In such cases, the book has been vetted through the peer review process and there is a commitment for publication. If galley proofs are available for external reviewers by the spring prior to the tenure review, the department has the option to move ahead with the review process at that stage.

- 2) Research: Candidate can present evidence of an ongoing and active research agenda, normally indicated by other publications, conference presentations, and/or external fellowships.
- 3) Research: Candidate has attained a national reputation as an excellent scholar in the candidate's subfield.

Note: Community-engaged research, public-facing publications, and digital/multi-media publications are not required for promotion in our department but may be viewed favorably as part of the evidence for "attainment of authoritative knowledge and reputation."

## Teaching

- 4) Candidate shows evidence of "effective teaching skill" at Pitt. Normally, this will consist of the same measures of quality of teaching as that of the tenure review.

## Service

- 5) Candidate should be active and engaged at Pitt and/or in national and international (when appropriate) scholarly organizations and activities. As with promotion to associate professor and tenure, the exact mix will vary depending on what is appropriate for the scholarly trajectory developed by the candidate.

## **How/when these guidelines are communicated to faculty**

- At time of hire
- After promotion to associate professor and granting of tenure.
- Periodic reminders from chair to associate professors
- At a time when the chair believes the associate professor has fulfilled or will soon fulfill the above expectations, they may suggest that the faculty member begin the process (see below).

## **Process to begin review for promotion to full professor:**

- The faculty member will submit a request in writing to be considered for full professor explaining how they fulfill the above expectations. Normally such requests should be made during the fall term in the year prior to the expectation of review.

- The chair (if a full professor) will convene a committee of full professors from the department (and others from outside the department if there are fewer than five full professors at the time in the department). If the chair is not a full professor, they will ask one of the full professors in the department to convene a committee.
- The committee of full professors will make a preliminary determination that the faculty member is eligible for promotion and will begin the process of asking the faculty member to prepare a dossier and the process of soliciting outside letters. The committee should normally make the recommendation to proceed as early in the spring term as possible.

**Sample time frame for someone to be considered for promotion in AY 2030**

- Fall 2028: request to chair to be considered for promotion
- Late Fall 2028: chair (or designated full professor) convenes committee
- Early Spring 2029: committee makes preliminary determination and if a positive recommendation, generates a list of prospective external reviewers
- Mid-late spring 2029: department chair and committee chair (if different) solicit external review letters; candidate assembles dossier to be sent to reviewers
- End of summer 2029: receipt of review letters
- Fall 2029: full professor committee reviews dossier and makes recommendations according to Dean's office guidelines.