

Department of Soil and Crop Sciences Promotion and Tenure Policy

Adopted by Action of the Soil & Crop Sciences Faculty on June 21, 1993. Modified by departmental action in [May 2014](#).

INTRODUCTION

The Soil & Crop Sciences Department at Texas A&M University seeks to retain and reward faculty members who develop distinguished teaching programs at the graduate and/or undergraduate levels, develop exceptional research or extension programs, and share their time and professional expertise in service both within and outside the University community.

This document describes the Soil & Crop Sciences Departmental policy and procedures for promotion and/or tenure of its faculty members. The general procedures for evaluation at the College, University and Systems levels following Departmental evaluation are also described.

The policies and procedures for promotion described in this document apply to both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty, except that the stated teaching criteria do not apply to non-tenure track faculty whose positions do not require them to teach organized college courses. The annual program review and recommendation for promotion to higher rank for faculty located at Research and Extension Centers will be the responsibility of the Department Head and the appropriate Resident Director.

Faculty programs are based on the Position Description and the Annual Plan of Work, with documentation of achievement in the Lifetime Achievement Report. Instructions for the preparation of these documents may be found on [website of the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences](#), (<http://aglifesciences.tamu.edu/faculty-staff/promotion-tenure/> [link verified May16, 2014](#)) or are available from the Department Head or Resident Director.

PROMOTION AND TENURE RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual

It is the responsibility of each faculty member to be aware of the criteria for promotion within the Department, College, University, and System and to meet or exceed these criteria to be promoted and/or be granted tenure. [Ultimately, it is responsibility of each candidate that](#) their required documentation is current, [and complete, and adheres to prescribed organization and formats.](#) The faculty documentation file will include:

1. A current Position Description prepared and signed by the faculty member and the Department Head and Resident Director, as appropriate. Duties and responsibilities of the position with regard to extension, instruction, and/or research programs should be clearly stated. The Position Description will be reviewed annually with the faculty member by the Department Head and Resident Director, as appropriate.
2. An Annual Plan of Work consistent with the Position Description, which reflects in detail the objectives and tasks to be accomplished during the coming fiscal year. This document is prepared by the faculty member for consultation with the Department Head and Resident Director, as appropriate. The Annual Plan of Work for the previous year is to be utilized as a point of reference in the evaluation process.

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3. A cumulative, comprehensive Achievement Report of extension, instruction, research and public service for the faculty member's professional lifetime, including copies of no more than five publications selected by the candidate. This report will be used in support of recommendations for promotion and tenure.
4. A list of **nine** referees who are external to the System and **who, the** candidate believes are capable of critical evaluation of the candidate's merit for promotion and/or tenure, and free of conflicts of interest with the candidate, especially any whereby the referee or referee's program would possibly benefit by decisions regarding promotion, tenure or retention of the candidate. Note that additional reference(s) will be obtained, i.e., beyond those provided by the candidate. More [detailed guidelines](#) on references are provided on the final page of this document.

When called upon for written evaluations, each referee will be provided with the departmental criteria used for promotion and tenure, an up-to-date curriculum vitae of the candidate, and the candidate's statement of teaching, research, extension, and service as appropriate.

Departmental

During the first year of employment in the Soil & Crop Sciences Department, each assistant and associate professor will be assigned a minimum of two mentors from faculty in the department . All faculty will be reviewed annually by the Department Head. All Associate and Assistant Professors are expected to meet annually with their mentors who will forward any recommendations to the Department Head. All Associate and Assistant Professors will be reviewed by the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee at the completion of the third year in rank for Associate Professors and mid-term (normally the third year) for Assistant Professors. A written assessment on the progress of each based on Promotion and Tenure Committee deliberations will be prepared by the respective mentoring committees and forwarded to the Department Head through the chairperson of the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. Reviewed faculty members will receive a written evaluation from the Department Head or Dean that takes into account all evaluative inputs provided at departmental and college levels.

The Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee shall consist of all faculty in the department with the rank of Professor and Associate Professor and who hold a majority appointment with TAMU, AgriLife Research or AgriLife Extension. Associate Professors will only consider and vote on candidates for promotion from assistant to associate professor, and shall be excused from the Committee during deliberations on candidates for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. In tenure considerations, only faculty with higher rank or tenure will consider and vote on such promotions and vote of tenured members will be reported separately. Although votes of non-tenure-track professors are not used outside of the College or AgriLife, we do make it a policy of actually asking for and examining but not forwarding opinions and votes of non-tenured faculty on tenure-track promotions, too.

The chairperson of the Promotion and Tenure Committee shall be elected annually by the faculty of Soil and Crop Sciences. In cases where such an election is not held, the Associate Head for Academic Programs will be responsible for conducting all Committee meetings and for completion and submission of the summary recommendations and evaluations of the Committee.

Associate and Assistant Professors will annually meet with and be evaluated by their mentoring

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committees, and will be kept informed in writing on their progress toward promotion and/or tenure by the Department Head or the Resident Director, as appropriate. The role of mentors is to provide assistance and counsel, as needed or requested, to Associate and Assistant Professors and to the Promotion and Tenure Committee. The role of the mentors is advisory only. Faculty can seek counsel from the mentors as well as from the Department Head or Resident Director, as appropriate.

The role of the Promotion and Tenure Committee is advisory, however, all votes of the Committee are recorded, and the summary departmental recommendations of the Promotion and Tenure Committee will become part of the promotion and tenure documentation that is reported to the Department Head. The Department Head makes promotion and tenure recommendations for the Department to the Dean and/or Director.

ELIGIBILITY AND PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Development of an outstanding department depends upon quality academic, extension, and research programs resulting from the professional contributions of its faculty. Promotion to higher rank and the granting of tenure to tenure-track faculty are important steps for a faculty member since they indicate professional development as well as the desire of the department to retain this individual.

Candidates for promotion and/or tenure may be identified by any of the following:

1. Nomination by the Department Head or Resident Director
2. Nomination by the Promotion and Tenure Committee
3. Request by the individual faculty member.

Tenure-Track Faculty

Tenure or tenure-track status typically is restricted to faculty having a minimum of a 25 percent appointment on a 12-month basis or a 33.3 percent appointment on a 9-month basis with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University.

Normally new faculty members who have only recently earned terminal degrees or have only postdoctoral experience are accorded a maximum probationary period within which they must demonstrate competence for tenure. The probationary period for a faculty member will not exceed seven (7) years of full-time service, beginning with appointment to the rank of Assistant Professor or higher rank. Persons with prior experience may be accorded lesser probationary terms. Persons whose initial appointments to the faculty are at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor are eligible for tenure upon appointment.

The tenure decision for faculty hired without tenure is made no later than the second year prior to the end of the probationary period. Only in exceptional cases will the decision on promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor and the granting of tenure take place prior to the last probationary year. Such action recognizes the accomplishments of the faculty member in making exceptional progress in the development of extension, teaching, and/or research programs.

Assistant Professors who have served a maximum probationary term will not be recommended

for tenure without also being recommended for promotion to Associate Professor. The probationary period should in no way restrict the awarding of merit salary increases.

Decisions to dismiss a non-tenured faculty member prior to the expiration of an appointment, to deny the renewal of the appointment of a non-tenured faculty member, or to deny the granting of tenure to a non-tenured faculty member shall be based on the individual's professional performance and will be consistent with University and System [policy](#).

Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor will be based on the documentation of superior achievement in extension, teaching, research, and professional activities. Consideration may be given to promotion of an individual whenever criteria as set forth in the following section are met. There is no definite maximum period designated for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor.

Non-tenure Track Faculty

Extension and research faculty who do not have a formal teaching appointment that puts them in the tenure track will be considered for promotion but not tenure. The eligibility requirements and requirements for promotion of non-tenured faculty are the same as those for tenured faculty except that the formal teaching function is not required. For these faculty, the recommendation of the Department Head and Resident Director, as appropriate, will also become a part of the promotion package.

CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE

General Policy

The criteria for promotion or promotion and tenure in the Soil and Crop Sciences Department, as set out below, are identical for both; that is, promotion and/or tenure are/is recommended only if the candidate meets the criteria for promotion to the next higher rank (distinguished professorships excepted).

Assistant Professor. Normally the rank of Assistant Professor pertains to an initial appointment rather than a promotion. In either case, this rank reflects potential for achievement. It denotes the *novitiate* of the academic order, a fact emphasized by our tenure policies.

Qualifications for this rank include high expectations of future extension, instruction, and/or research ability, normally ascertained from written letters of recommendation from outstanding scientists in the candidate's field, evaluation of service as a teaching assistant and/or instructor, the candidate's dissertation, coursework, or written evidence of original research.

A maximum probationary period of seven (7) years will be applied to all Assistant Professors in the Department. A mandatory vote on promotion or promotion and tenure, as appropriate, should occur no later than the second year prior to the end of the probationary period regardless of appointment (i.e. AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension, COALS). The year for mandatory consideration for promotion may be calculated as follows. Year for promotion consideration = calendar year hired + probationary period (not to exceed 7 years) – 2 years.

In addition to a mandatory vote on promotion as described in the preceding paragraph, all tenure-track faculty must undergo a formal review in the promotion cycle following their third year of employment. A promotion dossier identical to that prepared for promotion will be used, except

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that internal letters of recommendation will be substituted in lieu of external letters required in the actual promotion dossier.

Associate Professor: Promotion to the rank of Associate Professor requires demonstration and evidence of superior performance in extension, instruction, research, or a combination of these disciplines. Evidence of a substantive research or extension program including peer-reviewed publications relevant to the job description of the candidate, success at grant acquisition, and other evidence of successful extension and/or research activities is required. If appropriate, a teaching portfolio that provides evidence of instructional competence is also required for advancement to this grade. Other professional and scientific activities, as well as efforts in international, national, regional, state, and university programs are positive factors. The candidate must have national visibility.

After six (6) years in grade, but prior to the seventh year, each eligible Associate Professor will undergo a formal review by the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. Following this review, the Promotion and Tenure Committee will forward its recommendation to the Department Head and Resident Director, as appropriate, with a recommendation to promote or that the faculty member be evaluated again in two years. The Department Head and Resident Director in consultation with the faculty member will determine whether the promotion package should be forwarded to the Agriculture Program Review Committee. In cases where the Department Head and Resident Director are in disagreement, the package will be forwarded to the Agriculture Program Review Committee.

If the eligible Associate Professor has not been promoted after the six-year review, he/she will undergo another comprehensive review after eight (8) years, but prior to nine (9) years. The recommendation after this review will be to recommend promotion, recommend that the faculty member remain at the rank of Associate Professor until such time that they warrant additional consideration, or, where applicable, recommend dismissal.

Professor. Promotion to the rank of Professor requires evidence of superior and sustained performance as a leader in extension, instruction, research, or a combination of these disciplines. Evidence of superior achievement in one or more of these three functions is required of a Full Professor. The relative importance of the three functions is determined by the position description.

Publications that provide evidence of a distinguished extension or research program and, if appropriate, a teaching portfolio that provides evidence of superior instructional competence are required. The candidate should have achieved national and international recognition within the scope of research, extension, and instruction functions in the individual's job description. Significant service contributions to the Department, College, and University are expected through committee assignments and leadership roles, and by visible participation in professional and scientific societies at the national/international level.

Measures that may weigh heavily in evaluation for promotion to Professor include quality of the extension program; quality of instruction; quality of theses and dissertations prepared under the candidate's supervision; the candidate's own extension or research productivity; success at grant acquisition; participation in Departmental, College, and University business; and participation in appropriate activities with commodity organizations and state and federal agencies.

Post Tenure Annual Review [<http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/12.06.99.M1.pdf>]

The Department will coordinate a post tenure review of full professors every year as part of the annual review process. A post tenure review committee consisting of two professors with knowledge and experience within the faculty member's discipline will be commissioned by the Department's P&T Committee to review the on-going productivity relative to the criteria listed in this document for promotion to full professor. A succinct report will be submitted to the Department Head who will include a summary of the post tenure evaluation in the annual review.

For non-tenured faculty at the rank of Professor, the Resident Director or Department Head may require a comprehensive evaluation at any time performance is viewed to be less than satisfactory. Three consecutive unsatisfactory annual reviews will automatically trigger a comprehensive evaluation. For tenured faculty, the professional review process also will be triggered by 3 consecutive unsatisfactory annual reviews.

Criteria for Evaluation

All faculty are expected to develop distinguished extension, instruction, and/or research programs and to serve their profession and Department by participating in committee and administrative functions. Programs will be evaluated with respect to the proportion of budgeted time assigned to each activity as indicated by the position description. Major emphasis for evaluation will be on the quality and balance of effort in the individual's overall academic and professional programs. The criteria for evaluation of each function are as follows:

Criteria for the Extension Function

- Evidence of a strong, well-defined, nationally- and internationally-recognized (as appropriate) extension program or a key role in a strong, multi-disciplinary program.
- Publication of peer-reviewed extension bulletins and reports targeted to clientele.
- Publication of extension activities in scholarly and professional journals, especially those involving collaborative efforts.
- Receipt of awards for excellence in extension.
- Significant external funding for extension programs.
- Presentations at user, professional and scientific meetings.
- Presentation of invited papers at professional and scientific meetings.
- Maintenance of effective relationships with clientele.
- Conduct of extension programs with demonstrated impact or outcome for clientele.
- Evidence of strong, collaborative efforts.
- Accomplishment of Program objectives from the Plan of Work.

Criteria for the Instruction Function

- Superior teaching performance in the classroom.
- Development of innovative and effective instructional approaches, materials and techniques.
- Development of nationally-recognized teaching or graduate student programs.
- Development of new academic courses.
- Chairperson of graduate advisory committees and participation in graduate student research programs.
- External funding to support instruction programs.
- Publication in refereed educational and/or scientific journals.
- Receipt of awards for teaching from the University and professional organizations.
- Effective student counseling.
- Effective student recruitment.
- Accomplishment of project activities from the Plan of Work. Criteria for the Research Function
- Evidence of independent, nationally- and internationally-recognized (as appropriate) research in a well-planned and developed program, or a key role in strong, nationally- and internationally-recognized multi-disciplinary research.
- Publication of original research in professional refereed journals and scholarly books.
- Publication of research in forms that are targeted to clientele.
- Receipt of awards for excellence in research.
- Significant research funding from external sources.
- Presentation of invited papers at professional and scientific meetings.
- Evidence of collaborative efforts with extension, research, teaching, and/or industry.
- Evidence that research has contributed to the advancement of knowledge or has produced a tangible benefit to society.
- Recipient of nationally-approved patents.

- Accomplishment of project objectives from the Plan of Work. Criteria for the Public Service Function
- Service to the Department, College, and University through committee assignments and leadership roles.
- Service to professional and scientific societies.
- Maintenance of a strong working relationship with extension, instruction, and research counterparts in the department.
- Service to state, regional, and national levels of government.
- Service to students, student organizations, and charitable organizations.
- Service to clientele organizations and groups.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Departmental

The entities responsible for the review of candidates for promotion and tenure in the Soil & Crop Sciences Department are the Department Head and the Promotion and Tenure Committee. Candidates with primary appointments with Texas AgriLife Research and who are located at AREC's will be reviewed by the Resident Director, the Department Head, and the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee.

The lifetime achievement report along with external recommendation letters and other documents prepared by the candidate (i.e. the candidate's assessment of his/her teaching, research, extension and/or service as reviewed by the candidate's mentoring committee, faculty acknowledgement of contents of promotion dossier, etc.) being considered for promotion and/or tenure will be reviewed by the Promotion and Tenure Committee, with the exception of individuals recused by way conflict of interest. Faculty should recuse themselves from viewing, reviewing and voting official documents of any promotion/tenure documents with whom they have a conflict of interest, as defined by any of the relevant superior institutional guidelines (System, University, College, and AgriLife). These include Board of Regents rules on "33.03 Nepotism (<http://policies.tamus.edu/33-03.pdf>).

The Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee will meet and members who attend the meeting in person or by TTVN will vote on recommendations for promotion and/or tenure. Individuals recused by way conflict of interest should not participate in any phase of the review of the conflicted candidate (they should not view the official dossier, and should exit the meeting during the discussions relevant to that candidate). The vote will be by secret ballot. In promotions that involve tenure consideration, only tenured faculty will be allowed to vote.

The Promotion and Tenure Committee, in collaboration with each candidate's mentoring committee, will prepare the departmental statements pertaining to the evaluation of quality of teaching, research, extension, or service as appropriate, as well as the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee report and recommendation. The Department Head will prepare a

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recommendation in coordination with the Resident Director, as appropriate, but must include the vote of the Promotion and Tenure Committee in the recommendation letter to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences or appropriate Agency Director.

After the vote and final decision are made, the Department Head shall inform the candidate of the results of the Promotion and Tenure Committee vote and recommendation, and forward the recommendation to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Director of AgriLife Research, or the Director of AgriLife Extension, as appropriate.

College, University, and System

The Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Director of Texas AgriLife Extension, or the Director of Texas AgriLife Research receives the recommendation of the department along with supporting documents. The Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences or the appropriate Director will seek additional review from Peer Review Committees at the College or System level.

The Director of Texas AgriLife Extension and/or the Director of Texas AgriLife Research will review all documents and forward their recommendation to the Vice Chancellor for Agriculture and Life Sciences. The Vice Chancellor for Agriculture and Life Sciences reviews the recommendations of the Department Head and Director. The Vice Chancellor of Agriculture and Life Sciences either concurs or demurs. Documents of non-tenure track faculty that are approved by the Vice Chancellor are forwarded to the Board of Regents for final approval.

Tenure-track faculty recommendations are forwarded by the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to the Provost through the Dean of Faculties. The Dean of Faculties and the Provost review the recommendations and confer with the Dean of the

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences before making their recommendation to the President. The President also reviews the recommendations and, if the President concurs, forwards them through the Chancellor to the Board of Regents for final approval. Only the Board of Regents can grant promotion and tenure for tenure-track faculty.

Approval of promotion and/or tenure by the Board of Regents usually occurs during the Spring semester. Promotions and tenure thus approved become effective the following September 1. Faculty are notified of the promotion decision from the Vice Chancellor for Agriculture and Life Sciences through the Dean or Director to the Department Head and Resident Director.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

The right of appeal of an unfavorable decision is specifically acknowledged. A candidate who does not receive a favorable recommendation from the Promotion and Tenure Committee or Department Head may appeal that decision. The appeals process is clearly stated in the appropriate Texas A&M University, AgriLife Extension, or Texas AgriLife Research document on promotion and tenure.

TYPICAL SCHEDULE OF DEADLINES FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE CONSIDERATION

Early May

Early June

Mid July Late July

Late August Early September Late September

Potential candidates wishing to be considered for tenure/promotion should submit their request in writing to the Department Head/Resident Director. Department Head/Resident Director and Associate Department Heads will review request with potential candidates.

Associate Department Heads will request specific information from the candidates (curriculum vitae, outside references, etc.). Outside letters will be requested.

Complete list of potential authors for letters of reference.

All requested documents are due to the main departmental office for review of documentation. Comments and suggestions will be relayed to the candidates prior to distribution to the committee.

Final packets will be distributed to Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Promotion and tenure committee meets to discuss candidate's packets and record votes.

Packets, accompanied by vote of promotion and tenure committee and unit head recommendations, forwarded to Dean/Director (date tentative).

*** Selection of outside reviewers.**

The dossier must contain a minimum of three (3), but no more than six (6) letters from external reviewers who have been asked to evaluate the candidate's accomplishments and potential. Such evaluators should be leading individuals in their discipline and, where possible, from peer institutions or better. Care should be taken in selecting outside referees to ensure that a) they are persons whose objectivity is not open to challenge- i.e. no co-authors, longtime personal friends, former students, or former mentors, and b) they hold at least the rank for which the candidate is being considered.

The candidate should provide the Department Head a list (including names, addresses, and contact information) of **nine (9) individuals** whom they consider appropriately qualified to evaluate their dossier. **Ideally, these individuals will be readily if not widely recognized in relevant fields of endeavor, from institutions of high caliber, and free of conflict of interest.** Candidates may wish to describe the types of past interactions with a given referee, since this can facilitate the selection of an optimal subset of suggested referees. Explanations may also help, e.g., [1] in a narrow research discipline, some level of familiarity and interaction may be common among successful researchers in the same discipline; [2] co-authorship with a referee resulted from a large-group effort and publication that involved no direct research interactions. In addition, the candidate should also provide a list of names of individuals whom they do not want the Department to contact.

The Department will insure that there is a mix of reference letters solicited (some from the candidate's list and some by the Department), and none from anyone designated by the candidate as not to be contacted. It is the Department's responsibility to clearly delineate in the dossier who

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suggested specified reviewers. All letters received must be included in the dossier.

