

# Protocol and Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure

Department of Forestry  
Mississippi State University

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# 1. ROLE OF THE PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE OF THE

**From the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022):** “Among the responsibilities of the department and school promotion and tenure committee are the following:

- To establish procedures for a third-year review of all non-tenured, tenure-track faculty;
- To specify a mandatory date by which candidates must notify the department head of their intent to submit an application for tenure and/or promotion;
- To specify criteria for external peer reviews, including the identification of peer departments or schools at other colleges or universities;
- To facilitate all votes related to the promotion and tenure process, including the vote to approve the original promotion and tenure document and policies and all subsequent changes;
- To conduct a review by the end of the third year of all non-tenured, tenure-track faculty; and
- To conduct a vote on all dossiers for promotion and tenure.

College, school or department promotion and tenure committees will consider, if submitted, but are not bound by, the department head's annual review of a candidate's progress toward tenure or promotion.

Prior to the offer of hire, the appropriate promotion and tenure committee will make a formal recommendation about:

- The initial appointment of a faculty member or administrator at the level of Rank 2 or Rank 3;
- The acceptance of experience as the equivalent of a terminal degree; and
- The acceptance of years of credit at another institution of higher education toward fulfillment of the minimum probationary period for tenure.”

The Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Committee of the Department of Forestry operates in both an advisory and evaluative capacity and is responsible for:

- Reviewing the eligibility of all faculty members who have met the minimum requirements for advancement in rank or tenure and making recommendations to the Department Head.
- Maintaining of the contents of the document “Protocol and Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure” in current form. See Appendix D for revision and acceptance procedures.
- Counseling and mentoring of new faculty members concerning their progress toward promotion and tenure (when applicable).
- Providing a recommendation of approval or disapproval (prior to the initial

appointment) for any faculty member or Department Head granted time for service at another university or for any individual appointed to the faculty at the rank of Associate Professor, Professor, Instructor II, and Instructor III.

- Conduct P&T Committee interim review (at the end of the third contract year) of all Assistant and Associate Professors without tenure and Instructors I and II with credited with that rank (when applicable), and professorial faculty of any full-time academic rank who will go through the department/college/university promotion and/or tenure process.
- Conduct a P&T Committee vote and provide written recommendations/evaluations on all reviews and applications for promotion and tenure (where applicable) to the Department Head.

## 2. COMPOSITION OF THE DEPARTMENTAL P&T COMMITTEE AND

**From the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022):** “Every department and school will establish and maintain a promotion and tenure committee. The department committee may include any faculty track. The promotion and tenure procedures must specify the inclusiveness of the committee composition and clearly establish the eligibility for voting and participation within the department promotion and tenure process. In departments where there may be professional-track faculty of rank serving on department committees along with tenured faculty, it is permissible for all faculty members on the committee of appropriate rank to vote on promotion to Rank 2 or to Rank 3. Only tenured faculty members on the committee can vote on the tenure decision. When a candidate is being considered for promotion to associate professor or to professor and for tenure at the same time, any non-agreement of the promotion vote and the tenure vote will be resolved by vote of only the tenured faculty members on the committee.

The faculty of each school or department will determine the structure of its promotion and tenure committee, subject to the conditions that:

- A minimum of three tenured faculty must be available to vote on tenure decisions;
- Committee members must hold a rank (i.e., 2, 3) at or above the candidate’s aspirant rank to vote on each case. For example, a Rank 2 faculty member cannot vote on a candidate’s promotion to Rank 3. The department promotion and tenure policies shall describe the procedures that will be followed if sufficient numbers of members are not available because of absence, recusal or insufficient rank. Only tenured faculty may vote on a tenure recommendation;
- Unless a unit uses a committee-of-the-whole, the members of the committee must be elected. The length of terms will be determined by the unit;
- No member of the committee will consider the application of a relative. Appearance of conflicts of interest should be avoided;
- No faculty member functioning as an administrator, department head or director of an academic unit will be a member of the committee;
- A faculty member serving on the college promotion and tenure committee may observe but neither participate nor vote in a candidate’s promotion or tenure review at the department level. The committee will annually elect its chair;
- The membership of the committee will be made known to the faculty; and
- An individual will not serve in a year that their promotion application is being considered.

### 2.1. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The P&T Committee shall consist of five elected members with the rank of Associate or Full Professor, an equivalent research or extension faculty level, or equivalent professional-track faculty ranks (Table 1) elected for three-year, staggered terms. An additional committee member might be added in the event an application of a professional-

track faculty is being reviewed. The intent is to have one tenured member elected from each Departmental working group (i.e., Forest Biology; Economics, Management, and Policy; and Measurements and Spatial Technology). The fourth member will be elected from the Extension faculty. The fifth member will be elected from the faculty “at large” and can be from any Working Group, as long as they are qualified to serve. Professional-track committee members must hold a rank (i.e., 2, 3) at least as high as the candidate’s aspirant rank to review and vote on each case.

**Table 1.** Levels of Academic faculty appointment and their equivalent Research and Extension faculty, and professional-track appointments (based on MSU Policy 56.06 2014) with no distinction made between 9- month and 12-month appointments.

<b>Academic Faculty Level Tenure-Track</b>	<b>Research Faculty Level Non-Tenure-Track</b>	<b>Extension Faculty Level Non-Tenure-Track</b>	<b>Teaching Faculty Level Professional-Track</b>	<b>Teaching Instructor Level Professional-Track</b>
Assistant Professor	Assistant Research Professor	Assistant Extension Professor	Assistant Teaching Professor	Instructor I
Associate Professor	Associate Research Professor	Associate Extension Professor	Associate Teaching Professor	Instructor II
Professor	Research Professor	Extension Professor	Teaching Professor	Instructor III

Faculty hired on a split appointment with one part being an academic tenure-track position will carry a single professorial title consistent with their tenure-track appointment, (i.e., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor). Faculty members, who hold joint extension and research appointments, may use one or all titles as deemed useful, (e.g., Research Professor, Extension Professor, or Research and Extension Professor).

For the remainder of this document, faculty described as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor also refers to equivalent faculty ranks in teaching, research and extension, unless otherwise noted (Table 1 above).

## **2.2. PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE MEMBER SELECTION**

Elections will be held each year before the end of the Spring Semester or shortly thereafter. Newly elected members will assume responsibilities on July 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. Eligible candidates will include faculty with the rank of Associate Professor or Instructor II, or higher. At least three members of the Committee must be Full Professors. Three Committee members must also be tenured. To ensure that there are at least three tenured Full Professors on the Committee, elections for the “at large” member may be restricted to tenure- track Full Professors. Committee members representing each working group and “at large” category will be selected by a majority vote of faculty casting votes. If there are no willing and/or eligible members for a particular working group or category then the faculty, through the voting process, will vote for additional “at large” and/or professional-track member(s) as needed to bring the Committee up to full membership. Working group member elections should precede “at large” member elections so that any deficiencies in Committee member tenure or rank status may be designated as qualifications for eligibility for the “at large” elections.

## **2.3. ANNUAL ELECTIONS AND SELECTION OF CHAIR**

Annual ballots will be designed by the Department Head each year prior to the election to adjust for eligible or available faculty and those willing to serve on the Committee. Departing Committee members may be reelected for another term. Each faculty member will get one vote for each vacancy, and can only vote for one member in each working group or category. Committee members shall elect a Chair each year with the position of Chair rotating among the working groups. The Chair should have at least one year of experience serving on the Committee prior to becoming Chair. Due to the nature of professional-track committee appointments, professional-track faculty shall not serve as the committee chair.

To maintain staggered terms, 1-2 Committee members will be elected each year. The following schedule is to be used as a guide, with “X” designating the election for the start of the next term and “C” designating the suggested rotation for Chair (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Election schedule for members of the P&T Committee and suggested rotation of Chair.

Working Group or Category	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Forest Biology	X(C)			X		X(C)
Measurements and Spatial Technology		X(C)			X	
Management, Economics, and Policy			X(C)			X
“At Large”	X			X(C)		
Extension <sup>1</sup>		X			X(C)	

## 2.4. MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

Ideally, each Committee decision should be made by the vote of all five Committee members. However, there will be times when less than five votes will be cast. The MSU Faculty Handbook only allows tenured Committee members to vote on tenure applications and on the promotion of tenure-track faculty from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. Second, only Committee members with the rank of Full Professor are eligible to vote on promotions from Associate to Full Professor. Finally, no faculty member may vote in a candidate's promotion or tenure review at more than one level. If the vote is a tie, then the results will stand as they are and go forward. A tie vote sends a message in and of itself, and does not necessarily have to be broken.

If an elected Committee member is unable to fulfill his/her duties for reasons of health, resignation, professional opportunity (e.g., sabbatical, fellowship), or is applying for promotion and/or tenure, the faculty will elect a replacement (preferably from the same Working Group or category) if the faculty member's absence is expected to be one year or less. In situations where the above policies do not cover a specific problem, the Forestry Department's faculty will decide by majority vote on a policy/procedure to cover that specific issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Extension faculty may be non-tenure track

### 3. PROMOTION AND TENURE

#### From the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022):

##### **“Promotion.**

Promotion is never granted simply for satisfactory performance or for length of service but reflects progressively higher professional competence and accomplishment. Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor, or from Associate Professor to Professor, will normally only be considered after a faculty member has served at least five years in rank so that sustained productivity at Mississippi State University can be demonstrated. Applications for promotion prior to that time will be regarded as early action and considered only for exceptionally strong and well documented cases. Rank should reflect comparable stature with others in similar disciplines in other university settings. Professional achievement at another academic institution may be considered for promotion.

##### **Tenure.**

The granting of tenure is a faculty-driven process and is the academic community's chief guarantee of academic freedom for the faculty member to perform their academic duties without undue or inappropriate external pressures.

Definition: Tenure is defined by IHL Board Policy 403.01 as “Continuing employment that may be granted to a faculty member after a probationary period upon nomination by the Institutional Executive Officer for election by the Board.”

IHL Board Policy 403.0104 further provides that a tenured faculty member is protected from dismissal except under the extraordinary circumstances stated in section L. 168 Dismissal of Tenured Faculty of this document.

According to IHL Board Policy 403.01, tenure is granted in a department, unless otherwise designated by the IHL Board.

Attainment of tenure at Mississippi State University is by no means automatic, based on years of service, but is the result of a thorough evaluation of a faculty member's performance in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service. The proportions of these activities may vary by discipline. Excellence in one area and satisfactory performance in the others are needed to qualify a faculty member for tenure.

Tenure is granted with the university's expectation that the faculty member will continue to perform at or above the minimum standards set by the department or school, college, and university.

Eligibility. Tenure may be granted to professors, associate professors, and simultaneously to assistant professors upon promotion to Associate Professor. Faculty members of all professorial ranks in specifically designated tenure-track positions may work toward tenure. An employee cannot be promoted into a professorial position unless specified in the original offer letter. Professional-track faculty positions cannot be converted to tenure track positions (IHL section 404.01).”

**From the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022):**

**“Probationary Period**

A tenure-track faculty member must apply for and be granted tenure by the university president during the sixth full contract year of employment in a tenure-track position. Failure to earn tenure at the end of the sixth full contract year will result in a terminal contract in the seventh full contract year. The probationary period for tenure-track faculty begins at the start of the faculty member's first full contract year. A full contract year is defined as one that starts on August 16 for 9-month employees and on July 1 for 12-month employees and continues until the next contract period. If the initial contract is for a partial year, e.g., starts after August 16 for a 9-month employee or after July 1 for a 12-month employee, that time is not included in the probationary period.

Up to five years of professorial experience at other universities may be counted in this probationary period, as determined and agreed upon by the department promotion and tenure committee, the department head or director, the dean, and the faculty member in the letter of offer at the time of initial appointment.

For clearly stated personal reasons (e.g., emergencies related to health, activation of military service, pregnancy, adoption, childcare, care of parents), a tenure-track faculty member may request an extension of up to two years from the first five years of this probationary period for an approved leave of absence or a modified assignment. Specific aspects of such an extension must be established by the department head or director, the dean, the provost, and the faculty member. Such an agreement must be in writing. The department promotion and tenure committee shall be notified in writing of the extension and the revised probationary period.

IHL Board Policy 403.0101 allows a faculty member or an administrative employee who held faculty rank at the level of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor and tenure at another institution to be awarded tenure at the time of initial appointment if recommended by the faculty of the tenuring department, the dean, the provost, and the university president, and awarded by the IHL Board.

For tenure-track faculty members with a shortened probationary period as specified in an offer letter or an approved extended probationary period, the "third-year review" should be held at the midpoint of the individual's probationary period.”

The maximum probation period for evaluation of new tenure track faculty with regard to promotion and tenure (when applicable) is six years beginning at the start of the first full contract year of employment (July 1<sup>st</sup> for 12 month faculty, August 16<sup>th</sup> for 9 month faculty). Employment contracts during this period are renewed annually subject to documented satisfactory performance and progress toward promotion and tenure (if applicable). To receive guidance toward promotion and tenure, each new faculty member is encouraged to seek out advice and mentorship from tenured faculty.

The Committee will generally conduct new faculty three-year reviews in September-October and evaluate faculty candidacies for promotion and tenure in August-October. To

help the Committee meet MSU requirements, the faculty is requested to honor deadlines (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Important dates and deadlines for Promotion and Tenure activities.

Promotion and Tenure Activities	Important Dates and Deadlines
Submit three-year review documents to Committee Chair	2 weeks before the scheduled meeting but no later than August 31 <sup>st</sup>
Schedule meeting with Committee for three-year Reviews	September - October
Submit notice of candidacy for promotion and/or tenure to Forestry Department Head*	By July 1 <sup>st</sup>
Submit promotion and/or tenure documents to Forestry Department Head*	By August 1 <sup>st</sup>
External Reviewer letters and any other requested additional material to Committee	By October 1 <sup>st</sup>
Committee Recommendations to Forestry Department Head*	By October 15 <sup>th</sup>

\* For faculty appointed to Research and Extension Centers, documents should be submitted to their Research and Extension Center Head simultaneously.

A member of the P&T Committee whose background most closely aligns with the faculty member under review will be assigned to the faculty member to guide them through the review process and prepare a draft summary letter at the conclusion of the review process. After the completion of the third contract year of employment, the faculty member is responsible for arranging a meeting with the Departmental P&T Committee. At least two weeks prior to the meeting but no later than August 31<sup>st</sup> of the evaluation year, the faculty member will provide to the P&T Committee Chair a summary of information relevant to document progress toward achieving promotion and tenure. Applicants should use the

University's Application for Promotion and/or Tenure Form for the third year progress summaries and final application. At a minimum, this document should include a brief summary of the annual reviews (no page limit), copy of the applicable position offer letter, completed University's Application for Promotion and/or Tenure Form, supporting documents as deemed applicable by the applicant, and copy of a letter from departmental P&T Committee summarizing findings and recommendations as related to three-year review pertaining to promotion (and tenure where appropriate). Applicants undergoing a full application review are required to submit letter copies from their three-year review.

If after this three-year review the P&T Committee finds that the faculty member is not making satisfactory progress towards promotion and tenure, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled by the faculty member before the end of the fourth contract year. The faculty member should submit supporting documentation of progress that, in particular, addresses deficiencies and concerns identified in the three-year review. This documentation will be submitted no later than August 31<sup>st</sup> and at least two weeks prior to the follow-up meeting. Additional meetings may be requested by the faculty member. Each meeting will serve to evaluate whether the faculty member is progressing satisfactorily toward promotion and tenure, and recommendations will be offered by the P&T Committee.

For faculty members with a shortened probationary period as specified in their offer letter or an approved extended probationary period, the "interim review" should be held at the mid-point of the individual's probationary period. These faculty members should contact the P&T Chair during the first semester of their first full contract year to determine the appropriate timing for the interim review.

A written record of the results/recommendations of these meetings will be prepared by the P&T Committee and signed by the P&T Committee Chair, subject to approval of other Committee members. This written record will then be sent to the faculty member and copied to the Department Head. For faculty members assigned to Research and Extension Centers, the written record will also be copied to the Research and Extension Center Head.

## **4. APPLICATION PROTOCOL AND THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

Faculty in the Department of Forestry are encouraged to be familiar with the promotion and tenure procedures contained in the Section V of the MSU Faculty Handbook. Candidates for promotion and/or tenure (if applicable), must meet (or exceed) University and College of Forest Resources promotion and tenure (if applicable) guidelines as well as those of the Department of Forestry.

### **4.1. NOTICE OF INTENT AND APPLICATION**

Consideration for promotion and tenure (when applicable) can be initiated by either the Department Head or faculty member. Notice of intent to apply for promotion and/or tenure must be given in writing to the Department Head by July 1<sup>st</sup>. All application materials will be provided to the Department Head no later than August 1<sup>st</sup> for subsequent distribution to the P&T Committee (Section VI. Chronology). Thereafter, the timeline for completion of the review process will be according to the timetable outlined in the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook. For faculty members assigned to Research and Extension Centers, application materials should be presented to the Research and Extension Center Head, who will then forward a copy to the Department Head. Application to the Research and Extension Center Head should be performed two weeks prior to the deadline for forwarding to the Department Head. Submitted applications for promotion and/or tenure must include a list of five individuals who can provide letters documenting the applicant's scholarly/professional performance. These individuals should have a rank equal or greater than the rank for which the candidate is applying. Names of fellow faculty at Mississippi State University are unacceptable.

## 4.2. EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

**From the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022):**

### **“EXTERNAL LETTERS**

External letters will be solicited from professionals in the field who can provide an impartial evaluation of the candidate's work and accomplishments.

In the case of professorial tracks, external reviewers should be faculty at peer to peer-plus institutions, or peer to peer-plus departments. In the case of instructor tracks, external reviewers must be external to the department, but may be internal or external to the university. External faculty reviewers should not include individuals who have a professional or personal conflict-of-interest with the candidate. Conflicts-of-interest in general would include but not necessarily be restricted to previous mentors, previous graduate students, collaborating co-authors, collaborating co-investigators, or relatives/past-relatives. In disciplines or fields where the general conflict-of-interest definition commonly does not apply, external reviewers normally excluded from the process can be utilized if complete and adequate justification is provided. Definition of what constitutes a conflict-of-interest may be further defined in the department promotion and tenure document and be in accord with the Policy and Procedures Document for Conflict-of-Interest and Ethics (Department of Human Resources and Management: Employee Relations Section Mississippi Code of 1972 Sections 25-4-101 through 25-4-105). The candidate, the department promotion and tenure committee, and department head will each provide a list of names that will be used to create a master list of potential external reviewers.

The department head and department promotion and tenure committee chair will jointly select the final list of external reviewers from whom letters of evaluation will be requested and should include faculty names provided by all three sources. Both the department head and department promotion and tenure committee chair are responsible for eliminating, to the best of their knowledge, all external reviewers that have a conflict-of-interest.

Dossiers must contain an explanation of the credentials and qualifications of each external reviewer regarding their training/background in addition to the extent of their contact, interaction or relationship with the candidate. External letters of evaluation must be received from a minimum of four external reviewers for inclusion in the dossier of the candidate. It is the responsibility of the chair of the department committee or the department head to obtain at least the minimum number of letters of evaluation from external reviewers who have agreed to function in this capacity. All letters received from external reviewers must be included in the dossier of the candidate unless the department head and department promotion and tenure committee collectively decide to withdraw a letter from the review process if it contains information that refers to or describes a conflict-of-interest. In instances when substantial modifications of the application have occurred (e.g. official notifications of accepted publications or awarded grants) after documentation has been forwarded to the external reviewers, these achievements can be communicated in a letter written by the candidate and forwarded to the department head. The letter should be included in the section of the dossier containing the external letters of review.

The identity of the external reviewers will not be revealed to the candidate and communications must not include any information that might indicate the identity or location of any external reviewer. Exceptions may include situations as may be required by law or ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The specific procedures regarding solicitation and use of external letters of evaluation are to be detailed in school and department policies.”

The P&T Committee Chair, in consultation with P&T Committee members and the Department Head, will jointly select the final five external letters supporting the applicant's scholarly/professional performance relative to suitability for promotion. The list will include names from all three sources. The P&T Committee members will solicit these external letters. External reviewers should not include individuals who have a conflict of interest with the applicant. At least one letter will be solicited from the names of the five individuals provided by the faculty member. The names of other individuals (minimum of three, but preferably five) who can be contacted to provide letters will be obtained by the P&T Committee and will be chosen based on recommendations from colleagues who work in a similar discipline or field at other universities, institutions, or agencies, and/or from members of user groups who have insight into the evaluation of the applicant's scholarly/professional performance. If five letters are to be used, two letters will be obtained from the list provided by the applicant and three from colleagues in a similar discipline as noted above. It should be noted the same number of letters need to be solicited in a given year for each candidate going forward. Each external examiner will be asked to provide a recommendation for promotion and/or tenure (if applicable), and the justification for their decision. External reviews will be sent to the Committee Chair and held on file in the offices of the Department Head and the Research and Extension Center Head. External reviews will be used by the Departmental P&T Committee for guidance in developing its overall evaluation of performance in the areas of teaching, research, service, and extension.

#### **4.3. PROTOCOL**

Thereafter, the protocol is as follows:

The Department Head notifies the Chair of the P&T Committee that an application for promotion/tenure has been received from a faculty member. The application will be kept in the faculty member's permanent departmental file in the office of the Department Head (and, when appropriate, with the Research and Extension Center Head). Only the Department Head (and, when appropriate, the Research and

Extension Center Head) and members of the P&T Committee have access to the file for purposes of examination. With the exception noted below, nothing can be added to or removed from the file by anyone after it has been submitted to the Department Head or the Research and Extension Center Head. However, a change in content can be made by the applicant upon request of the P&T Committee in the interest of enhancing the presentation quality. If the applicant wishes to add new information that might be helpful to the promotion and tenure decision making process, then that information will be communicated through a letter addressed to the Chair of the P&T Committee and copied to the Department Head (and, when appropriate, to the Research and Extension Center Head). Such letters will be included in the application packet. As per the MSU Faculty Handbook, if material from a personnel file is provided to the Committee or an administrator, then the candidate will be provided a copy of the material and an opportunity to submit his/her written comments within 5 working days regarding the material before the material is considered by the Committee or an administrator. Again, such letters will be included in the application packet. Once a P&T packet has been sent to external reviewers, no amendments, through a letter or otherwise, can be made.

Members of the P&T Committee will be informed by the P&T Committee Chair about any applications on file in the Department Head's office. Upon this notification, P&T Committee members are responsible for reviewing all material contained in each application and other pertinent and documented information by a date set by the P&T Committee Chair. On that date, P&T Committee members will meet to decide whether the applicant has met the required standards of performance in teaching, research, service, and extension as outlined for promotion and tenure (when applicable) in the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook and standards set forth in this document. At least three tenured members of the P&T Committee must be present at any meeting that ultimately leads to recommendations regarding tenure. A faculty member who cannot attend for extenuating reasons must meet

with the Chair prior to the meeting to provide input and his/her recommendation. Committee members must be of a rank equivalent or higher to the rank being sought by the applicant to engage in review and provide decisions concerning promotion and tenure. If a Committee member's rank disqualifies him/her from the review and decision process, the Department Head and remaining Committee members will collaborate to select a faculty member who is qualified to review the application. Evaluation and voting on promotion and tenure (when applicable) recommendation will be conducted as outlined in the "Promotion and Tenure Procedures" in the MSU Faculty Handbook. A single vote evaluating the appropriate areas (i.e., teaching, research, and/or creative achievement, and service) as a whole will be taken on promotion and tenure. The recommendation will be based on a simple majority vote conducted by secret ballot.

Guidelines provided in Appendix A. "**Criteria for Promotion and Tenure**" and Appendix B "**Performance Categories**" will be used as a basis for the detailed evaluation. Qualified members of the P&T Committee will vote concerning the level of performance (i.e., excellent, satisfactory, unsatisfactory) for the three performance categories, teaching, research, and service. Within each category, evaluation of scholarly performance of each individual depends upon the proportional assignments to categories that constitute his/her appointment(s). Thus, a faculty member with a greater percentage research appointment will be expected to demonstrate greater research scholarly activity than a faculty member who has a lower percentage appointment. Discussion and voting on the application for promotions are conducted prior to the discussion and vote on the application for tenure.

The Chair will complete a report form (supplied by the Office of the Provost) and prepare a written recommendation with input and review on behalf of the Committee members which will be forwarded to the Department Head. The Chair will also prepare a written notification for the candidate with input and review on behalf of the P&T Committee. A negative recommendation must contain explicit reasons for the decision. The Department Head will then forward the application, as appropriate, based on the individual's

appointment (See stepwise procedures in the Appendix C). A written record of the P&T Committee vote and the corresponding recommendation will be maintained in the applicant's departmental file and, when appropriate, the applicant's file at their Research and Extension Center. In those cases where differences of opinion among members of the Committee concerning the performance of an individual are apparent, any member of the P&T Committee is entitled to prepare a written minority opinion report. If such a report is prepared, it will be included with the recommendation forwarded to the Department Head.

## 5. CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE

**The Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022) states:**

### **“Relationship Between Promotion and Tenure**

Tenure-track faculty members who have met the requirements for promotion, but who have not fulfilled the probationary period for tenure, may be promoted without tenure.

Tenure-track faculty members who are granted tenure as assistant professors automatically meet the criteria for promotion to Associate Professor.

### **Performance Standards and Evaluation of Professional Activities**

Every faculty member is expected to meet high standards of professional competence and integrity and to further the goals of their department or unit. In every case, a tenure-track faculty member's performance in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service will be judged by all participants in promotion and/or tenure decisions on the basis of specific criteria in written policy statements, developed by the appropriate academic units.

In evaluating a tenure-track faculty member being considered for tenure and/or promotion, the appropriate faculty committees and academic administrators will give adequate consideration to the faculty member's professional performance as a function of their relative academic workload assignments within the three academic missions of service, teaching/instruction, and research/creative activities. Adequate consideration of a tenure case consists of a conscientious review, which seeks out and considers all available evidence bearing on the relevant performance of the faculty member and assumes that the various academic units follow their approved procedural guidelines during the tenure and promotion review process. Such consideration should be based upon adequate deliberation over the evidence in light of relevant standards and exclusive of improper standards (i.e., any criterion not related to the professional performance of the faculty member). The evaluation of a tenure case should constitute a bona fide exercise of professional academic judgment.

All criteria should be based on the application of the highest professional standards and are to be in harmony with the following university criteria:

*Teaching.* Criteria for assessing instructional activities may include regular classroom and laboratory instruction; supervision of field work, internships, performances, and fellowships; direction of theses and dissertations; development of educational materials; conduct of other academic programs that confer university credit; invited presentation of non-credit and off-campus lectures and demonstrations; and other teaching activities as defined by the academic units. Excellence in teaching, as defined by the current academic operating policy/policies, includes the ability to impart the knowledge, methods, and standards of the discipline, the ability to communicate effectively with students by counseling, advising, or motivating them, the ability to direct students in their own research, and the ability to evaluate student work accurately and fairly according to prevailing academic standards of the discipline.

*Research and/or Creative Achievement.* Criteria for assessing research and/or creative achievement activities may include systematic, original investigation directed toward the enlargement or validation of human knowledge, the solution of contemporary problems, or the exploration of creative forms that bring greater meaning to life. Excellence in research and/or creative achievement must be established by critical peer evaluation, using standards prevailing in the discipline. Excellence may be documented by books, articles, or reviews published by commercial or university presses or in refereed journals of international, national, or regional prestige; research grants, leading to high quality research, intellectual property; presentation of papers before professional groups; invited participation in scholarly conferences; editorial work for professional journals or publishers; or artistic or humanistic performances, presentations, or shows. Evidence of substantive progress on long-term projects that meet the criteria above may be considered as specified by the academic units.

*Service.* Criteria for assessing service activities may include activities which enhance the scholarly life of the university or the discipline, improve the quality of life or society, or promote the general welfare of the institution, the community, the state, the nation, or international community. Thus it includes outreach and extension of academic knowledge to the public, participation on department, college, or university committees, or on regional, national, or international scholarly committees, boards, or review panels, or on public boards as a representative of the scholarly community. Membership or participation in such bodies may constitute satisfactory service, but excellence requires leadership or initiative leading to substantial improvements or progress.”

The probationary period for tenure-track faculty begins at the start of the faculty member’s first full contract year. A full contract year is defined as one that starts on August 16<sup>th</sup> for 9-month employees and on July 1<sup>st</sup> for 12-month employees and continues until the next contract period. If the initial contract is for a partial year (e.g., starts after August 16<sup>th</sup> for a 9-month employee and after July 1<sup>st</sup> for a 12-month employee), that time is not included in the probationary period. It should be noted that annual contracts are not guaranteed for the full five-year probationary period. A terminal contract may be issued prior to the five-year period if the faculty member’s program is unsatisfactory (See MSU Faculty Handbook 2015, Notice of Non-reappointment of Non-tenured, Tenure-track Faculty; pg. 42.).

Tenure-track faculty members who have met promotion requirements, but have not fulfilled the five-year probationary period required before applications for tenure can be submitted, may be promoted without the granting of tenure. Promotion is based upon performance and demonstrated competence and not on length of service. However, a reasonable period of time must have elapsed to demonstrate competence and performance.

Tenure is based on a thorough evaluation of the faculty member's performance during the probationary period.

### **5.1. PROMOTION FROM ASSISTANT PROFESSOR TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ASSISTANT EXTENSION PROFESSOR TO ASSOCIATE EXTENSION PROFESSOR, OR ASSISTANT RESEARCH PROFESSOR TO ASSOCIATE RESEARCH PROFESSOR (TENURE-TRACK POSITIONS)**

**The Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022) definitions of Assistant Professor and Associate Professor ranks (tenure-track positions):**

*“Assistant Professor (Rank 1): A faculty member who has met the requirements in the first paragraph of section B. Academic Rank and has the potential to be successful in the areas of teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service.*

*Associate Professor (Rank 2): A faculty member who has met the criteria for assistant professor, who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who excels in at least one of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the department promotion and tenure documents, an associate professor is developing a national and/or international reputation and is showing a potential for making sustained contributions to the university and to their profession, field, or discipline.”*

Beginning in the academic year 1998-99, a faculty member who meets the established departmental, college, and university standards for tenure automatically meets the standards for promotion to Associate Professor.

For promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor (or from Instructor I to Instructor II) an individual must have achieved at least a satisfactory performance rating in all applicable areas (based on position responsibilities) of teaching, research, and service and an excellent rating in one of the areas of primary responsibility. For promotion purposes a performance rating in Extension can be considered Non-Resident Teaching, Research, and/or Service. For performance rating guidelines see Appendix A “Criteria for Promotion and Tenure” and Appendix B “Performance Categories”. In addition, an Associate Professor is expected to be developing a national and/or international reputation in his/her profession,

field, or discipline.

## **5.2. PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TO PROFESSOR, ASSOCIATE EXTENSION PROFESSOR TO EXTENSION PROFESSOR, OR ASSOCIATE RESEARCH PROFESSOR TO RESEARCH PROFESSOR (TENURE-TRACK POSITIONS)**

**The Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022) definition of a Professor rank (tenure-track positions):**

“Professor (Rank 3): A faculty member who has met the criteria for associate professor, who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who excels in at least two of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the department promotion and tenure documents, a professor must have a national and/or international reputation within their profession, area of expertise, or discipline.”

For promotion from Associate Professor to Professor (or equivalent), an individual must have achieved excellent performance in two of the three principal missions of the University (based on position responsibilities) of teaching, research, and service, and satisfactory in other applicable areas. For promotion purposes, a performance rating in Extension can be considered non-resident Teaching, Research, and/or Service. Faculty with equal split appointments must achieve excellent performance in two areas and satisfactory in all other applicable areas to be promoted. For performance rating guidelines see Appendix A “Criteria for Promotion and Tenure” and Appendix B “Performance Categories”. A Professor is also expected to have a national and/or international reputation in his/her area of expertise.

### 5.3. TENURE

Applications for tenure (when applicable) should be initiated in the sixth year of the applicant's contract and granted with the issuance of the seventh-year contract. The timetable for submission of required application materials is stated in this document and is the same as applications for promotion. If tenure is denied in the sixth year, then the seventh year is the terminal contract year. Some faculty may be hired at the level of Assistant or Associate Professor with written agreement about how many years of credit (maximum of five years) from previous employment can be applied toward the five-year probationary period required before an application for tenure can be submitted. The Department Head must consult with the P&T Committee prior to awarding years of credit at other institutions of higher education toward fulfillment of the minimum probationary period for tenure. The Department Head must communicate such a request in writing to the P&T Committee.

### 5.4. PROFESSIONAL-TRACK POSITIONS (TEACHING PROFESSOR AND INSTRUCTORS)

**The Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022) definition of a professional-track positions (Teaching Professor and Instructors):**

***"Teaching Professor Ranks:***

*Assistant Teaching Professor (Rank 1):* A faculty member with a terminal degree in a discipline appropriate for the position, who possesses the potential for successful performance in instructional activities in a university environment, and who should contribute to the service and/or other scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

*Associate Teaching Professor (Rank 2):* A faculty member who has met the criteria for assistant teaching professor, has demonstrated an ability to perform at a level of excellence appropriate for the rank in instructional activities, and who significantly contributes to the service and/or other scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

*Teaching Professor (Rank 3):* A faculty member who has met the criteria for associate teaching professor, has consistently demonstrated excellence in instructional activities, and who is consistently contributing at a high level to the service and/or other scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

***Instructor Ranks:***

*Instructor I (Rank 1):* A faculty member with a minimum of a Master's degree or higher, who possesses teaching credentials appropriate for the position and the potential for successful performance in instructional activities in a university environment, and who should contribute to the service of the unit, university, and/or profession.

*Instructor II (Rank 2):* A faculty member who has met the criteria for Instructor I, has demonstrated an ability to perform at a level of excellence appropriate for the rank in instructional activities, and who significantly contributes to the service of the unit, university, and/or profession.

*Instructor III (Rank 3):* A faculty member who has met the criteria for Instructor II, has consistently demonstrated excellence, and who is consistently contributing at a high level to the service of the unit, university, and/or profession."

## **5.5. PROMOTION OF PROFESSIONAL-TRACK FACULTY**

**From Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022):** "Promotion is never granted simply for satisfactory performance or for length of service, but reflects progressively higher professional competence and accomplishment. Promotion from one level to the next will normally only be considered after a professional-track faculty member has served at least five years in rank so that sustained productivity at Mississippi State University can be demonstrated. Applications for promotion prior to that time will be regarded as early action and considered only for exceptionally strong and well documented cases. Rank should reflect comparable stature with others in similar disciplines in other university settings. Professional achievement at another academic institution may be considered for promotion."

## 5.6. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF PROFESSIONAL-TRACK FACULTY

**From Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook (June 2022):** “Every faculty member is expected to meet high standards of professional competence and integrity and to further the goals of their department or unit. In every case, the performance of professional-track faculty members will be judged by all parties involved in promotion decisions on the basis of written promotion policies, and criteria specified therein. Those documents shall be developed by the faculty and shall apply to the faculty in specific units which may be departments or divisions.

In evaluating a professional-track faculty member being considered for promotion, the appropriate faculty committees and academic administrators will give adequate consideration to the faculty member’s professional performance as a function of their relative academic workload assignments within the three academic missions of service, teaching/instruction, and research/creative activities as stated in the faculty member’s offer letter. Adequate consideration for promotion consists of a conscientious review, which seeks out and considers all available evidence bearing on the relevant performance of the faculty member, and assumes that the various academic units follow their approved procedural guidelines during the promotion review process. Such consideration should be based upon adequate deliberation over the evidence in light of relevant standards and exclusive of improper standards (i.e. any criterion not related to the professional performance of the faculty member). The evaluation of a promotion case should constitute a bona fide exercise of professional academic judgement.

All criteria should be based on the application of the highest professional standards and are to be in harmony with the following university criteria:

*Teaching:* Criteria for assessing instructional activities may include regular classroom and laboratory instruction; supervision of field work, internships, performances, and fellowships; direction of theses and dissertations; development of educational materials; conduct of other academic programs that confer university credit; invited presentation of non-credit and off-campus lectures and demonstrations; and other teaching activities as defined by the academic units. Excellence in teaching as defined by the current academic operating policy/policies includes the ability to impart the knowledge, methods, and standards of the discipline, the ability to communicate effectively with students by counseling, advising, or motivating them, the ability to direct students in their own research, and the ability to evaluate student work accurately and fairly according to prevailing academic standards of the discipline. Excellence in teaching may be documented by peer reviews, student awards, student evaluations, student successes, faculty teaching awards, recognition of teaching excellence, sample course materials, recordings of teaching sessions, graduate student theses and dissertations, and any other documentary materials that demonstrate teaching effectiveness on the university campus or at the national or international level.

*Service:* Criteria for assessing service activities may include activities which enhance the scholarly life of the university or the discipline, improve the quality of life or society, or promote the general welfare of the institution, the community, the state, the nation, or international community. Thus, it includes outreach and extension of academic knowledge to the public, participation on department, college, or university committees, or on regional, national, or international scholarly committees, boards, or review panels, or on public boards as a representative of the scholarly community. Membership or participation in such bodies may constitute satisfactory service, but excellence requires leadership or initiative leading to substantial improvements or progress.

*Research and/or Creative Achievement:* Research is not an expectation of instructional faculty (i.e. Teaching Professors, Professors of Practice, and Instructors) and should not be a requirement for promotion. Research that allows the instructional faculty member to remain active in their discipline or that contributes to their excellence in instruction or service may be included in the evaluation.

Professional-track faculty who are not in instructional tracks may be required to perform research and/or creative achievement activities. Criteria for assessing research and/or creative activities may include systematic, original investigation directed toward the enlargement or validation of human knowledge, the solution of contemporary problems, or the exploration of creative forms that bring greater meaning to life. Excellence in research and/or creative achievement must be established by critical peer evaluation, using standards prevailing in the discipline. Excellence may be documented by books, articles, or reviews published by commercial or university presses or in refereed journals of international, national, or regional prestige; research grants, leading to high quality research, intellectual property; presentation of papers before professional groups; invited participation in scholarly conferences; editorial work for professional journals or publishers; or artistic or humanistic performances, presentations, or shows. Evidence of substantive progress on long-term projects that meet the criteria above may be considered as specified by the academic units.”

## APPENDIX A

### 1. GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE

Decisions regarding promotion and/or tenure by the Department of Forestry's P&T Committee are not based on a rigid set of criteria. The diversity of disciplines and expectations with reference to the professional roles within the Department of Forestry do not permit such an approach. However, criteria considered highly relevant to the evaluation of the applicant's performance level will be used. An overview of the evaluation of teaching, research, service, and extension missions is provided in Appendix B.

The appropriate departmental committees (Undergraduate Curriculum, Graduate, Research, and Extension Committees) initially provided the following guidelines. These guidelines clearly delineate expectations for satisfactory or excellent performance in each category (mission). Performance of individuals will be assessed as the sum of all professional and scholarly activities, some of which may not be included in criteria presented in this document. Also, it is recognized that responsibilities of a faculty member relative to the different missions of teaching, research, service, and extension may vary widely. Not all criteria apply to each individual.

Criteria for promotion were delineated previously. It is notable that to qualify for Professor, Extension Professor, or Research Professor status a record of significantly greater accomplishments, a reputation in one's area of expertise, and a more substantial commitment to the research/extension community, the University community, the applicant's profession, and clientele, industry, the state of Mississippi, the southern region, and the Nation, **MUST BE EVIDENT**. The extent of these efforts is to be judged relative to the faculty member's area of expertise and appointment.

## **1.1. Teaching Guidelines (tenure-track, non-tenure track, and professional-track faculty)**

Teaching is considered to include both resident (traditional undergraduate and graduate instruction) and non-resident (extension, continuing education, and outreach instruction). To be considered satisfactory, teaching performance must meet an acceptable amount of the minimum standards below. To be considered “excellent,” teaching performance must meet “satisfactory” standards plus demonstrate significant accomplishments in the activities listed below under “excellent.”

### **UNSATISFACTORY:**

- Individual fails to satisfy requirements for either satisfactory or excellent.

### **SATISFACTORY:**

- Teach undergraduate or graduate courses as assigned by the Department Head in keeping with the academic mission and objectives of the Department, CFR, and University.
- Advise graduate students and serve on graduate committees within your subject area.
- Evidence of efforts to secure extramural funding to support teaching activities.
- Initiate Distance Learning courses in one’s area of expertise.
- Meet all assigned undergraduate and graduate classes and/or participate in short courses and/or group or clientele meetings.
- Obtain student and/or peer evaluations for all undergraduate and graduate classes and/or short courses and/or group or clientele meetings. Also, document how course evaluations are being used in the development and improvement of courses.
- Prepare and/or develop and cover during class a syllabus for each undergraduate and graduate course being taught that meets minimum requirements set forth by the University.

- Provide a mechanism for evaluating student performance.
- Provide sufficient and timely office hours for student consultation.
- Return assigned materials and tests for undergraduate and graduate classes within a reasonable time period.
- Revise course content regularly to incorporate advances in technology and changes in knowledge and relevancy.
- Support the teaching program by advising undergraduate students (for faculty with budgeted teaching appointments).

**EXCELLENT:**

- Develop and teach new undergraduate or graduate courses or significantly modify and teach existing undergraduate or graduate course in keeping with the academic mission and objectives of the Department, CFR, and University.
- Develop a record of successful recruitment, guidance, and graduation of graduate students. Success may also be measured by publications originating from the student's graduate work (See *Research Guidelines*).
- Develop new teaching tools and/or create new ways of using existing teaching tools.
- Develop new methods to enhance student problem solving skills.
- Develop new outreach education programs or significantly modify an existing program/or programs.
- Develop tutorials, electronic teaching aids, or distance learning tools.
- Document efforts to improve teaching through formal courses, conferences, workshops, and peer consultation.
- Develop additional and/or alternative methods for evaluation of student performance other than traditional instruments.
- Incorporate writing and/or presentation skills in class exercises.

- Obtain grant(s) related to forestry education (resident and non-resident).
- Participate as an invited lecturer in another instructor's course(s).
- Participate in meeting and advising potential undergraduate or graduate students, with an emphasis on curriculum requirements and career opportunities in forestry.
- Participate in graduate and undergraduate recruiting activities.
- Participate in special activities for recruiting and retaining female and minority students.
- Participate in student life and professional activities (e.g., club sponsors, student activity days, award banquets and social functions, professional and honor society meetings).
- Participate in undergraduate retention activities (e.g., tutoring and mentoring activities).
- Participate in the development of a degree program to be taught through Distance Learning.
- Provide organized efforts to assist students beyond the minimum number of office hours set aside for consultation.
- Publish articles related to forestry education in refereed publications and other appropriate venues.
- Receive positive evaluations for non-resident instruction.
- Receive positive peer reviews on teaching ability (resident or non-resident as appropriate).
- Receive positive undergraduate or graduate student course evaluations.
- Receive College, University, industry, professional association, or other relevant awards or recognition for teaching efforts.
- Serve on departmental, college, and university curriculum committees or other academic and student life committees (e.g., academic honesty or grade appeals

committees).

- Serve on graduate committees outside of your subject area or in disciplines outside of forestry.
- Serve on professional or national educational committees.
- Work with your, or other, graduate students outside the classroom in a teaching situation.
- Write laboratory manual(s), textbook(s), or book chapters related to forestry education (resident and non-resident).

## **1.2. Research Guidelines (tenure-track, non-tenure track faculty, and professional-track faculty if applicable)**

Individual performance in research activities may be classed as unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or excellent. The following items should be considered when evaluating an individual's accomplishments as may relate to promotion and/or tenure. While every item may not be applicable to all individuals in any given year, the lists can be used as established expectations as appropriate to the individual's appointment.

### **UNSATISFACTORY:**

- Individual fails to satisfy the requirements for either satisfactory or excellent.

### **SATISFACTORY:**

- Demonstrated effort in grantsmanship, with some success in obtaining extramural funding at state, regional, or national levels.
- Presentations at state, regional, or national conferences.
- Publication of presentations in non-refereed conference proceedings.
- Develop documents or reports for funding agencies based on research activities.

- Direction of thesis/dissertation research work which leads to completed graduate degree programs.
- Publications of manuscripts in other non-refereed venues including magazines, trade journals, etc.
- A faculty member is expected to produce a minimum of one-peer reviewed (refereed) publication per year, in their research discipline, with consideration given to publication quality (journal impact factor), quantity, level of authorship, and percent research appointment. Publications will present new knowledge, new methods, or be editorial contributions. All publications should have some impact on the discipline.\*

**EXCELLENT:**

- Achieve a notable record of achievement in mentoring graduate students from recruitment through job placement after graduation.
- Notable success in securing extramural funding and/or successful grantsmanship.
- Publish a significant number of presentations in non-refereed conference proceedings.
- Participate in a significant number of invited presentations at regional, national, or international research conferences.
- Recognition of research through invited presentations at regional, national, or international research conferences.
- Obtaining patents or copyrights, which result from research activities.
- A faculty member is expected to produce a minimum of two peer reviewed (refereed) publications per year, in their research discipline, with consideration given to publication quality (journal impact factor), quantity, level of authorship, and percent research appointment. Publications will present new knowledge, new methods, or be editorial contributions. All publications should have some impact on the discipline.\*
- Receive College, University, industry, professional association, or other relevant awards or recognition for research efforts.

**\*NOTE:** Special emphasis should be given to items with an asterisk. Individuals are also

strongly encouraged to attain the goals set forth in other items on the list.

### **1.3. Service Guidelines (tenure-track, non-tenure track, and professional-track faculty)**

The mission of service includes both those activities within the University and those at a state, regional, national, or international level. It includes accomplishments for both professional groups and non-professional clientele. The Department of Forestry regards the mission of service as essential to department, college, and university success.

#### **UNSATISFACTORY:**

- Individual fails to satisfy the requirements for either satisfactory or excellent.

#### **SATISFACTORY:**

- Documentation of satisfactory performance in workshops, short courses, and outreach programs.
- Active participation on department, college, or university committees.
- Active participation in professional organizations.
- Active participation in recruiting and placement of students.
- Documentation of response to requests for information from clientele groups.
- Preparation of letters of references as requested by students or professional colleagues.
- Service to commodity or special interest groups as is relevant to the individual's field of expertise.
- Completion of special assignments (non-committee) at the department, college, and university level.
- Internal review of departmental drafts, manuscripts, and proposals.
- Moderator or panelist at state and regional professional or scholarly meetings.
- Serve as an advisor to student organizations.
- Serve on program committee for state and regional professional or scholarly meetings

or conferences.

- Serve on state or regional advisory boards groups.

**EXCELLENT:**

- Documentation of very good or excellent performance in workshops, short courses, and outreach programs.
- Chair of department, college, or university committee task forces.
- Officer at the local, state, regional, or national level of professional organizations.
- Exemplary leadership or innovative activities in commodity or special interest groups as is relevant to the individual's field of expertise.
- External reviewer of manuscripts, proposals, or other relevant documents.
- Moderator or panelist at national and international professional or scholarly meetings or conferences.
- Advising a group of students during the establishment of a student organization.
- Advisor to a student organization, which receives exemplary recognition.
- Serve on program committee(s) for national and international professional or scholarly meetings or conferences.
- Serve as program chair for state, regional, national, or international professional or scholarly meetings or conferences.
- Serve as an editor of conference proceedings.
- Serve as an editor for a refereed textbook.
- Serve as the editor for a journal.
- Serve on editorial boards or panels for journals.
- Serve on national or international advisory boards or groups.

#### **1.4. Extension Guidelines (tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty)**

Evaluation of Extension activities should be based on both quality and quantity of activity. Evidence of an effective Extension program may consist of the following elements:

development and implementation of programs based on documented needs, production of high-quality materials and innovative approaches to solving problems at the state, regional, and/or national levels, awards at the state, regional, and/or national levels, and effective efforts in grantsmanship.

**UNSATISFACTORY:**

- Individual fails to satisfy the requirements for either satisfactory or excellent.

**SATISFACTORY:**

- Documentation of needs assessment in area of program responsibility.
- Development, adaptation, and effective use of educational materials.
- Participation on departmental, college, or university committees.
- Two Extension publications per year if appointment is  $\geq 50\%$  extension; one Extension publication per year if appointment is  $< 50\%$  extension.
- Documentation of response to requests for information originating from written, telephone, or electronic communication.
- Delivery of educational workshops, short courses, and outreach programs in response to demand by clientele.
- Documentation of program impacts.
- Preparation of no less than five news releases, newspaper and magazine articles, newsletters, web pages, radio programs, video features, or television program segments if appointment is  $\geq 50\%$  extension; two or more if appointment is  $< 50\%$  extension.
- Evidence of efforts to secure extramural support for Extension programs.
- Participation in appropriate professional organizations and clientele interest groups.
- Obtain evaluations for all short courses and/or group (clientele) workshops. Also, document how evaluations are utilized in development and improvement of presentations.

**EXCELLENT:**

- Outstanding or innovative efforts in needs assessment in area of program responsibility.
- Development of new and/or innovative educational workshops, short courses, and outreach programs in appropriate subject areas.
- Preparation of eight or more news releases, newspaper and magazine articles, newsletters, web pages, radio programs, video features, or television program segments in appropriate subject areas.
- Three or more Extension publications per year if appointment is  $\geq 50\%$  extension; two or more Extension publications per year if appointment is  $< 50\%$  extension.
- Documentation of program impacts, which generates information on behavioral change of clientele.
- Providing active exemplary leadership in professional organizations, clientele groups, and committees.
- Notable success in securing extramural funding and/or successful grantsmanship.
- Documentation of very good or excellent performance in workshops, short courses, and outreach programs.
- Receive College, University, industry, professional association, or other relevant awards or recognition for extension efforts.

## APPENDIX B

### 1. PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES

Criteria used to evaluate faculty members for promotion and tenure reflect an expectation of excellence in scholarship based on the job description of the appointment. Components of scholarship include leadership, originality, creativity, initiative, discovery, synthesis, productivity, communication, and recognition. The expected manner and extent of scholarship demonstrated by each faculty member depends on the unique assigned areas of contribution.

#### 1.1. Teaching

Teaching, as a scholarly activity distinct from instruction, is a continuous and systematic effort to understand knowledge in a subject area, determine what is important, develop a learning environment that facilitates student understanding and interpretation of knowledge, and periodically assess the effectiveness of the activity. The standard for evaluation of teaching excellence is the degree of student learning. There is no singular methodology for achieving teaching excellence. Rather, it is composed of a variety of approaches that are continually evaluated, modified, and tested against one another to achieve the highest quality learning environment.

Evaluation of teaching prowess should be based upon examination of syllabi that should represent a detailed description of objectives, a chronology of classroom activities, and the approach used to measure student performance. Self-evaluations, student exit interviews, sabbaticals, use of appropriate information technology, attendance at teaching/learning workshops, and discussion of teaching strategies with fellow faculty also are strong indicators of an earnest desire to self-evaluate and improve one's teaching

performance and the learning experience for all students. A high level of teaching performance is demonstrated by effective strategies that engender and achieve student learning and critical thinking. Such classroom strategies include maintenance of a positive attitude; motivation of students by working at their level; a clear statement of expectations and how they can be met; respect for students; creation of an interactive, non-intrusive environment; creation of a student/professor partnership; development of self-confidence within the student; continual challenge of teachers and students to achieve a dynamic and effective learning experience; and use of a variety of teaching methods based on a recognition of a diversity of ways to learn.

Evidence of teaching excellence includes validation by students and peers through evaluation, as well as recognition of outstanding performance through awards at the department, college, university, state, regional, and national levels. Recognition of teaching prowess also may take the form of published peer-reviewed or refereed articles on teaching philosophy and/or methodology, creation of teaching manuals or other aids for classroom instruction, and awarding of funds from competitive programs for activities to enhance classroom learning.

## **1.2. Research**

Research is a scholarly activity that consists of the creation and synthesis of knowledge, creation of new approaches to understanding and explaining phenomena, development of new insights, critical appraisal of the past, and application of knowledge and expertise to address identified needs in society and the profession. Evidence of research excellence includes an ability to develop a research program that addresses important local, regional, national, and/or international problems, obtain resources to conduct research, document research efforts through peer-reviewed or refereed publications, and publish at least some research results in the most highly-esteemed, peer-reviewed or refereed outlets of the appropriate discipline. Publications should be complemented by a sustained record of

volunteered and invited presentations.

Although quantity of research, especially when sustained over time, is an important indicator of a high level of research performance, the most significant indicator of performance is the magnitude of contributions to existing knowledge and corresponding documented impact of the work on the discipline or society. Collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts to develop, fund, and conduct research are highly valued because such activities commonly enhance the quality and quantity of research, as well as create an enhanced base for research funding support. Evidence of research excellence also includes validation by peers or clientele. Recognition may include awards from the home university, scholarly or professional organizations, evidence of a growing list of citations of the individual's research, and a sustained record of invited presentations, papers, or contributions to edited and refereed books/proceedings.

### **1.3. Service**

Service is a scholarly activity founded on the application of results and corresponding benefits of research to address the needs of clientele, society, and the profession. Faculty service is an important component of the overall mission of the Department of Forestry under the aegis of a land-grant institution.

Service to society is an application of a faculty member's professional abilities, as a representative of Mississippi State University, to enhance the quality of life for Mississippians and others. While the University acknowledges personal public service to be a valuable contribution to society, performance is based exclusively on scholarly service. The key distinctions between personal and scholarly public service are that the beneficiaries of service recognize Mississippi State University, rather than the individual, as the provider of the service and the individual's professional credentials are the foundation of the service. Evaluation of scholarly public service should include the extent to which the service meets clientele needs, induces positive change, or has a demonstrative impact on societal problems

or issues.

Within the University, service activities include serving on committees, boards, panels, task forces, and commissions, and as an officer of university chapters of professional societies.

A faculty member also is expected to engage in service activities within his/her professional discipline by serving as an officer or on committees of professional societies, as an editor or reviewer for professional journals or other publications, as an organizer or moderator of symposia or sessions at professional meetings, and as an advisor or member of review panels for government agencies and funding organizations.

#### **1.4. Extension**

Extension is a scholarly activity consisting of various aspects of teaching, research, and service. Extension focuses on creating, interpreting, communicating, widely disseminating, applying, and preserving knowledge for the benefit of a specific clientele. Extension activity is broader than what is usually termed service because extension entails all aspects of scholarly public service in addition to planned, mission-based educational programs and outreach. Extension includes technical assistance and a variety of formal and informal educational efforts such as radio, television, and youth programming, etc. Central to these efforts is the ability to assess current and future clientele needs and develop effective programs to address those needs.

Evaluation of extension activities should principally be based on quality and impact rather than quantity of activity. Evidence of an effective outreach and extension program should consist of: the development and implementation of an Extension effort based on documented needs in the area of responsibility; production of high-quality materials and innovative approaches to solving problems at the state and regional level; timely dissemination of applied knowledge in the area of responsibility; development, adaptation, and effective use of educational materials; leadership as demonstrated by recognition by

peers and clientele; awards at the local, regional, and national levels; working collaboratively with appropriate Extension, department, and administrative colleagues and effective efforts in grantsmanship

## **2. THE FOUNDATION FOR DECISIONS ABOUT PROMOTION AND TENURE**

Promotion is based on the sum of scholarly and professional activities attained since initial employment at the entrance level, whether Assistant or Associate Professor. While the same individual has to be considered for promotion and tenure simultaneously by the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the general principle is that promotion is discussed and voted on prior to any discussion about recommendation for tenure.

Tenure is the most significant commitment by the University to a faculty member. Only those candidates who are Associate Professors, or who meet the criteria for promotion to Associate Professor, will be considered for tenure. Up to three years of employment in the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor may be applied toward meeting tenure requirements. Granting of tenure is a more significant action than granting of promotion in academic rank because it considers whether a faculty member's character, collegiality, integrity, potential for long-term excellence, in addition to a sustained record of scholarly activity in teaching, research, service, and/or extension, warrant a reciprocal long-term commitment by the University. Tenure ensures a faculty member's rights to the freedom of inquiry, thought, and expression. Tenured faculty members contribute to institutional stability, serve as mentors for untenured faculty, and demonstrate the University's continuing commitment to maintain excellence.

## APPENDIX C

### 1. STEPWISE PROCEDURE FOR TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

1. Applicant notifies Department Head of intent to apply for promotion and/or tenure by July 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Applicant submits P&T packet to Department Head by August 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. Department Head submits individual's P&T packet to Departmental P&T Committee.
4. Departmental P&T Committee reviews packets and makes recommendations to Department Head.
5. Department Head reviews packets and considers P&T Committee recommendations.
6. Department Head forwards packets to the Dean of College of Forest Resources with P&T Committee and Department Head recommendations (positive and/or negative).
7. The Dean of College of Forest Resources forwards packets to the College of Forest Resources P&T Committee.
8. College of Forest Resources P&T Committee reviews packets and makes recommendations to the Dean of College of Forest Resources.
9. The Dean of College of Forest Resources reviews packets and recommendations.
10. The Dean of College of Forest Resources forwards packets to Office of the Vice President of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine with Departmental P&T Committee, Department Head, College P&T Committee, and Dean's recommendations (positive and/or negative).
11. The Division Vice President forwards packets to the Office of the Provost with Departmental P&T Committee, Department Head, College P&T Committee, Dean of College of Forest Resources, and Vice Presidents' recommendations (positive and/or negative).
12. Provost reviews packets and recommendations. Provost makes decision for promotion and/or tenure.
13. Provost notifies appropriate administrative personnel of decision.
14. If an applicant's packet is rejected, he/she may appeal the decision through appropriate University procedures.

## **2. STEPWISE PROCEDURE FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY**

1. Applicant notifies Department Head of intent to apply for promotion by July 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Applicant submits P&T packet to Department Head by August 1<sup>st</sup>
3. Department Head submits individual's P&T packet to departmental P&T Committee.
4. Departmental P&T Committee reviews packets and makes recommendations to Department Head.
5. Department Head reviews packets and considers P&T Committee recommendation.
6. For faculty with research appointments, the Department Head forwards packets to Director of the Forest and Wildlife Research Center (FWRC) with P&T Committee and Department Head recommendations (Positive and/or negative). For faculty with no research appointment, the Department Head forwards packets to the Director of Extension.
7. Director of the Forest and Wildlife Research Center forwards packets to College of Forest Resources P&T Committee.
8. College of Forest Resources P&T Committee reviews packets and forwards recommendation to Director of the Forest and Wildlife Research Center.
9. Director of the FWRC/Director of Extension reviews packets and recommendations.
10. Director of the FWRC/Director of Extension forwards packets to the Office of the Vice President of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine with P&T Committee, Department Head, and Director of FWRC/Director of Extension recommendations (positive and/or negative).
11. The Division Vice President makes the decision concerning promotion.
12. Division Vice President notifies the appropriate personnel of decision.
13. If an applicant's packet is rejected, he/she may appeal the decision through the use of appropriate University's procedures.

## APPENDIX D

### **1. DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR THREE-YEAR AND FINAL APPLICATION REVIEWS**

- Brief summary of the annual reviews (no page limit).
- Copy of the applicable position offer letter.
- Completed University's Application for Promotion and/or Tenure Form.
- Supporting documents as deemed applicable by the applicant.
- Copy of a letter from departmental P&T Committee summarizing findings and recommendations as related to the three-year review pertaining to tenure (and promotion where appropriate). Applicants undergoing a four-year review are required to submit the letter copy from their three-year review.

## APPENDIX E

### 1. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS TO DOCUMENT

This document is subject to periodic review and revision by the P&T Committee as needed. The P&T Committee should prepare revisions, agree upon revisions as a Committee, and then send the revised document to the entire faculty for review. The faculty will vote to approve the revisions, with a simple majority accepting the revisions. The P&T Committee Chair will then prepare the final revised document, update the description of revisions below, send the revised and accepted document to the Department Head, and send the revised and accepted document to the CFR Manager of Communications for posting on the CFR Intranet.

**Table 4.** Summary and description of policy revisions.

Revision/Acceptance Date	Description of Revisions
September 2004	Adoption of document.
August 10, 2006	Expansion of guidance text.
November 7, 2006	Rewording of text.
April 2008/June 23, 2008	Update chair rotation schedule and rewording of text.
September 21, 2010	Rewording guidance text and enhancements to protocols after making application.
September 2012/May 2013	General review and editing.
June 2014	Changes made to ensure compliance with MSU P&T Policy.
December 2017	General review and editing.
December 2018	Changes made to clarify the Department's publication requirements.
February 2021	Updated chair rotation schedule and rechanged name of Committee category from "Non-Tenure-Track" to "Extension".
February 2022	Revised schedule for submission of two- and four-year reviews. Added appendixes D and E. Implemented general review and editing.

Revision/Acceptance Date	Description of Revisions
November 2022	Revised schedule for midterm reviews: two- and four-year reviews were replaced with a three-year review.
December 2022	Revised the P&T document to accommodate the addition of professional-track faculty positions