

Protocol and Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Mississippi State University

Document

This document represents protocols and guidelines specific to the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture (WFA). Promotion and tenure portions of the document will be approved by a majority vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty. Votes approving promotion-only portions of the document will also include non-tenured and non-tenure track faculty. Timelines are generally controlled by University policy and administrative decisions. Promotion and tenure are on a specific timeline for tenure-track faculty. Non-tenure track faculty generally are expected to spend 6 years “in rank,” but earlier consideration of promotion may be possible for sustained, exceptional productivity which are rare circumstances.

Role

The WFA Promotion and Tenure (P & T) Committee advises and evaluates faculty as they progress from initial to ultimate appointment levels. Our goal is to ensure fairness by providing long-term stability in expectations and evaluations.

The committee will:

- Review and counsel regarding progress toward promotion and tenure during the third year (at 2.5 years) for tenure-track faculty or generally at the request of any faculty member regarding qualifications toward promotion. The Committee’s input is independent of that provided during annual faculty reviews with department and/or center administrators.
- Review eligibility of faculty members who have met the minimum requirements and applied for advancement in rank or tenure.
- Maintain and suggest amendment to the WFA “Protocol and Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure.”
- Provide a recommendation, upon request by the Department Head, before the initial appointment of any faculty member at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor.
- Provide a recommendation, upon request by the Department Head, before the award of credit to a faculty member for service at another institution of higher learning toward promotion or fulfillment of the minimum probationary period before application for promotion or tenure.

Composition of the Departmental P & T Committee and Election Procedures

The WFA P&T Committee shall consist of five elected faculty members at the rank of Associate or higher within Professor, Research Professor, Extension Professor, Teaching Professor, and

Professor of Practice titles, and at the II rank or higher within Instructor and Extension Instructor titles. At least three of the five members of the Committee must be tenured, and at their terminal rank. Ad hoc members will be added to address specific representation as needed. The term served will be three years, without limit to the number of consecutive terms. Vacancies will be filled by secret ballot. All members of the faculty at all Professor ranks, all Research Professor ranks, all Extension Professor ranks, all Professor of Practice ranks, all Teaching Professor ranks, all Instructor ranks, and all Extension Instructor ranks are eligible to vote on membership and document revisions. The Department Head is not eligible for election and will conduct the election. Vacancies on the Committee resulting from resignation, assumption of an administrative position, etc., will be filled through a special election (secret ballot) conducted by the Department Head. The elected faculty member will serve as a member of the Committee for the remainder of the term of the individual who can no longer serve. If two or more individuals receive the same number of votes, runoff elections will be conducted until the vacancies are filled. The Chair of the Committee shall be elected annually by the Committee members.

Guidance and Communication Concerning Progress toward Promotion and/or Tenure

We provide a guide to new WFA faculty per the entire P&T process. During their first 6 months, new faculty members should discuss selecting a mentor with the Chair of the P & T Committee and Department Head. The mentor shall be at the Associate or Professor rank or II or higher rank for Instructors and will provide the faculty member guidance toward achieving satisfactory progress toward promotion and/or tenure.

Midway through the third contract year of employment, the faculty member should submit a progress packet consisting of a cover letter, the most recent DAFVM application document, and a CV. The P&T Committee will then evaluate the member's progress toward promotion and/or tenure and consider recommendations as needed. An in-person meeting can also be requested. Additional meetings with the Departmental P & T Committee can be requested by the faculty member in any contract year to obtain advice and guidance toward promotion and/or tenure. A written record of the results/recommendations will 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.

Application Protocol and the Decision-Making Process of the P & T Committee

Consideration for promotion and/or tenure should be initiated by the faculty member according to their timeline (Table 1) and as detailed in their offer letter. The faculty member's decision to apply for promotion should be communicated in writing, along with the promotion dossier, to the Chair of the P & T Committee and the Department Head (and, when appropriate, the Research and Extension Center Head) ideally by May 1, but as late as May 15, of the calendar year when application for promotion and/or tenure will be made. The promotion dossier should include a summary of performance metrics within a cover letter, a CV, and other items listed in the DAFVM application packet. The P & T Committee will review the faculty member's curriculum vita and packet and advise on areas of potential improvement. Input resulting from this meeting *will be advisory and non-binding* to the applicant. A letter summarizing Committee discussions will be sent to the faculty member and copied to the Dean, Department Head (and, when

appropriate, the Research and Extension Center Head).

Revised applications for promotion and/or tenure should be presented to the Committee Chair and Department Head by July 1. For faculty members assigned to Research and Extension Centers, applications should be routed through their Research and Extension Center Head.

The application for promotion and/or tenure should include a list of five potential external reviewers at Peer or Peer+ Institutions who are at least at the same level as the applicant is applying. Reviewers should be able to review the applicant's scholarly performance relative to suitability for promotion and/or tenure. The applicant should include the potential reviewers' contact information, position, and area of expertise and justification of their credentials. 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. External reviewers normally excluded from the process can be used if complete and adequate justification is provided. Other potential reviewers will be obtained by the P & T Committee and Department Head. Four external reviews will be solicited by the Department Head, with a due date of September 1. At least two letters may be solicited from the names provided by the faculty member.

The Department Head will notify the Chair of the P & T Committee upon receipt of the four external review letters. The application and external review letters will be kept in the faculty member's permanent departmental file in the office of the Department Head (and, when appropriate, 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 application and associated correspondence for purposes of examination.

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.

The P & T Committee will review the application and external review letters by a date set by the Chair of the P & T Committee. The committee will decide if the applicant has met the required standards concerning performance in teaching, research/creative endeavors, and service as outlined for promotion and/or tenure in the Mississippi State University Faculty Handbook and appropriate operating procedures (e.g., Division OP 56.06). At least four of the five members of the P & T Committee must be present or attend by teleconference at any meeting which ultimately leads to recommendations regarding promotion and/or tenure. A faculty member who cannot actively participate in discussions, must provide written input to the Chair prior to the

meeting. Members of the committee must be of a rank equivalent or higher to engage in review and provide decisions concerning promotion and/or tenure. If a committee member's rank disqualifies him/her from the review and decision process, the Department Head and remaining members of the Committee will collaborate to select a faculty member who is qualified to review the application for promotion and/or tenure. All deliberations of the P & T Committee are confidential.

The candidate may respond to the department promotion and tenure committee's and/or the Department Head's or Dean's letters to correct any factual errors represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of each letter. The candidate's letter(s) of factual corrections must be sent to the review level to which the response was made. That level may address the concerns in a new letter to be included in the application within 5 working days of receipt of the candidate's letter of factual correction. All letters shall be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review process.

Guidelines provided in the section ***Criteria for Promotion and/or Tenure*** in this document will be used as a basis for evaluation. Each member of the P & T Committee will evaluate the applicant by assigning scores of excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory in each of the appropriate performance categories (teaching, research/creative endeavors, and service). Within each category, evaluation of the scholarly performance of individuals depends upon the proportional assignments to the categories that constitute his/her appointment(s) plus service. That is, 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 lesser percentage appointment. Based on this evaluation, criteria for promotion described in this document, and any ensuing discussion, each member of the P & T Committee will cast one vote relative to the decision to recommend promotion and/or tenure. Voting by the P & T Committee will then be the basis for a majority-based decision and recommendation by the Committee. Only tenured faculty may vote on the promotion and tenure of untenured, tenure-track faculty. A non-tenured professor at rank of Professor may vote on promotion of a tenured Associate Professor.

A written recommendation prepared by the Chair on behalf of the P & T Committee will be forwarded to the Dean/Director (based on appointment) and copied to the applicant and Department Head and other supervisors. All recommendations must contain explicit reasons for the decision. For faculty members assigned to Research and Extension Centers, the Department Head will then forward the recommendation to the Research and Extension Center Head. A written record of the Committee vote and the corresponding recommendation will be maintained in the applicant's Departmental file and, when appropriate, the applicant's file at the Research and Extension Center. In those cases where there are differences of opinion among members of the Committee concerning the performance of an individual, a 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 Dean and copied to the Department Head.

Qualifications and Professorial Appointments

There are multiple categories and appointments within WFA (teaching, research, Extension, service; depending on appointment) that can be considered for promotion and/or

tenure, but it is not expected that an individual will display equal strength in all areas. Candidates should be evaluated using the dossier information within each of the various categories and their specific job assignment. Significant changes to appointment categories and/or percentages should be provided in writing to the Committee by the department head prior to P&T deliberations. All positions within Professorial and Professional titles are considered members of the faculty. Someone with a Lecturer title is not considered a faculty member.

Tenure-Track Professorial Titles

According to University regulations, a faculty member must be reviewed for tenure during the sixth academic year of the probationary period (i.e., the tenure packet is submitted at the end of the fifth year as the sixth year begins; schedule of due dates is included in Table 1). 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 and after July 1 for a 12-month employee), that time is not included in the probationary period. Failure to earn tenure after the sixth full contract year will result in a terminal contract in the seventh full contract year. A candidate for promotion and tenure at the Assistant Professor rank must apply formally at the beginning of their sixth year in rank (e.g., July of 6th year), with a draft packet provided to the WFA committee ideally by 1 May and certainly by 15 May. The committee will make non-binding suggestions on how to improve the packet prior to the formal deadline of July 1.

At hiring, all faculty contracts will specify whether the appointment is with tenure, tenure track, or non-tenure track. Upon written agreement between the institution and the faculty member, credit up to a maximum of five years toward fulfillment of the minimum probationary period may be allowed for service at another institution of higher education or industry. Such credit toward the probationary period must be determined at the time of initial appointment to rank and included in the *Offer of Employment* letter. Such an offer must be approved by the WFA P & T Committee prior to inclusion in the offer letter. Such allowance is to be granted only to an individual who possesses exceptional professional qualifications and achievements and is not to be construed as being an exemption from any other policies and institutional procedures governing the award of tenure.

At the end of the probationary period, a tenure track professor of any rank must be awarded tenure or a terminal contract. The award of tenure is not vested until written notice is received from the MSU President by the faculty member.

At the time of initial employment, a faculty member or an administrative employee whose preceding employment included faculty rank with tenure at the level of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor, may be granted tenure at MSU only if approved by the President. It is possible that an Assistant Professor could be eligible for and receive a promotion before being eligible for tenure (as stated above). For clearly stated personal reasons (e.g., emergencies related to health, pregnancy, childcare, care of parents) or due to uncontrollable circumstances (e.g., global pandemic), a faculty member may request a delay of up to two years from the first five years of this probationary period for an approved leave of

absence, a modified assignment, or a university-wide policy exception. Such exclusion must be agreed to by the university and the faculty member at the time of application for leave.

Assistant Professor or Assistant Extension Professor: A WFA faculty member who has met the requirements in the first paragraph of section B of the MSU Faculty Handbook Academic Rank and has the potential to be successful in the areas of teaching, research, and service. This rank is granted based on potential. It is awarded to people with a terminal degree who have shown evidence of potential for a successful career in teaching, research, Extension and/or service.

Associate Professor or Associate Extension Professor: A WFA faculty member who has met the criteria for assistant rank, who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in teaching, research, and service, and who excels in their primary area of appointment. Based upon the criteria established in this WFA promotion and tenure document, 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.

This rank is granted based on performance and professional growth. For those with split teaching, research, and/or Extension appointments, demonstrated excellence in at least one area, generally the area of greatest appointment (teaching, research, Extension) and at least satisfactory performance in the other areas is required.

There should be evidence that the candidate has gained recognition for accomplishments among colleagues within the University and at other national institutions. Advancement to this rank thus constitutes recognition of meritorious professional performance. A faculty member who meets the established departmental standards for tenure automatically meets the standards for promotion to Associate Professor. Typically, five years as Assistant Professor is recommended before submitting for advancement to Associate Professor. For truly outstanding performance (determined by the Department Head and Dean of the College, in collaboration with the WFA P&T Committee), or if previous experience is factored into the P&T timetable, a shorter period may be considered for promotion only, before tenure is granted (the tenure time-clock cannot be changed). For those with a significant research appointment, the candidate must have established an active, original research program at MSU, along with those since current appointment. *Publications and other professional accomplishments to be counted for Assistant Professor hired with approved year(s) of credit will only include those published in the approved year(s) of credit before joining MSU.* Associate is a high academic rank, and promotion to this rank contains no intrinsic presumption of future advancement to the rank of Professor.

Professor or Extension Professor: A faculty member who has met the criteria for associate rank, who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in teaching, research, Extension, and service, and who **excels** in their majority appointment area and at least one other area. 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.

A WFA professor is a faculty member who has demonstrated sustained excellence in productivity. There should be evidence that the candidate has a record of sustained productivity and has a reputation as an authority in his/her area of specialization among colleagues; a national or international reputation is considered integral to the qualifications for promotion to Professor. The rank of Professor cannot be earned by mere adequate performance. This rank should be

reserved for those who have marked themselves by superior/excellent performance and for whom convincing evidence in that regard can be presented. At least five years in the rank of Associate Professor is recommended before applying for promotion to full professor; however, early application (several years following appointment as Associate Professor) may be considered for **exceptionally strong** and well-documented cases; the department head, Dean of the college, in collaboration with the WFA P&T Committee, would make this determination.

Professional-Track Titles (Non-tenure Track Titles)

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 MSU 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. A candidate for promotion must apply formally at the beginning of their application year (e.g., July of year), with a draft packet provided to the WFA committee ideally by 1 May and certainly by 15 May. The committee will make non-binding suggestions on improving the packet prior to the formal deadline of July 1.

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 if credit is approved and included in the offer letter.

Extension/Research Professor Ranks

Assistant Extension/Research Professor: A faculty member with a terminal degree in the discipline, who possesses the potential for successful performance in clinical/Extension/research activities or creative achievement in a university environment, and who should contribute to the service and/or scholarly activities of the unit, university and/or profession.

Associate Extension/Research Professor: A faculty member who has met the criteria for assistant clinical/Extension/research professor, has demonstrated an ability to perform at a level of excellence appropriate for the rank in clinical/Extension/research activities and who significantly contributes to the service and/or scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

Extension/Research Professor: A faculty member who has consistently demonstrated excellence in clinical/Extension/research activities and who is consistently contributing at a high level to the service and/or scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

**Some Extension and Research positions can be hired as tenure-track. Faculty holding a tenure-track Extension or Research position should refer to the tenure-track guidance.*

Teaching Professor Ranks

Assistant Teaching Professor: 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 scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

Associate Teaching Professor: 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 scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

Teaching Professor: 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 scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

Professor of Practice Ranks

Assistant Professor of Practice: A faculty member with a terminal degree in a discipline appropriate for the position or its equivalent in professional achievement, who possesses the potential for successful performance in instructional activities in a university environment, and who should contribute to the service and/or scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

Associate Professor of Practice: A faculty member who has met the criteria for assistant professor of practice, 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 scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

Professor of Practice: A faculty member who has met the criteria for associate professor of practice, has consistently demonstrated excellence in instructional activities, and who is consistently contributing at a high level to the service and/or scholarly activities of the unit, university, and/or profession.

Instructor Ranks

Instructor I: A faculty member with at least a Master of Science degree, 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: 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 satisfactorily performs service to the unit, university, and/or profession.

Instructor III: A faculty member who has met the criteria for Instructor II, has consistently demonstrated excellence, and who excels in service to the unit, university, and/or profession.

Extension Instructor Ranks

Extension Instructor I: A faculty member with at least a Master of Science degree in a discipline appropriate for the position, who possesses the potential for successful performance in Extension activities and who should contribute to the service of the unit, university and/or profession.

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

Extension Instructor III: A faculty member who has met the criteria for Extension Instructor II, has demonstrated excellence in Extension activities and who is consistently contributing at a high level to the service of the unit, university and/or profession.

Review Criteria for Promotion and/or Tenure

The criteria for earning promotion and/or tenure are based on the candidate's ability to adequately document a record of sustained productivity and achievements that demonstrate the capacity for ongoing, significant contributions to the missions of WFA, CFR, and MSU. Tenure is not awarded based on years of service or linked directly to promotion (that is, you can be promoted early without receiving tenure, but you will be promoted if awarded tenure); however, the requirements and consideration for tenure are the same as those considered for promotion. Specific criteria for teaching (CFR and Extension), research/scholarship, and professional service effectiveness are described below; an overall evaluation of "excellent" is required in the category in which the candidate has the majority appointment (i.e., Teaching, Research, Extension), with satisfactory required in other categories.

Important Considerations:

Decisions concerning promotion and/or tenure by the WFA P & T Committee are not based on rigid criteria. The diversity of disciplines and expectations with reference to the different professional roles and skills within the Department do not permit such an approach. However, criteria judged highly relevant to the evaluation of performance level will be used. The initial promotion from Assistant rank to Associate Professor rank is based on the sum-total of activities since initial appointment at MSU. However, programs take time to develop, so we also look for an upward trajectory in metrics. We expect faculty are progressing in development of their national/international reputation. In contrast, we look for evidence of a sustained, relatively consistent level of activity and attainment of a national/international reputation to justify promotion to Professor. The third year review conducted by the WFA P&T Committee should be taken seriously, particularly in cases where adjustments are recommended.

Collegiality, per se, is not subject to a specific vote by the WFA P&T Committee, but collegiality among faculty within the department is critically important. Additionally, our faculty are expected to support diversity, equity and inclusion within the department and university.

External Reviews

All applications for promotion and/or tenure will be reviewed by a minimum of four external examiners at Peer or Peer+ institutions that have achieved the rank the applicant is seeking. The applicant will submit names of five potential external examiners based on listed criteria and include their contact information and why they are qualified as an external reviewer.

The P&T Committee and Department head will be responsible for developing a list of additional potential external examiners. The Department Head is responsible for securing reviews of the application materials from the four external reviewers. Each of the external examiners will be asked to provide either a favorable or unfavorable recommendation for promotion and/or tenure, and the justification for their decision. External reviews will be sent to the Department Head and held on file in the office of the Department 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/creative endeavors, and service.

For promotion from Associate rank to Professor rank the same standards listed below are used and an excellent rating must be obtained for at least two categories (teaching, research, Extension, and/or service). However, to qualify for the Professor rank, a record of significantly greater accomplishments and more substantial, sustained commitment to the research/academic/extension community, the University community, clientele, professional community (e.g., professional societies), the state, region, nation, and world must be evident. Recommendations of the P & T Committee will be based upon a majority vote following the same procedures outlined in the promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor, from Assistant Extension Professor to Associate Extension Professor, and from Assistant Research Professor to Associate Research Professor.

1. WFA Teaching - Undergraduate and Graduate

Examples of criteria and expectations for teaching evaluation include, but are not limited to, the following examples (some combination of multiple metrics are expected):

Expected (“Satisfactory”)

- Teaches assigned courses
- Covers the syllabus for the course being taught
- Provides an acceptable way of evaluating student performance
- Is responsive to students and provides time for student consultation or office hours
- Grades assignments within a reasonable time period
- Provides self-evaluation or report of student learning outcomes, course surveys, and faculty response to student input
- Seeks feedback from alumni regarding adequacy of course offerings
- Participates in undergraduate and/or graduate advising

Extra (“Excellence”)

- Expected criteria as outlined above, but at a “high” or “extraordinary” level
- Teaches classes above and beyond contractual requirement
- Exhibits passion and enthusiasm for teaching that comes through in their work and to students
- Provides organized efforts to help students beyond the minimum time required
- Develops a new course or significantly modifies an existing course to better meet the needs of students
- Develops and/or implements creative teaching methodologies and strategies

- Receives continual improvement in or consistent exceptional student evaluations
- Receives excellent reviews by peers or MSU teaching improvement unit on teaching ability.
- Directs students outside the classroom to enhance student learning
- Attends or contributes to institutes or programs primarily related to teaching
- Publishes pedagogical articles in refereed journals, study guides, textbooks, and/or obtains grants or other funding related to teaching
- Receives acknowledgment of teaching/advising excellence through awards or honors
- Establishes new community connections to be used as internship and practicum sites
- Receives teaching grants or aids for classroom instruction

Unsatisfactory: An unsatisfactory rating would be designated if performance is judged to be below satisfactory.

2. Extension: Non-formal and Non-degree Instruction

Extension involves educational programs and learning experiences for those not enrolled for credit toward a degree. Included are a variety of activities such as group and individual teaching or technical assistance and education dissemination through workshops, seminars, extension publications, audio-visual materials, curricula, websites, social media, among others. Private and public landowners, natural resource professionals, families, youth, and Mississippians interested in wildlife, fisheries, or Aquaculture management are a major important focus for Extension programming within WFA. Specialists develop and/or guide programming through approved statewide programs and competency development for Extension Agents.

Examples of criteria and expectations for Extension evaluation include, but are not limited to, the following guidelines (some combination of multiple metrics are expected):

Expected (“Satisfactory”)

- Develops and disseminates publications
 - Extension publications
 - Newsletters
 - Popular press articles
 - Websites developed or maintained
 - Reports and proceedings
 - White papers or policy briefs
 - Community reports
- Gives presentations at county, regional, statewide, multi-state, and/or national meetings
- Develops and disseminates recorded presentations (webinars, YouTube channel, social media tutorials)
- Provides mass media interviews (popular press, radio, TV, etc.)

- Serves on committees (advisory boards and other activities directed toward education and needs of clientele)
- Plans, conducts, and/or evaluates workshops, demonstrations, or short courses
- Translates and disseminates research information in formats useful to our stakeholders
- Professional service to Extension and the candidate's discipline as a whole (e.g., reviewer for journals, books, and/or conference or grant proposals)
- Academic teaching (i.e., guest lectures in WFA or other MSU courses when there is no formal teaching appointment) and/or advising (e.g., undergraduate or graduate).
- Implement standard techniques to determine stakeholder needs and impact of educational programming

Extra ("Excellence")

- Expected criteria as outlined above, but at a "high" or "extraordinary" level (e.g. annually averages at least 2 impactful and/or comprehensive Extension publications, and/or at least 2 impactful and/or comprehensive magazine articles).
- Development of novel Extension programming methods
- Develop and implement novel techniques to determine stakeholder needs and impact of educational programming
- Publications that include, but are not limited to:
 - Peer-reviewed journal publications
 - Book chapters and/or books
 - Publications on new or novel Extension programming methods
 - Development of new curricula to be used in Extension programming
- Procurement of a significant level of outside funds from industry, state, federal, or other sources to fully support outreach programming and/or research.
- Collaborates and uses their expertise to synergize with other disciplines or peers as part of multi-disciplinary teams
- Service on graduate committees
- An exceptional level of professional service to Extension and the candidate's discipline as a whole (e.g., reviewer for journals, books, and/or conference or grant proposals)
- Invited membership in special governmental groups, commodity associations, industry groups, educational organizations, and/or professional societies
- Served lead role in organizing committee for a national/international meeting
- Expansion of Extension work from state to national or international levels
- Receives acknowledgment of Extension excellence through awards and honors
- Documents a high level of outreach programmatic efforts that include economic (e.g., dollars saved), behavioral (e.g., practices adopted, knowledge transferred), or resources improved (acres of habitat restored), etc.

Unsatisfactory: An unsatisfactory rating would be designated if performance is judged to be below satisfactory.

3. Research/Scholarship

All WFA faculty with a research and extension appointment are expected to engage in research/scholarly activities with application to applied ecology/aquaculture and/or natural resource management, to publish results in peer-reviewed journals, and to disseminate findings in audience-appropriate outlets. Collaborative efforts are encouraged within WFA, with industry/community, with colleagues in other departments and universities, and governmental agencies. Faculty are encouraged to address research issues of concern to Mississippians, the region and nation.

Research/scholarship is evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative measures. It is important that reviewers of your dossier understand your relative role in scholastic activities, especially research, so you as the applicant need to provide those details. Authorship order varies among disciplines and groups within disciplines, leading to potential confusion as to your relative contribution on publications. Primary faculty may place themselves second behind their student or last to indicate you are lab director; either is acceptable, but you must indicate your policy at the beginning of the publications section.

External evaluation will be invited from experts at peer-institutions, as identified by the candidate, the P&T committee and the department head to assess the quality and quantity of research, scholarship, teaching and extension during the P&T process.

As a general rule of thumb, for promotion to WFA Associate Professor, the expectation is that the candidate clearly is developing national and/or international recognition as a scholar/researcher in their discipline; for Professor, the expectation is that the candidate has become so recognized. A review of the scholarly work conducted in WFA should be based on three principles:

- **Significance-** the scholarly work generates new approaches, ideas, theories, hypotheses with potential application to natural resource ecology and/or management; it results in advances in knowledge and understanding; it has implications for the discipline or other disciplines/audiences.
- **Soundness-** uses appropriate research/evaluation designs; conducts appropriate statistical and/or qualitative analyses; written in a way that conveys the research/evaluation effectively to the appropriate audience.
- **Relevance-** focuses on state, national, and international needs and advances the missions of the department, college, and university; promotes the use of research findings by stakeholders, industry, government, and other natural resources professionals.

Examples of criteria and expectations for Research/Scholarship evaluation within WFA include, but are not limited to (some combination of multiple metrics are expected):

Expected (“Satisfactory”):

- Coordinate a research program that is satisfactory by internal peer review
- Publications (annually averages 2-3 peer-reviewed publications, assuming a 100% research appointment) that include, but are not limited to:

- Most peer-reviewed articles appear in national/international journals.
- Peer-reviewed published abstracts and/or proceedings from international conferences
- Advising/Mentoring of undergraduate/graduate research
 - Undergraduate student works published or presented at conferences
 - Graduate students complete degree programs and publish peer-reviewed papers
- Intramural and Extramural Funding
 - Consistent application and awarding of internal and external funding grants to maintain an effective research program. External grants of \$75,000 - \$125,000 per year, assuming a 100% research appointment.
 - Procurement of awards to support graduate students
- Professional Activities - Presents research findings at regional and national meetings

Extra (“Excellence”):

- Expected criteria as outlined above, but at a “high” or “extraordinary” level
- Publications. Annually averages ≥ 5 publications per year, assuming a 100% research appointment. Types of publications include:
 - Consistent publication primarily in national/international peer-reviewed journals
 - Publication of review articles in national/international peer-reviewed outlets
 - Other publications include, but are not limited to:
 - Books
 - Chapters in books
 - Intellectual property/patents
 - Impactful, comprehensive Extension and/or popular publications
- Advising/Mentorship
 - Productive research direction of two or more graduate students as major professor during the evaluation period
 - Service sought as a committee member for multiple graduate students
 - Productive research direction of visiting scholars and post-doctoral fellows, graduate intern, and/or faculty at lower ranks
 - Significant efforts made to promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Intramural and Extramural Funding
 - Ongoing submission of proposals to appropriate agencies and industry in support of research programs (regardless of promotion level)
 - Success in intramural and extramural funding. External grants exceed \$125,000 per year, assuming a 100% research appointment.
- Professional Activities
 - Invited activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Presentations, especially plenary, at symposia or meetings of professional societies
 - Lectures or seminars at peer (or peer plus) institutions of higher learning
 - Review grant panels and review boards
 - Authorships for book chapters and review articles

- National and/or international collaboration, especially for promotion from associate professor to professor
- Special professional honors, awards, recognition, or achievements
- Editorship in book or peer-reviewed national/international journal
- Graduate or undergraduate student awards from your lab

Unsatisfactory: An unsatisfactory rating would be designated if performance is judged to be below satisfactory.

4. Professional Service

Service to the institution and profession is expected of **all** faculty; it is considered for annual appraisals, tenure, and promotion, but is not itself a basis for awarding promotion and tenure (i.e., it cannot be the only area in which the candidate receives an excellence to be granted promotion and tenure). Professional service enhances the faculty member's reputation and brings recognition to WFA and university. Service to the community in their area of expertise, such as planning or management of natural resources, is also acceptable, but most other voluntary service, such as to church or scouting, does not qualify. In the case where a faculty member has an administrative assignment, the WFA P&T Committee will be made aware of this to consider in promotion/tenure deliberations.

The criteria for evaluation of professional service include, but are not limited to, the following (some combination of multiple metrics are expected):

Expected ("Satisfactory")

- Academic/career counseling of undergraduate and/or graduate students
- Service on graduate student committees
- Service on WFA, College, Division, and/or University committees
- Participation in regional or national professional organizations
- Willingness to offer help to others interested in the candidate's area of expertise
- Editor of a non-peer reviewed newsletter

Extra ("Excellence")

- Expected criteria at a "high" or "extraordinary" level
- Expands departmental activities to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives
- Serves as an editor of a peer-reviewed journal
- Excellence in the coordination of laboratory or special programs or WFA service
- Faculty advisor for an undergraduate or graduate student organization
- Regularly serves as a mentor for new faculty
- Serves in a variety of leadership positions in professional societies
- Regularly participates in promotional activities for the WFA (e.g. Academic Insight)
- Reviews peer teaching, papers, books, and/or grant proposals
- Instrumental effort in obtaining significant gift support for the department

- Organizing or participating in University or regional workshops, short courses or seminars on research, teaching, or outreach, or in programs in curriculum or faculty development
- Significant organizational responsibilities for symposia and workshops of professional societies
- Invited membership in special government study groups
- Invited membership of study sections or review teams for federal funding agencies
- Consultantships or documented use of area of expertise to assist others
- Contributions to continuing education and/or Extension (if not currently holding an Extension appointment) through:
 - Radio and television appearances
 - Contributions to programming
 - Social media outputs, etc.
- Organization and presentation in workshops, seminars, and short courses
- Creation and dissemination of research information into methodologies useful to natural resources professionals
- Guest lectures in other classes, academic departments, or industry meetings
- Receives service awards or recognition

Unsatisfactory: An unsatisfactory rating would be designated if performance is judged to be below satisfactory.

Table 1. Timeline for promotion and tenure application to a subsequent rank. This calendar is based on a 12-month appointment and assumes a hiring date of July 1 of year 1 or a 9-month appointment with a hire date of August 15 of year 1.

- May 1 ideally and May 15 at the latest, end of Year 5 – Submit your draft promotion packet, including cover letter and suggested external reviewers, to the Chair of the P&T Committee and Department Head. You will receive comments back on your draft application from the committee.
- July 1, beginning of Year 6 – Submit your revised, final P&T packet to the Chair of the P&T Committee and the Department Head. The Department Head begins soliciting external reviews.
- September 1, Year 6 – Deadline for return of external reviews.
- October 1, Year 6 – P&T Committee recommendation letter due to appropriate administrator and copied to applicant.
- November Year 6 – Department Head letter and application package sent to the Dean (or Extension Director, for faculty with extension appointments) and copied to the applicant. Dean forwards application to College P&T Committee
- December Year 6 – College P&T Committee recommendation sent to Dean

- January Year 6 – Dean’s (and Extension Director’s decision, for faculty with extension appointment) is submitted to VP, DAFVM and copied to the applicant. Subsequent administrative decisions will be made and copied to the applicant with final notice typically in March of year 6.

Adoption and Revisions to Document

Adopted: 7/8/99

Revised: 6/15/00 - change of titles of extension faculty and change of composition of P & T Committee

9/12/03 - changes to reflect addition of extension and research faculty from Research and Extension Centers

5/19/04 - changes to reflect the stated guidelines in the new University promotion and tenure document; inclusion of addenda describing performance categories and promotion and tenure; inclusion of flow chart of post submission route of P & T application.

2/18/05 – changes to be in accordance with revised and ratified University Promotion and Tenure document.

5/30/06 – changes to clarify the timing and purpose of advisory meetings between candidates and the P&T Committee and to establish deadlines for requesting such meetings.

1/19/07 – changes to reflect University requirements relative to external reviews for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, and to evaluating instruction.

6/29/10 – incorporated changes approved at 2/23/2009 faculty meeting regarding allowing non-tenured faculty membership and changes approved at 5/11/2009 faculty retreat allowing associate-ranked faculty membership.

9/20/13 – incorporated changes approved at 9/20/2013 faculty meeting to reflect change in Departmental name, date for notification of intent to apply for promotion and/or tenure, requirement for reviews be from Peer and Peer+ institutions, exclusion of certain potential external reviewers, reduction in number of external reviewers, role of Offer of Employment letter regarding length of service and appointment percentages, added examples of level of performance, that only tenured and tenure-track faculty may revise tenure criteria in the document and vote on promotion and tenure of tenure-track faculty.

10/29/21 – incorporated changes to reflect new university policy regarding tenure-track extension appointments, clarify how to document extension impacts, clarify the date for mid-term evaluations, and to simplify the content.

11/10/22 – incorporated major changes to reflect new MSU position descriptions, clarified with examples the expectations for research, teaching, Extension, and service.

(NOTE: ADD BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF REVISION AND DATE OF APPROVAL)

ADDENDA

The Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine (DAFVM) Application

The DAFVM P&T application form lacks clarity pertaining to certain types of information. The WFA P&T Committee provides the following suggestions to assist the applicant in creating an effective, well-organized application.

Issue 1: Duplication of metrics in I. Current Responsibilities and II. Activities since promotion/hiring should be avoided.

I. Current Responsibilities - describe your **general responsibilities** tied to your hiring expectations. Do not list any specific metrics.

- Teaching: Describe your pedagogy philosophy and/or approach, describe each class you are currently responsible for teaching and its frequency. Include if it was a new course creation, what developmental efforts you did to an existing course, etc.
 - Extension (which falls under “teaching”) – include how you identify and meet the needs of your target clientele.
- Research: Describe your general areas of interest and the funding sources from which you seek funding.
- Service: Describe your general interests and the areas in which you serve. You must perform at multiple levels of service (i.e., University, College, Department), but describe how you view your service roles within the various university levels and across your profession (e.g., editorial vs professional leadership). Community or religious service roles are not applicable.

II. Activities since last promotion or initial appointment - This is the single location for all of your specific metrics

- Teaching: By class, cover metrics for each year or average across years (e.g., 4.3/5.0), including classes taught but no longer your responsibility, list student numbers (e.g., n=25), outcomes, and evaluations. Extension faculty should document impacts.
- Research: List all projects and their metrics, including past and currently active projects.
- Service: All the specifics related to university, college, and departmental, and external service metrics.

Issue 2. Lack of clarity as to types of publications. “Publications” includes a very broad spectrum of products, which must be placed into separate categories for clarity by reviewers.

- Book Chapters include topic synthesis and differ markedly from a Published Proceedings that is a written version of a presentation.
- Peer-reviewed journal articles differ marked from peer-edited publications. Peer-reviewed journal articles are independently reviewed by experts in the same scientific field outside the journal’s editorial board, whereas peer-edited journal articles are those that are reviewed by a journal editorial board. Also noteworthy, peer-reviewed publications in regional journals are less impactful than national/international outlets and are typically credited much less by reviewers.

- Extension publications should clarify if they are a numbered MSUES publication, or if they are a fact sheet.
- Include distribution metrics if available.
- ‘In review’ articles should include submission details, including journal name, date of submission, and assigned manuscript number

Issue 3. Lack of clarity as to sources of grants. Reviewers weigh grants differentially based on their relative competitiveness, so place them into separate categories for clarity.

- Competitive External Grants involve submission of a proposal to an outside entity and are the most desirable. For competitive external grants obtained by a research team, it is appropriate to list the entire grant while clarifying your involvement level (e.g., PI vs Co-PI, and % credit listed on your IAS).
- Competitive Internal Grants are less competitive and thus weighted differently by reviewers. An example is MAFES SRI.
- Managed Grants refer to “federal pass-through funding,” where the money generally will be present each year barring budget cuts; these are generally less impactful to reviewers.
 - If you are significantly involved in the management and expenditure of the grants with oversight of employees and facilities, you should claim the total grant.
 - If you are not involved in management, then list that portion of funds for which you are responsible for (and their associated productivity metrics).
- If an applicant is part of a research project where content is obviously outside the applicant’s areas of expertise, their reason/justification for involvement should be clarified.

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 depend upon the unique assigned areas of contribution.

Teaching

Teaching involves a continuous and systematic effort to understand knowledge in a subject area, development of a learning environment that facilitates student/clientele 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/clientele learning. There is no singular methodology for achieving teaching excellence. Rather, it is composed of various approaches that are continually evaluated, modified, and tested against one another to achieve the highest quality learning environment.

Student evaluations shall not be the only criterion used to review teaching performance. Used alone, evaluation results may or may not provide accurate and appropriate information upon which to base judgments about teaching effectiveness. By themselves, student evaluations of teaching may indicate trends and provide faculty members with useful information about methods of instruction and practices. Used in conjunction with other types of information about teaching performance, student evaluations can yield useful information about teaching effectiveness. (From AOP 13.15, revised 8/2/06)

For evaluation of teaching prowess, faculty members are expected to provide information in addition to student evaluations. The information can include one or more of the following: Peer evaluations combined with discussion of teaching strategies with fellow faculty; course syllabi that should represent a detailed description of objectives, a chronology of classroom activities, and the approach used to measure student/clientele performance, including exams; self-evaluations/reports; student/clientele exit interviews; attendance at teaching/learning workshops, curriculum development and innovation; scholarly research or Extension publications related to teaching philosophy and/or methodology; the production of teaching manuals or other aids for instruction; receipt of competitive teaching grants and awards; nominations or awards received for teaching excellence.

A high level of teaching performance is demonstrated by effective strategies that engender and achieve student/clientele learning and critical thinking. Such 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 and clientele; creation of an interactive, non-intrusive environment; creation of a student/professor partnership; development of self-confidence within the student and clientele; continual challenge of teachers, clientele, and students to achieve a dynamic and an effective learning experience; use of a variety of teaching methods that are based upon a recognition of a diversity of ways to learn.

Research/Creative Endeavor

Research/Creative Endeavor is a scholarly activity that consists of the creation and synthesis of knowledge, the creation of new approaches to understanding and explaining phenomena, the critical appraisal of the past, and the application of knowledge and expertise to address identified needs in society and in the profession. Evidence of research excellence includes the ability to develop a research program that addresses important local, regional, national, and/or international problems, to obtain resources to conduct research, and to document research efforts through peer-reviewed publications. Publications should be complemented by a sustained record of volunteered and invited presentations.

Although quantity of research sustained over time is an important indicator of a high level of performance, indicators of the magnitude of contributions to existing knowledge and the corresponding documented impact of the work on the discipline or society is also critical. Collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts 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 citation of the individual's research, and a sustained record of invited presentations, papers or contributions to books and edited proceedings.

Service

Service is a scholarly activity that is founded upon application of the products and corresponding benefits of research and Extension to address the needs of clientele, society, the University, and the profession. Faculty service is an important component of the overall mission of the Department 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 (e.g., volunteer service to church, scouting or sporting groups) 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 the needs of clientele, induces positive change, or has a demonstrative impact on societal problems or issues.

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. The quality of these activities may be further validated through awards and recognitions from professional societies or university entities.

Extension

Extension is a scholarly activity that consists of various aspects of teaching, research/creative endeavors, and service. Extension focuses on creating, communicating, 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 education and outreach. Extension includes technical assistance and a variety of formal and informal educational efforts. Central to these efforts is the ability to assess current and future clientele needs accurately and develop effective programs to address those needs.

Evaluation of extension activities should principally be based upon quality and impact rather than quantity of activity. Evidence of an effective outreach and extension program is commonly founded upon development and implementation of a coherent and focused outreach and extension agenda in the area of responsibility; production of innovative materials and new

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 a variety of educational materials; and leadership as demonstrated by recognition by peers and clientele and awards at the local, regional, and national levels.

A faculty member may demonstrate Extension scholarship through efforts in teaching (e.g., applied research as part of a demonstration effort for clientele, needs assessment, poster sessions, presentations, workshops, etc.) or research/creative endeavors (e.g., development of Extension publications or curricula, articles, book chapters, etc. about the effectiveness or results of Extension efforts). Extension scholarship may also be demonstrated in service. These examples are further identified in the section on Levels of Performance.

The Foundation of Promotion and Tenure Decisions

Tenure is the most significant commitment to a faculty member by the University. 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 service at the instructor level 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 the faculty'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.

Promotion is based on the sum of scholarly and professional activities attained since initial employment at the entrance level, whether Assistant or Associate Professor, unless additional length of service was granted in the *Offer of Employment* letter.