

# School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability

The University of Iowa

Policy regarding:

## Guidelines for Tenured Faculty Review

Approved by SEES Faculty on October 7, 2024

Faculty who joined the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences or the Department of Geographical and Sustainability Sciences before Fall 2025 have the choice at the time they apply for tenure to be reviewed using either the criteria set forth in the department at the time they joined or the criteria set forth here. Beginning in Fall 2025 all faculty who apply for promotion to Full Professor will be reviewed using the criteria set forth here regardless of when they joined the department.

### I. Basic Expectations of a Faculty Position

According to the [Professional Policies & Faculty Responsibilities](#) outlined by the college, faculty are expected to be meeting their instructional responsibilities and available to students from the third working day before classes begin in the fall semester until the end of examination week in the spring semester (or until course grades have been submitted, whichever is later).

Every member of the college's faculty is responsible for:

- Meeting assigned classes, holding regular office hours, and being available for students and for school responsibilities during the entire academic year (and, if granted formal permission for absence, making provision for course coverage, TA supervision, and advising during the absence);
- Conducting class according to a syllabus, creating a milieu in which free inquiry is possible, evaluating student work impartially, and administering final examinations at the scheduled times;
- Establishing and maintaining an active program of research or creative work, achieving national and/or international recognition for that program, participating in the professional work of the academic discipline to which they belong, and respecting the intellectual property rights of others;
- Providing service to the school, the college, and the university for the achievement of their missions and participating in faculty governance.

### II. Tenured Faculty

Faculty members are expected to have served at the rank of assistant professor for a period of time sufficient to have established a record in the areas of teaching, of research, scholarship, or creative work, and of service that meets the criteria below and

shows unmistakable promise of promotion to full professor. Most faculty members in the college serve a probationary period of six years.

Faculty promoted or appointed to the rank of associate professor are ordinarily expected

- to hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline or to have equivalent training and experience as appropriate to the particular appointment;
- to have an acknowledged record of success in undergraduate and graduate teaching, including successful direction of doctoral and/or master's candidates, as applicable;
- to have national recognition for a productive program of research, scholarship, or creative work, supported by substantial, significant publication (or the equivalent) of high quality;
- to have participated in the professional activities of the discipline, in ways other than teaching and research; and
- to have established an appropriate record of school service.

Candidates for promotion to full professor are expected to have established a record since promotion to associate professor that demonstrates a pattern of sustained development and substantial growth in achievement and productivity in the areas of teaching; of research, scholarship, and creative work; and of service.

Faculty promoted or appointed to the rank of professor are ordinarily expected

- to hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline or to have equivalent training and experience appropriate to the particular appointment;
- to have an acknowledged record of continued success in undergraduate and graduate teaching, including continued successful direction of doctoral candidates to the completion of their degree programs, as applicable;
- to have sustained unmistakable national recognition and, where applicable, to have achieved international recognition for a productive program of research, scholarship, or creative work of high quality; and
- to have a substantial and sustained record of effective service to the school, the institution, and the profession.

The school criteria below are consistent with the college's Criteria for Tenure-track Faculty Rank and the university's Qualifications for Faculty Rank (Operations Manual, III-10.4).

**A. TEACHING.** It is expected that faculty will regularly update existing courses and occasionally develop new courses. In most cases, teaching assignments will involve a mix of introductory, intermediate and graduate level classes. Other aspects of scholarly teaching activities are less formal but no less important, for example,

working with undergraduate students on independent and senior capstone projects, as well as discussions outside of a formal classroom setting.

The college requires that evaluations of teaching be solicited from students in every course. (See [Student Evaluation of Teaching](#)). The faculty member is ordinarily responsible for keeping their student evaluations on file for use in faculty reviews. These evaluations are necessary evidence of teaching effectiveness in all reviews of tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty.

Each peer evaluation of teaching must include classroom observation. At a minimum, one class session must be observed and reported on as part of the review of teaching in each annual review of probationary faculty and each review for tenure. The peer evaluation of teaching must also include a review of syllabi and other materials from a variety of levels of instruction, evidence of successful supervision of graduate students, and other evidence of teaching quality. Under Regents' policy, the assessment of teaching must explicitly consider the oral communication competence of the candidate ([Operations Manual, III-13](#)).

Graduate student mentoring is an important component of teaching. Associate and Full Professors are expected to advise graduate students and post-doctoral students and serve as committee members for other students in the school. Graduate admissions vary by subdiscipline and by year and consequently, a specific standard for mentorship is difficult to establish. However, if faculty are unable to attract students and are not asked to serve on committees over a period of three years, they are not participating in the full range of expected teaching roles.

**B. SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE WORK.** The scholarly record of tenured faculty is expected to show continued development and growth, and high visibility and impact in their fields of research during their career through frequent publications in high quality peer reviewed journals, presentations at scholarly venues, and external funding from highly competitive sources.

In most disciplines the primary marker of productivity is peer-reviewed journal articles. The expectation is an average of 2 published articles per year within a three-year sliding window, or an equivalent mix of articles, book chapters (in the production of a (co)authored book or edited volume), and proceedings of high impact conferences. These articles should be in journals with significant impact and readership and should include a mix of both senior-authored and co-authored papers, including student-authored papers. In cases where a faculty member is working on a book project, markers of productivity must be continuously maintained. It is also expected that each faculty member will on average present their work at one or more national or international conferences per year.

It is expected that faculty members will seek external funding from NSF or other federal funding agencies or private foundations and maintain, to the extent possible, a continuous stream of funding to support their research activities and the work of their graduate students. Evidence of support should include some combination of providing research assistantships or providing funding for research activities for graduate students (e.g., travel to research sites, analytical costs, travel to conferences). At times when they have no active grant, faculty members are expected to submit proposals for external funding.

**C. SERVICE.** It is expected that as a faculty member increases in seniority and rank they will assume an increasing role in providing leadership and service to the school, the institution, and the profession.

**a. School.** All faculty members are expected to participate in the administration of school programs through service on, and chairing of, school committees (e.g., undergraduate and graduate committees). Associate Professors are expected to serve on one to two school committee per year or equivalent administrative activities determined in consultation with the DEO. Full Professors are expected to serve on two to three school committees per year or equivalent administrative activities determined in consultation with the DEO. School service may also occur in the form of public interactions and outreach, including but not limited to being a scientific commentator (TV, radio, video) and giving public lectures/seminars, or meaningful collaborations with other entities on the Iowa campus, such as other colleges or collection facilities. Faculty members are expected to attend committee meetings, school faculty meetings, and talks in the school seminar series during the fall and spring semesters and respond promptly to requests from the DEO or committee chairs.

**b. Institution.** Service to the college or university is expected. Membership on many university committees can be sought by volunteering for service and it is expected that such activities are performed routinely. It is desirable that each faculty member should serve on average on at least one college or university committee per year. Institutional service may also occur in the form of public interactions and outreach, including but not limited to being a scientific commentator (TV, radio, video) and giving public lectures/seminars.

**c. Profession.** Professional service is recognized as a marker of scholarly/teaching visibility. It may include activities such the following:

- professional society/commission officer
- editor/associate editor of a major journal
- editor of a peer-reviewed book/monograph
- editor of a fieldtrip guidebook/ fieldtrip leader
- panel/council member
- scientific commentator (TV, radio, video)
- lectures/seminars at other institutions

- short-course instructor
- organizer of a professional symposium/workshop
- review of articles for major journals
- review of proposals for nationally competitive funding agencies (e.g. NSF, NOAA, DOE, EPA, DOD, NASA).

Associate Professors are expected to participate in one or more of the professional activities listed above each year. Full Professors are expected to have professional service above the level expected for Associate Professors. This level of activity should demonstrably impact organizations in the profession.