

Department of English
 McCausland College of Arts and Sciences
 University of South Carolina

Professional-Track Faculty Promotion Criteria and Procedures

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See final page for faculty revision and approvals history

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I. Definitions. This document articulates the English Department's approved policies, procedures, and governing rules regarding the appointment, evaluation, reappointment, non-reappointment, and promotion of professional-track faculty, along with the *Faculty Manual* and relevant materials issued by the College, the offices of the provost and the dean, and the University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty (UCPTF). In addition, it articulates the membership and duties of the department's Professional-Track Promotion Committee (Promotion Committee) and its Tenure and Promotion Secretarial Committee (Secretarial Committee) with regards to professional-track faculty.

A. Professional-Track Faculty Appointments and Titles. Faculty will be evaluated only on the areas of professional responsibility in relation to teaching and service that are defined in their appointments and workload allocations. The weight of the evaluation in each area should be commensurate with the allocation of duties, keeping in mind that workload allocation may vary from year to year as professional responsibilities change. Promotion review will take into consideration the shifting allocation of effort over the full review period. All candidates for promotion should demonstrate a record of accomplishment indicative of continuing development of the faculty member in the areas of responsibility defined in their appointments and workload allocations.

The base teaching load for a professional-track faculty member in the English Department is 4:4 or equivalent and should be distributed accordingly: for the instructor track, teaching (90%) and service (10%); for the teaching professor track, teaching (80%), service (10%), and student mentoring (10%). **Professional-track faculty shall not be required, expected, or pressured to participate in activities that are not included as compensated responsibilities under the terms and conditions of their employment.** However, where a departmental service requirement does not exist in a contract, its absence shall not be used to exclude professional-track faculty from voluntarily serving in governance.

1. Titles: Instructor Track

Instructor

To be eligible for appointment at the rank of instructor, a faculty member normally is expected to possess a master's degree in the relevant teaching discipline or a master's degree with a concentration in the relevant teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the relevant teaching discipline).

Senior Instructor

An individual appointed at or promoted to the rank of Senior Instructor must have the equivalent of five years of full-time teaching experience in higher education and evidence of effective instruction as defined by the unit. A master's degree in the relevant teaching discipline or a master's degree with a concentration in the relevant teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline) is required.

Principal Instructor

An individual appointed at or promoted to the rank of Principal Instructor requires the equivalent of nine years of full-time teaching experience and a record of excellent instruction as defined by the academic unit. A master's degree in the relevant teaching discipline or a master's degree with a concentration in the relevant teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline) is required.

2. Titles: Teaching Professor Track

Teaching Assistant Professor

An individual appointed at the rank of Teaching Assistant Professor must have strong potential for development as an instructor and student mentor. A terminal degree is required.

Teaching Associate Professor

An individual appointed at or promoted to the rank of Teaching Associate Professor must have at least five years of effective, relevant experience; a record of effective professional performance as defined by the academic unit; and strong potential for further development as an instructor and student mentor. A terminal degree is required.

Teaching Professor

An individual appointed at or promoted to the rank of Teaching Professor must have at least nine years of effective, relevant experience, and a record of excellent instruction and student mentorship as defined by the academic unit. This rank is reserved for individuals with proven stature in instructional roles. A terminal degree is required.

B. Professional-Track Promotion Committee (Promotion Committee). The Professional-Track Promotion Committee is composed of all professional-track and tenured members of the department at or above the (equivalent) rank to which the candidate aspires. For the purposes of reviewing professional-track faculty, faculty appointments at each of the three-tiers of professional-track and tenure-track faculty titles, respectively, are considered equivalent (e.g., the ranks of Instructor, Teaching Assistant Professor, and Assistant Professor are equivalent in this context). See also Section II.A.9 below for a detailed list of who is eligible to vote on applications for promotion to each rank.

The Professional-Track Promotion Committee is chaired by the chair of the Tenure and Promotion Secretarial Committee (see I.C below). The Promotion Committee convenes at the committee chair's notice to review promotion candidates in teaching, service, and student mentoring, evaluating performance according to the procedures and criteria outlined below in Section IV.

C. Tenure and Promotion Secretarial Committee (Secretarial Committee). The department's Tenure and Promotion Secretarial Committee is composed of five tenured faculty members, at least two of whom must be full professors, and one professional-track faculty member at a rank higher than the promotion candidate(s), elected during the spring semester for two-year terms. By April 15 of each year, the Tenure and Promotion Secretarial Committee shall elect its chair for the upcoming year and report the incoming chair's name to the department chair, who in turn reports it to the office of the dean to be reported to the provost and Faculty Senate. If an additional professional-track faculty member at higher rank is needed subsequently, one may be added. The chair of the Secretarial Committee will hold the rank of full professor and will assist the candidates in preparing their files.

II. Promotion Procedures and Criteria

A. Procedures

1. Notification and Review Calendar. In the Fall, following the deadlines set by the university and the college, the department chair will notify all eligible faculty to ascertain whether they

intend to be reviewed for promotion in the Spring. The chair of the Secretarial Committee will provide a written notification of the timetable for submission and consideration of a candidate's files by December 1.

2. Peer Observation. In addition to observations conducted as part of the annual review process, the Secretarial Committee in consultation with the departmental Teaching Committee will arrange for two colleagues to observe one of the candidate's classes and contribute letters as part of the candidate's promotion file. These will typically occur during the semester prior to or in which the candidate submits their file. The observers must be tenured or professional-track faculty of higher rank than the candidate. When possible, these observations will be held by professional-track faculty. The two observers will consult with the candidate prior to the visit in order to receive a copy of the syllabus and any other information the candidate wishes them to have to place the class in context of the entire semester. After the visits, each observer will write a detailed description addressed to the department chair about the class, noting its strengths and weaknesses. These reports will become part of the promotion file to be considered by the Promotion Committee.

3. Preparation of Teaching Summary. With guidance from and in coordination with the Secretarial Committee, the candidate will arrange for a faculty member eligible to vote on the file to prepare a comprehensive summary of their teaching activity for a minimum of five years or since the last promotion, whichever is greater. The document will conform to requirements of the offices of the dean and the provost, including a summary of all student evaluations for the candidate's courses as well as a summary of peer observations. The Teaching Summary will be submitted by its author directly to the chair of the Secretarial Committee for addition to the file.

4. Advisement of Candidates. The chair of the Secretarial Committee will meet with candidates to discuss the compilation of the promotion file. While the Secretarial Committee will assist the candidate as outlined in II.A, the ultimate responsibility for a complete and persuasive file remains with the candidate.

5. Promotion File. The promotion file is the record of performance. It includes a primary file and a secondary file. Both are compiled by the candidate in accordance with all requirements of the offices of the provost and the dean and submitted to the chair of the Secretarial Committee (as two separate bookmarked PDF files). The primary file must include all documents required by the office of the provost and be organized according to their guidelines. The secondary file, which should also be organized clearly, should include student evaluations, sample syllabi, and any other (optional) material the candidate wishes to include to document their teaching (e.g., sample assignments and other teaching materials), service, student mentoring (if required), and any other evidence of success relevant to the criteria. The Secretarial Committee will supplement the primary file with the documents noted below in II.A.6 and submit the complete promotion file to the Promotion Committee and the department chair for evaluation by the department, the dean, the provost, and the UCPTF.

After the Promotion Committee votes on the file, the primary file will be supplemented by the ballots of the eligible voting faculty and the department chair's summary evaluation before the chair submits it to the dean.

6. Consolidating Candidates' Files for Review. After the candidate submits the promotion file, the chair of the Secretarial Committee will add the Teaching Summary and peer reports on classroom observations and ascertain that the file is ready for review by the Promotion Committee. By the deadlines set by the dean and the provost, the Secretarial Committee will make available the candidate's promotion file to the eligible voting faculty (see II.A.9 below). When confidentiality can be assured, the Secretarial Committee will make available to the eligible voting faculty an electronic copy of the primary promotion file via a secure access system provided by the university (Blackboard or other). This password-protected file will be read-only. Members of the eligible voting faculty shall not produce or circulate copies by any means whatsoever and shall ensure the confidentiality of contents at all times.

7. Processes for Joint Appointments. To ensure that the voice of the secondary unit registers in the deliberations over promotion of jointly appointed candidates, the department will do the following: At the beginning of the review cycle, the department chair will notify the secondary unit chair that a joint faculty member intends to be a candidate for promotion. As soon as the file is complete, the Secretarial Committee will make it available for review to the relevant promotion committee of the secondary unit. As soon as possible thereafter, and no later than the meeting at which the primary unit discusses the candidate's file, the chair of the secondary unit promotion committee will submit a letter summarizing the assessments of the candidate's file by that unit's eligible faculty. This letter will be included in the candidate's promotion file. The chair of the secondary unit's promotion committee will also present this evaluation at the primary unit's meeting to discuss the candidate's file.

8. Meeting of the Promotion Committee. In accordance with the timetables established by the offices of the provost and the dean, the Promotion Committee will meet to discuss each candidate's file. Prior to the meeting, all members will have given a thorough and conscientious review of all materials in the files. The meeting will be chaired by the chair of the Secretarial Committee. Members of the Promotion Committee will have pledged not to discuss in any manner with anyone not a member of the committee, faculty member or otherwise, any of its proceedings or deliberations.

9. Vote of the Promotion Committee. All faculty of eligible rank (except the department chair, whose vote is reported separately) shall vote on whether a candidate should be promoted, as follows:

For promotion from Instructor to Senior Instructor, eligible voting members of the faculty include Associate Professors, Professors, Teaching Associate Professors, Teaching Professors, Senior Instructors, and Principal Instructors.

For promotion from Senior Instructor to Principal Instructor, eligible voting members of the faculty include Professors, Teaching Professors, and Principal Instructors.

For promotion from Teaching Assistant Professor to Teaching Associate Professor, eligible voting members of the faculty include Associate Professors, Professors, Teaching Associate Professors, Teaching Professors, Senior Instructors, and Principal Instructors.

For promotion from Teaching Associate Professor to Teaching Professor, eligible voting members of the faculty include Professors, Teaching Professors, and Principal Instructors.

Secret ballots will be submitted to the office of the department chair by the deadline set by the Tenure and Promotion Secretarial Committee. Ballots cannot be accepted after the deadline. Each faculty member eligible to vote shall vote “yes,” “no,” or “abstain.” All “yes” or “no” ballots must include a written justification that states specifically how the candidate meets or does not meet the department’s criteria for promotion outlined in this document. Votes to abstain must offer a justification for the abstention.

A conflict of interest will be deemed to exist between the candidate and a faculty member if the second was a master’s, doctoral, or postdoctoral advisor of the candidate; and/or the committee member is or has been a member of the candidate’s immediate family or lives in the same household. If a faculty member has a conflict of interest, they shall not vote or otherwise participate in the process.

The department vote total and ballots with justifications are to be included in the promotion file. The ballots will be tallied by the department chair in conjunction with the Secretarial Committee. The chair will indicate their vote in a letter summarizing and evaluating the unit vote.

A favorable recommendation is a simple majority of "yes" votes from among all written ballots. Abstentions do not count toward the total votes in determining the existence of a majority vote.

The department chair will notify the candidate in writing of the positive or negative nature of the departmental vote as soon as possible after the voting.

10. Affirmative Recommendation by the Department. A candidate’s file will be sent forward if the department recommends promotion.

11. Negative Recommendation by the Department. If the department does not recommend promotion, the chair will meet with the faculty member upon request to provide feedback regarding the decision. In keeping with the process governed by the *Faculty Manual*, upon written request of a candidate dissatisfied with any negative decision on promotion by the department, the department shall send that candidate’s file through all appropriate channels for endorsement to the provost for appropriate action. Failure to recommend a candidate favorably for promotion is without prejudice with respect to future consideration. After the decision by the provost, candidates dissatisfied with the decision regarding promotion may submit an appeal to the University Faculty Appellate Panel.

B. Criteria for Promotion

1. Evaluation Criteria. The departmental criteria below use the adjectival standards for promotion set forth in the *Faculty Manual* as follows:

Outstanding:	The candidate's performance is far above the minimally effective level as defined by unit criteria.
Excellent:	The candidate significantly exceeds the minimally effective level of performance.
Good:	The candidate's performance is clearly above the minimally effective level.
Fair:	The candidate meets the minimally effective level of performance.
Unacceptable:	The candidate has accomplished less than the minimally effective level of performance.

Departmental criteria for promotion by rank are as follows:

Instructor to Senior Instructor

For promotion to Senior Instructor, candidates should be considered at least Excellent in the area of Teaching and at least Good in the area of Service.

Senior Instructor to Principal Instructor

For promotion to Principal Instructor, candidates should be considered at least Excellent in the areas of Teaching and Service.

Teaching Assistant Professor to Teaching Associate Professor

For promotion to Teaching Associate Professor, candidates should be considered at least Excellent in the area of Teaching and at least Good in the areas of Service and Mentoring.

Teaching Associate Professor to Teaching Professor

For promotion to Teaching Professor, candidates should be considered at least Excellent in the areas of Teaching, Service, and Mentoring.

2. Teaching Evaluation Criteria for Instructor and Teaching Professor Tracks

The criteria for teaching required for the rank being sought (as detailed in II.B.1 above) is defined and determined as follows:

Outstanding teaching is defined as teaching classes that offer exceptional clarity and rigor, are taught at an appropriate level, and strongly motivate students to learn. In addition, the record of an outstanding teacher testifies to sustained high standards and pedagogical dedication.

Excellent teaching is defined as teaching classes that regularly display clarity and rigor, are taught at an appropriate level, and motivate students to learn. In addition, the record of an excellent teacher testifies to consistently high standards and pedagogical dedication.

Good teaching is defined as teaching classes that display clarity and rigor, are taught at an appropriate level, and support student learning. The record of a good teacher reflects high standards and pedagogical dedication.

Fair teaching is defined as teaching that meets the minimally effective level of performance, including appropriate course preparation and delivery.

Unacceptable teaching is defined as a pattern of teaching that falls below the minimally effective level of performance, including failure to attend class and to fulfill the course learning objectives.

The Promotion Committee will determine excellence of teaching by reviewing peer evaluations (including class observations as specified in II.A.2 above); student evaluations (both narrative and quantitative); the comprehensive teaching summary (as described in II.A.3); syllabi; and any other (optional) teaching materials (e.g., assignments, exams, handouts) provided by the candidate in the file.

In evaluating teaching, the Promotion Committee will also consider any other optional aspects of the teaching record included in the file, which may include but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Management of class time, resources, and/or assignments in ways that significantly exceed the minimally effective standards
- Use of pedagogical strategies in line with current disciplinary best practices—e.g., to create an inclusive classroom culture, foster student engagement, respond to a variety of student learning needs
- Use of current events and/or recent research to engage students in class materials, concepts, and methods
- Completion of pedagogical workshops and/or certification (e.g., at USC's Center for Teaching Excellence)
- Creation of new or substantially improved syllabi, curricula, teaching infrastructures, and/or approaches
- Teaching awards or honors
- Teaching likely to have a lasting impact on students' academic and professional careers
- Teaching upper-division or advanced courses when appropriate
- Other evidence as provided

The list above is unweighted and unranked. Candidates will not be expected to offer materials in every category listed, nor is the list intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it illustrates the diversity of accomplishments and materials that the Promotion Committee might consider in reaching a decision about teaching excellence. When reviewing this record, the Promotion Committee will look for evidence of sustained excellence inside the classroom and in other teaching-related activities.

3. Service Evaluation Criteria

The criteria for service required for the rank being sought (as detailed above in II.B.1) are defined and determined as follows:

Outstanding service is defined as exceptional, sustained, conscientious, and effective contributions to departmental, college, and/or university programs, and/or academic communities beyond the university.

Excellent service is defined as significant, regular, conscientious, and effective contributions to departmental, college, and/or university programs, and/or academic communities beyond the university.

Good service is defined as regular, conscientious, and effective contributions to departmental, college, and/or university programs, and/or academic communities beyond the university.

Fair service is defined as service that meets the minimally effective level of contribution to departmental, college, and/or university programs, and/or academic communities beyond the university.

Unacceptable service is defined as failure to contribute to departmental, college, and/or university programs, and/or academic communities beyond the university.

In evaluating service, the Promotion Committee will consider evidence of activities and accomplishments included in the file that may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Serving on Faculty Senate
- Serving on the department's Professional-Track Faculty Committee
- Serving on the department's Tenure and Promotion Secretarial Committee
- Serving on the University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty
- Serving on other departmental, college, university, regional, and/or national committees
- Performing peer teaching observations
- Sharing pedagogical knowledge with faculty colleagues
- Mentoring faculty colleagues in support of professional development
- Participating in program-level curricular design initiatives
- Presenting on or publishing education-based, pedagogical research, or research relating to the candidate's subject area/s
- Other evidence as provided

The list above is unweighted and unranked. Candidates will not be expected to offer materials in every category listed, nor is the list intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it illustrates the diversity of activities and accomplishments that the Promotion Committee might consider in evaluating service.

4. Student Mentoring Criteria for Teaching Professor Track

The criteria for mentoring required for promotion on the Teaching Professor track (as detailed in II.B.1) are defined and determined as follows:

Outstanding student mentoring is defined as exceptional, sustained, conscientious, and effective contributions to student success beyond the classroom.

Excellent student mentoring is defined as significant, regular, conscientious, and effective contributions to student success beyond the classroom.

Good student mentoring is defined as regular, conscientious, and effective contributions to student success beyond the classroom.

Fair student mentoring meets the minimally effective level of contribution to student success beyond the classroom.

Unacceptable student mentoring is defined as failure to contribute to student success beyond the classroom.

In evaluating mentoring, the Promotion Committee will consider evidence of activities and accomplishments included in the file that may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Providing letters of recommendation for students when appropriate
- Mentoring student work and projects beyond the classroom
- Serving as faculty advisor for a student organization
- Creating beyond-the-classroom experiences for students
- Directing or serving as a reader on student theses and/or research projects when appropriate
- Other evidence as provided

The list above is unweighted and unranked. Candidates will not be expected to offer materials in every category listed, nor is the list intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it illustrates the diversity of activities and accomplishments that the Promotion Committee might consider in evaluating student mentoring.

Faculty on the instructor track are not required to engage in student mentoring; however, they may include evidence of mentoring as additional material when seeking promotion.

Faculty Revision and Approvals History

First Edition, entitled “Department of English Professional-Track Faculty Committee (PTFC) and Policies,” approved by a vote of the faculty of the Department of English at the University of South Carolina on March 30, 2024 to establish the Professional-Track Faculty Committee (Section I).

Second Edition, renamed “Professional-Track Faculty Promotion Procedures and Criteria.” First draft approved by a written ballot vote of the faculty of the Department of English on November 6, 2024. Second draft, following feedback from the College of Arts and Sciences, approved by a written ballot vote on February 26, 2025. Third draft, responding to additional instructions from the College and the Provost, approved by a written ballot vote on April 29, 2025. Fourth draft, responding to additional instructions from the Provost’s Office, approved by a written ballot vote on March 4, 2026.