School of Information Science
College of Information and Communications

Tenure and Promotion Criteria and Procedures

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Introduction

This document defines the criteria, policies, and procedures for tenure and promotion at the School of Information Science (iSchool). It conforms to the guidelines in the University of South Carolina *Faculty Manual* and provides details pertaining to iSchool faculty, who endeavor to uniquely fulfill the overall mission of the College of Information and Communications to:

> support the purpose of the University of South Carolina by transforming
> the lives of the people of South Carolina, the nation, and the world through
> teaching, research, creative activity, and community engagement. We strive
> to produce graduates and knowledge that strengthen global and diverse
> communities and promote democratic participation in an information society.

The iSchool prepares individuals for a broad spectrum of positions in the information field. To this end, the iSchool offers a broad range of degrees, detailed on the iSchool's degree programs website. Professionals in the information and library fields rely on the iSchool for innovative and collaborative research, continuing education, guidance on evidence-based practice, and professional engagement that is beneficial to the state and beyond. Therefore, effective teaching, exemplary research and publication, and leadership through service are critical faculty responsibilities, and their integration is fundamental to our mission, bridging between theory and practice.

Rapid changes in technology and society bring about new challenges to accessing, interacting with, organizing, and interpreting information. Library and information science is, thus, a continually evolving discipline that responds to these challenges by exploring questions on subjects as varied as literacy, data science, inclusive and equitable information practices, scholarly communication, information policy, library collections and services, information behavior, health information, and knowledge work. The wide range of expertise that is essential to conducting scholarship in our field is reflected by our faculty specializations and their inter- and

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multidisciplinary approaches to investigation. Our scholarship draws substantially from the theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences, the arts and humanities, the physical and applied sciences, and computer science. In turn, the information field contributes broadly to society in its emphasis on bringing together people, information, and technology to enable people to find, use, and create information for their own purposes in work and life. The faculty of the iSchool acknowledge the importance of a full range of approaches to scholarship, which draw upon strategies appropriate for supporting teaching, research, and service in an academic environment where diversity, equity, and inclusion are prioritized.

Tenure and Promotion Criteria

The iSchool uses separate criteria related to teaching, research, and service to lead to a comprehensive evaluation of the record of candidates for tenure and promotion. Overall, tenure and promotion reviews primarily address the candidate's past sustained performance and impact as a scholar, as well as the anticipation of sustained future scholarly performance and influence. Teaching, research, and service are components of scholarly performance, and their interaction is evaluated through evidence of impact on student learning, the advancement of knowledge, and influence on the information professions and broader society at community, state, national, and international levels. We recognize that the lines between teaching, research, and service are often interrelated and overlap as faculty creatively provide solutions to challenges in each area; candidates are expected to highlight these synergies, as well as their contributions to the achievement of the iSchool's mission in their tenure and promotion dossiers.

When departments use adjectival standards for evaluating teaching, research, and service, the University of South Carolina Faculty Manual mandates the use of the following adjectival categories: (1) Outstanding; (2) Excellent; (3) Good; (4) Fair; and (5) Unacceptable. The definitions of each rating are outlined under the Evaluation guidelines for teaching, research, and service below.

Associate Professor:

Candidates will be considered eligible for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor if they achieve a rating of Excellent in either teaching *or* research and Good in the other area (teaching or research). It is expected that service will at least be at the Good level and will complement teaching and research. The candidate must demonstrate substantial potential for continued development as a teacher and researcher as well as evidence of progress toward establishing a national or international reputation in a specialized area that enhances the image of the School, College, and University.

<u>Professor:</u>

Candidates will be considered eligible for promotion to the rank of Professor if they achieve a rating of Excellent in teaching and research and at least Good in service. The candidate must demonstrate achievement of national or international professional visibility that enhances the image of the School, College, and University. The candidate's entire professional career will be assessed, but emphasis will be placed on development while serving in the rank of Associate Professor. Their performance will demonstrate a consistent and durable impact on the information field.

Evaluation of Teaching
The candidate's primary and secondary files, along with a personal statement will be evaluated on overall evidence of teaching activities and effectiveness such as:

Examples of Teaching:

- Regularly scheduled classes—face-to-face, distance, blended, or other pedagogically sound approaches
- Supervision of independent studies, student research studies, internships, and/or service-learning experiences
- Direction of or membership on undergraduate, master's or doctoral theses/dissertations
- Preparation of instructional materials
- Design of new or significant revision of or innovation in existing courses, curriculum, certificates, or programs
- Provision of professional development workshops for other faculty or professionals in practice
- Mentorship of student work leading to presentation or publication or contributing to receipt of student awards/honors
- Receipt of teaching awards, fellowships, and other recognition
- Receipt of peer-reviewed teaching-related grants and support
- Receipt of graduate certificates in learning and teaching in higher education
- Adoption of teaching resources by other universities
- Evidence-based or theory-based publications on teaching or student learning
- Membership in international educational networks
- Requests to instruct seminar sessions for academic or professional associations
- Requests to serve as a visiting instructor or guest lecturer at another institution
- Attendee evaluations from professional development workshops
- Other feedback from colleagues, students, alumni, in the form of solicited letters of input

Evidence and Evaluation:

- Student evaluations from every course taught prior to tenure, or since the last promotion will be examined to determine the degree to which students judge faculty as effective in instruction.
- A summary assessment of all teaching at the University since assumption of a tenure track position or since the granting of tenure or the last promotion will be prepared and placed in the candidate's file. The summary assessment of teaching is based on the required sources (e.g., student evaluations and peer reviews of teaching) and any optional sources (annual evaluations by the Tenure and Promotion Committee and annual evaluations by the director of the iSchool.) The summary will include comparative data from other sections of multi-section courses and from the same, or when applicable, comparable courses taught by other faculty members in the recent past. This document will clearly explain the iSchool's student evaluation process, evaluation system, and provide an overall rating of teaching in keeping with the definitions of rating of teaching given above. The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee will prepare or request another member of the Committee to prepare the summary.
- Annual peer reviews of teaching prior to tenure will be given consideration in judging teaching effectiveness. Peer evaluations are conducted at least annually for untenured faculty and at least once for promotion to full professor and post-tenure review.
- Improvements in teaching effectiveness as judged by student and peer reviews will be considered in a positive light, with more recent reviews receiving more weight in evaluation. Other factors that might influence ratings, such as class size, content, or a required versus elective class, will be considered.
- Course materials for all courses since appointment as a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the iSchool. These materials would likely include, for example, syllabi and examples of assessments and learning aids; they will be examined to assess their relationship to the curriculum-related learning outcomes of the degree program(s) involved, incorporation of an evidence-based approach in teaching, encouragement of student research, and development of connections to professional practice and/or service.
- Annual evaluations by the Tenure and Promotion Committee since appointment as a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the iSchool or since the last formal review
- Annual evaluations by the director of the iSchool since appointment as a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the iSchool

Ratings:

- Outstanding:
  - The candidate's teaching consistently receives high student course evaluations.

- o The candidate exceeds the excellent level through evidence of noteworthy accomplishments and contributions, such as significant mentorship roles, impactful curricular design, external teaching engagements, nominations/awards for teaching, etc.
  - o The summary assessment of teaching prepared by the iSchool Tenure and Promotion Committee rates the teaching as outstanding.
  - o Overall evaluation of course materials and teaching activities show exceptional evidence of engagement and development beyond teaching assigned courses.

- Excellent:
  - o The candidate's teaching consistently receives high student course evaluations. consistently receives a rating of excellent on annual and peer evaluations.
  - o The summary assessment of teaching prepared by the iSchool Tenure and Promotion Committee rates the teaching as excellent.
  - o Overall evaluation of course materials and teaching activities show a variety of evidence of engagement and development beyond teaching assigned courses.

- Good:
  - o The candidate's teaching generally receives overall positive student course evaluations with some indication of continuing areas for improvement.
  - o The candidate has taken the initiative to seek help in areas needing improvement.
  - o The candidate generally receives at least a rating of good on annual and peer evaluations.
  - o The summary assessment of teaching prepared by the iSchool's Tenure and Promotion Committee rates the teaching as good.
  - o Overall evaluation of course materials and teaching activities show some evidence of engagement and development beyond teaching assigned courses.

- Fair:
  - o The candidate's student course evaluations are only occasionally positive.
  - o The candidate occasionally receives at least a rating of fair on annual and peer evaluations.
  - o The summary assessment of teaching prepared by the iSchool's Tenure and Promotion Committee rates the teaching as fair.
  - o Overall evaluation of course materials and teaching activities show little evidence of engagement and development beyond teaching assigned courses.

- Unacceptable:
  - o The candidate's teaching consistently receives student course evaluations that are not positive.
  - o The candidate consistently receives annual and peer evaluations that are rated as

unacceptable.
- o The summary assessment of teaching prepared by the iSchool's Tenure and Promotion Committee also rates the teaching as unsatisfactory.
- o Overall evaluation of course materials and teaching activities shows no evidence of engagement or development beyond teaching assigned courses.

Evaluation of Research

Definition of Research:

Research includes the intellectual activities that contribute to the development and dissemination of the knowledge base of the information field and the information professions. The scope and interdisciplinarity of the information field leads researchers to draw upon qualitative, quantitative, mixed, historical, and other methodologies appropriate to specific inquiries. Research can be demonstrated by ability to:

- Investigate questions with appropriate methodological technique and rigor
- Conceptualize and theorize in an original way
- Synthesize, criticize, and clarify extant knowledge and research
- Innovate in the collection or analysis of empirical data
- Relate findings to the solution of practical problems of individuals, groups, organizations (e.g., libraries, schools, communities, government agencies, and corporations), or society
- Produce or interpret literature, art, etc.
- Disseminate the results of scholarly inquiry through publication, presentation, performance, and other means of communication not limited by format or intended audience

Production and performance that are tied to the faculty member's special field of scholarship and create venues for community outreach and engagement may be included in the definition of research; for example, scholarship focused on enriching cultural literacy through literature, folklore, storytelling, etc. As scholars engage in community outreach, they will disseminate promising innovations to appropriate audiences and subject their work to critical review.

Evidence and Evaluation:

The candidate's record will be evaluated on the overall significance, contribution, and impact made to the discipline and the information professions through independent and collaborative research. Since the relative importance of different types of research products and order of authorship will vary depending on the candidate's subdiscipline within library and information science, the personal statement should contextualize the candidate's research within their subdiscipline's customary markers of significance,

impact, and quality and explain levels of involvement and contribution in collaborative projects. The iSchool also recognizes that particular methodological approaches may impact the rate of publication.

Primary evidence of scholarship includes:

- Peer-reviewed publications or juried presentations, productions, or performances
- Editorially reviewed publications, presentations, productions, or performances
- Grant proposals, with funded proposals having a higher standing
- Invited publications, presentations, productions, or performances in recognition of scholarly productivity or expertise
- Publication of textbook chapters, reviews, or writing/editing whole textbooks; evidence-based or theory-based publications on pedagogy
- Other publications reflecting scholarship and expertise (e.g., technical reports, reports to government, professional standards, white papers, evaluations, assessment tools, podcasts, etc.)
- Evaluation of research quality and impact by external reviewers

The following evidence may also be considered in judging the merits of the scholarly record:

- Evidence of publication venue quality such as journal impact factors, journal or conference acceptance rates, or other measures of impact and quality
- Evidence of impact, visibility, and professional status such as total citations, h-index, g-index, i10-index, alt-metrics, reviews, awards, media coverage, and other forms of recognition of the quality of publication, production, and performance
- Research projects in progress or under review
- Evidence of contributions to theoretical, conceptual, and/or methodological development, influence on pedagogy or professional practice, or application of innovative approaches to research problems
- Expert witness service
- Awards for research-based publications and activities
- Other evidence of scholarly activity, which the candidate offers for consideration or by request of the iSchool Tenure and Promotion Committee

Ratings:

- <u>Outstanding</u>:
  - The candidate's record of research is of such a high quantity and quality that a national and/or international reputation is evident.
  - Indicators and evidence of impact demonstrate the substantial influence of the candidate's scholarship on the discipline of library and information

science.
- o The evaluations by external referees note the outstanding quality, significance, and impact of the candidate's research record.

- **Excellent**:
  - o The candidate's record of research reflects a high level of quantity and quality, and the achievement of a national and/or international reputation is likely.
  - o Indicators and evidence of impact demonstrate the increasing influence of the candidate's scholarship on the discipline of library and information science.
  - o The evaluations by external referees recognize the quality of the candidate's work and the likelihood that they will have a significant impact on their field of specialization.

- **Good**:
  - o The candidate's record of research reflects a consistent level of quantity and quality, and there is the potential for achievement of a national and/or international reputation.
  - o Indicators and evidence of impact demonstrate a moderate degree of influence of the candidate's scholarship on the discipline of library and information science.
  - o The evaluations by external referees generally attest to the quality and significance of the candidate's scholarship.

- **Fair**:
  - o The candidate's record of research reflects an inconsistent level of quantity and quality and does not clearly show the potential for achievement of a national and/or international reputation.
  - o Indicators and evidence of impact demonstrate a minimal degree of influence of the candidate's scholarship on the discipline of library and information science.
  - o The evaluations by external referees minimally attest to the quality and significance of the candidate's scholarship.

- **Unacceptable**:
  - o The candidate's record of research is of low quantity and quality and shows little or no potential for achievement of a national and/or international reputation.
  - o Indicators and evidence of impact do not demonstrate an influence of the candidate's scholarship on the discipline of library and information science.
  - o The evaluations by external referees do not attest to the quality and significance of the candidate's scholarship.

Evaluation of Service

Definition of Service:

- Review of manuscripts for academic or professional journals
- Review of papers for academic or professional conferences
- Review of grant proposals for internal and external funding agencies
- Editorial positions on scholarly and professional journals
- Participation in and leadership of School, College, and University committees, task forces, and related groups
- Participation in and leadership of professional and/or scholarly organizations in the information field and their committees, special interest groups, task forces, conferences, etc.
- Discipline related consulting, presentation of seminars, workshops, and continuing education events
- Non-research application of professional expertise with community groups
- Non-research-based community engagement and outreach
- Receipt of service grants, honors, and awards
- Review of tenure and promotion files of candidates from other universities
- Organizing meetings, symposia, conferences, and workshops

Evidence and Evaluation:

The candidate's service record will be evaluated on the degree and quality of professional activity and service locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The degree and quality of service to the School, College, and University's faculty governance structure will also be evaluated. Service efforts that positively impact teaching and/or research are particularly valued. Untenured faculty members are encouraged to emphasize service that enhances their teaching and research. Evidence includes:

- The service record as documented by the candidate's primary and secondary files and personal statement
- Letters of appointment and/or support from colleagues indicating the nature of the service contributions
- Other documentation of contributions or products that are generated through the service activity

Ratings:

- Outstanding:
  - Candidate's record shows an exceptionally high level and quality of service in at least two of the following areas: School, College, University, community, or professional/scholarly community.
  - Candidate has taken on a leadership role such as committee chair or has initiated new service projects.

- Excellent:
  - Candidate's record shows a high level and quality of service in at least two of the following areas: School, College, University, community, or professional/scholarly community.

- Good:
  - Candidate's record shows a high level and quality of service in one of the following areas: School, College, University, community, or professional/scholarly community.

- Fair:
  - Candidate's record shows an adequate level and quality of service in one of the following areas: School, College, University, community, or professional/scholarly community.

- Unacceptable:
  - Candidate's record shows an inadequate level and quality of service in all of the following areas: School, College, University, community, or professional/scholarly community.

Applicable Criteria and Probationary Period

All policies and guidelines concerning applicable unit criteria and, time in rank, and probationary period from the Faculty Manual are applicable. Time and accomplishments in a faculty position at another education institution may be considered in evaluating a candidate for tenure and promotion; evidence of scholarly productivity, particularly since joining the iSchool, will need to be sufficient to justify consideration.

Faculty Recommended for Tenure on Appointment

Faculty members may be recommended for tenure upon appointment at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor. In this case the faculty member will typically already hold tenure at another institution and/or present a convincing case for meeting iSchool and University of South Carolina tenure criteria. The faculty member under consideration for tenure upon appointment

will undergo an expedited review prior to appointment. While there is no minimum time of service at USC to be considered for tenure and promotion of faculty members appointed at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor without tenure, they normally will not be recommended for tenure or promotion until they are in, at least, their third year at the University.

Faculty with Joint Appointments

Jointly appointed faculty are faculty members whose tenure home is in one unit (the "primary unit") and who have a part time appointment, with some combination of teaching, research, and service obligations, in one or more units or programs (the "secondary unit"). A joint appointment is formalized by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that specifies the responsibilities of the faculty member to the primary and secondary units. The MOU (1) identifies the tenuring unit; (2) specifies teaching load and split of teaching load between the primary and secondary units; (3) includes formula and criteria for sharing indirect cost return (IDCR) among the units; and (4) specifies service responsibility load and split between the units.

The criteria for granting tenure or promotion to a jointly appointed faculty member will be those of the primary unit. If the iSchool serves as the primary unit, the secondary unit will be asked to provide a list of appropriate outside evaluators at the same time that the iSchool faculty are consulted for names of outside evaluators. An evaluation must be solicited from at least one evaluator nominated or approved by each secondary unit. . The chair of the iSchool's Tenure and Promotion committee will grant the secondary unit's Tenure and Promotion Committee chair access to the candidate's files for review by members of the secondary unit at the appropriate rank. The chair/director and eligible faculty of the secondary unit will be invited to submit a document summarizing the secondary unit's formal evaluation of the candidate, to be placed in the candidate's file at least five working days prior to the deadline for the iSchool vote on the candidate.

If the iSchool serves as the secondary unit for a faculty member with a joint appointment, the views of all faculty eligible to participate in evaluation of the candidate will be solicited and provided for inclusion in the candidate's file, as a summary of faculty comments prepared by the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee.

PROCEDURE

The iSchool adheres to the tenure and promotion procedures delineated in the Faculty Manual and the guidelines published on the Provost's Tenure and Promotion website. Candidates should note specifically the section in the Faculty Manual under the heading "Tenure and Promotion Procedures." The tenure and promotion calendars are established by the Office of the Provost and are made available via the website. The director of the iSchool will notify all eligible faculty in writing of the option for tenure and promotion review at the

beginning of the Spring and Fall tenure and promotion cycles.

The candidate's application file for tenure and/or promotion must follow the guidelines established for that purpose by the University Committee on Tenure and Promotion. The candidate bears primary responsibility for preparation of the file on which the decision will be based. Working with the unit tenure and promotion committee chair, the candidate may customize the primary file to include subsections that address unique responsibilities of their faculty position.

In addition to the University procedures described above, the iSchool adheres to the following:

Membership of the iSchool Tenure and Promotion Committee

The Tenure and Promotion Committee is normally composed of all tenured faculty in the iSchool. In matters of tenure, voting members of the committee are all those tenured faculty members of higher rank to the person being considered for tenure. In matters of promotion, voting members of the committee are all those faculty members of higher rank (i.e., Associate or Full Professors for review of Assistant Professors; Full Professors for review of Associate Professors). The director of the iSchool is not eligible to vote or to serve on the Tenure and Promotion committee but may be invited to participate in meetings of the committee in an advisory role. The Director provides an independent written evaluation of the candidate as part of the official review of their files.

The chair of the iSchool Tenure and Promotion Committee will be elected in a meeting of the committee by April 15th of each year for a one-year term that will extend from the ensuing June 1 to May 31, by a majority vote of the members of that committee. All tenured iSchool faculty members are eligible to vote for candidates for chair of the committee.

In the event that there are fewer than five faculty members eligible to vote on a given application for tenure and/or promotion, the director of the iSchool, in consultation with the Tenure and Promotion committee members who are eligible to vote, will appoint a sufficient number of faculty members from other academic units within the University that do meet the eligibility requirements to make up a committee of five voting members.

Voting on a Tenure or Promotion Application

In addition to the voting procedures given in the Faculty Manual (e.g., voting by secret ballot), the iSchool Tenure and Promotion Committee adheres to the following procedure for determining whether an affirmative recommendation on an application will be made to the director:

A majority affirmative recommendation on an application for tenure or promotion is achieved when at least fifty-one percent of all those eligible committee members have cast a "yes" ballot on the candidate's application for tenure or promotion. Eligible members of the committee who cast an "abstain" ballot are not counted for purposes of determining whether a majority affirmative recommendation has been achieved. The Faculty Manual notes that written justification of all votes at the unit level is mandatory and this justification will state specifically how the candidate meets or does not meet the unit's criteria; we interpret the mandatory justification requirement in the faculty manual to include a requirement for justification for abstentions.

Eligible members of the committee who are on official leave from the University (e.g., sabbatical, leave without pay) retain the right to vote during their absence, provided that they have notified the chair of the committee in writing of a desire to do so before beginning the leave, and are familiar with the evidence presented in the file. The chair of the committee will make every reasonable effort to provide information to eligible members of the committee on official leave.

Use of Outside Referees

Each application file for tenure and/or promotion will contain at least five evaluations of the candidate's file by impartial scholars at peer or aspirant institutions within the field of library and information science. A person who is a leading scholar in the field of library and information science may be used as an outside evaluator if she or he is at an institution that is not peer or aspirant. A non-university specialist may be used as an outside evaluator if their expertise is particularly relevant. Faculty serving as outside evaluators should hold a higher rank than the candidate under review. The external reviewers should not include individuals who were former instructors of the candidate, dissertation directors, coauthors, colleagues with whom the candidate has served at other institutions or who were fellow students with the candidate at the same institution, or where there may be some other conflict of interest.

The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, with the advice of other members of the Committee and the Director, will select enough outside referees to ensure that at least five evaluations are received. All outside evaluators will be asked to disclose any relationship or interaction with the candidate. The Chair will handle all communications with the outside referees using the letter recommended by the University Committee on Tenure and Promotion and will add the referees' evaluations to the candidate's file for review before unit consideration.