

## Department of Computer Science and Engineering Promotion and Tenure Policy and Procedure

### PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document presents the guidelines and procedures used in making promotion and tenure (P&T) recommendations by the Department of Computer Science and Engineering. These policies and procedures are consistent with the Mississippi State University Promotion and Tenure Procedures of May 15, 2014, OP 56.06 Research, Extension And Clinical Faculty Positions of January 28, 2014, and the Bagley College of Engineering Promotion and Tenure Policy of June 30, 2014, but provide additional departmental detail. This document may be amended by a majority of the full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty of the department, provided a written statement of proposed amendments has been submitted to the voting faculty at least three weeks before the vote to amend is taken.

### DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON PROMOTION AND TENURE

The Computer Science and Engineering Promotion and Tenure Committee is a committee of the whole consisting of all full time tenured, tenure track, and research graduate faculty members in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering except the Department Head. Membership on a committee considering tenure (tenure subcommittee T) is limited to and includes all tenured faculty members at or above the rank of the applicant. Membership on a committee considering promotion (promotion subcommittee P) for tenure-track faculty is limited to and includes all tenured faculty of the Department at or above the rank to be considered. A research faculty candidate for promotion whose primary appointment is in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering will utilize the appropriate promotion committee in the department. If a faculty member's primary appointment is in a research center/institute, he/she will be evaluated by the center's promotion procedures. Further details may be found in the OP56.06. Relatives of a candidate under consideration cannot participate in the decision making process for that candidate. In addition, an individual may not serve on a subcommittee in a year that his or her promotion application is being considered by that subcommittee. In the event that a sub-committee has fewer than three members, appropriate additional members will be nominated and elected by all the members of that Department's committee. A quorum of the committee of the whole or of a subcommittee will consist of the greater of three people or two-thirds of the members of that committee or subcommittee. An election will be held annually by the end of the spring semester by the committee at large to elect its chair. Recommendations of the committee will be made by majority vote, with a written record kept of all proceedings and filed in the P&T records of the candidate in the departmental office.

### PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The criteria for promotion and tenure in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering are consistent with those specified by the Bagley College of Engineering and

Mississippi State University.

Most members of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering are expected to be active in teaching and research. Evidence of continued growth in research is expected at all professorial ranks. Evidence of continued growth in teaching is also expected of those in tenured or tenure-track professorial ranks.

A faculty member engaged in carrying on an active research program is expected to have clear evidence of a focused research program periodically shared through peer-refereed outlets with the research community and is expected to be involved in the guidance of student research. Similarly, in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, growth in teaching requires periodic incorporation of new material at the graduate and undergraduate levels and other indications of continued growth in teaching.

Moreover, measures of performance in teaching and research should be measures of continued growth and the continued application of creative energy. While the same kind of activities which constitute excellence for the assistant professor aspiring to promotion to associate professor would likely be continued in the career of the associate professor aspiring to professor, the same set of activities that were the basis for meeting a standard of excellence at the time of promotion to associate professor would not necessarily constitute excellence for the associate professor aspiring to promotion to professor. The Department considers the following definitions of what constitutes Excellent, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory for Research, Teaching, and Service at both Associate Professor and Professor levels. There are no expectations for research faculty members in the teaching area, given that no such requirements are mandated for this type of faculty members.

#### Associate Professor

An associate professor is a faculty member who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in research, teaching, and service, and who excels in at least one of these. Definitions of Excellent, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory for promotion to Associate Professor follow:

##### Excellent

Research: Developing a national reputation for research achievement; showing potential for sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in research achievement.

Teaching: Developing a national reputation for educational achievement; showing potential for sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in teaching.

Service: Developing a national reputation for professional service; showing potential for sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in service.

##### Satisfactory

Research: Showing potential for sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in research achievement.

Teaching: Showing potential for sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in teaching.

Service: Showing potential for sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in service.

Unsatisfactory

Research: Has a lack of evidence of development toward nationally recognized research achievement.

Teaching: Has teaching contributions clearly below departmental norms.

Service: Has service contributions clearly below departmental norms

Professor

A professor is a faculty member who has developed a national reputation in his or her area of expertise; has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in research, teaching, and service; and who excels in at least two of the three. Definitions of Excellent, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory for promotion to Professor follow:

Excellent

Research: Possesses a national reputation for research achievement; showing sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in research achievement.

Teaching: Possesses a national reputation for educational achievement; showing sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in teaching.

Service: Possesses a national reputation for professional service; showing sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in service.

Satisfactory

Research: Showing sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in research achievement.

Teaching: Showing sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in teaching.

Service: Showing sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession or field in service.

Unsatisfactory

Research: Has a lack of evidence of development toward nationally recognized research achievement.

Teaching: Has teaching contributions clearly below departmental norms.

Service: Has service contributions clearly below departmental norms

It is expected that all members of the faculty will participate in the service activities of the department, college, university, and profession. While new faculty are usually well advised to devote major efforts to teaching and/or research, commitment to service in the department is nevertheless considered essential for all faculty.

## ANNUAL REVIEWS

Faculty members wishing to be considered for tenure or promotion in future years are strongly encouraged to request review from the Promotion and Tenure Committee in any or all of the preceding years. However, a faculty member is required by University policy to request a review during the third year following initial appointment. Such reviews are designed to provide guidance as the faculty member prepares for tenure and/or promotion and to assure that the faculty member, the Department Head, and the Committee have a common understanding of the Promotion and Tenure requirements.

To be reviewed, the faculty member must prepare a review packet in the same form and with the same contents as would be required if he or she were actually applying for tenure or promotion with the exception of external review letters. The packet should be submitted to the Committee on a date specified by the Chair of the Committee. Within one month the Committee will respond in writing to the faculty members being reviewed. The response will contain an assessment of each faculty member's progress toward tenure and/or promotion with explicit recommendations for improvement should progress be deemed deficient. The Department Head will also provide a written assessment for third year reviews.

## APPOINTMENT OF FACULTY

When faculty members are appointed in the Department with rank, such appointments will be referred to the Promotion and Tenure Committee for concurrence as to the rank and to any credit granted toward tenure. The appropriate sub-committee of the P&T Committee will review the credentials of the individual being considered for appointment and all members of the Committee will vote on the rank and on the tenure credit. The result of this vote will be forwarded in writing to the Department Head and to the Dean.

## PROMOTION AND TENURE OF FACULTY IN SPECIAL ROLES

Faculty who are not assigned the normal teaching/research/service role in the department can, with agreement of the Department Head and the Promotion and Tenure Committee, and with the concurrence of the Dean and the Provost, have Promotion and Tenure requirements and expectations different from those stated in the College and University documents. For example, a faculty member with an administrative appointment (e.g., assistant Department Head) or a faculty member appointed to a primarily teaching assignment could have Promotion and Tenure requirements that would not have the same research expectations as for faculty in a more "normal" role. Such roles can be given to either new faculty or to existing faculty.

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For a faculty member to have special considerations for Promotion and Tenure, the following must occur:

1. The Department Head writes a description of the assignment of duties.
2. The Department Head proposes a special set of Promotion and Tenure criteria for the faculty member.
3. The Promotion and Tenure Committee approves or modifies the criteria as specified by the Department Head.
4. The Department Head, the faculty member, and the Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee sign the documentation of the criteria.
5. Approval is sought from the Dean and Provost as appropriate.

The special criteria become effective only after the faculty member, the Department Head, and the Committee have agreed to a set of evaluation criteria and it is approved by the Dean and Provost (if necessary).

## PROCEDURES FOR FACULTY PROMOTION

Consideration for promotion can be initiated by the Department Head or by the individual faculty member. Faculty members applying for promotion must provide the Department Head with all pertinent information by at least six (6) weeks before a decision must be made at the departmental level.

When a faculty member is being considered for promotion, a vote will be taken of all members of the promotion subcommittee whose rank is at or above that being considered. The committee will base its decisions on documented evidence provided by the faculty member under consideration. All such provided evidence should be filed in the faculty member's permanent departmental file. Committee recommendations, with accompanying reasons, will be given to the Department Head who will provide a recommendation, based upon all documented evidence provided by the faculty member under consideration. This recommendation is independent of the committee's recommendation, and may agree or disagree with the recommendations of the committee.

Departmental recommendations must be submitted to the academic dean. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to transmit both the departmental committee's and Department Head's recommendations to the dean, who, after reviewing the recommendations, may or may not concur with the departmental recommendations.

For requirements for promotion, refer to "Promotion and Tenure Committees" in the "Faculty Handbook" (URL [http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty\\_handbook/v.html](http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty_handbook/v.html)).

According to current MSU policy, consideration for promotion to the rank of professor requires that a professor is expected to have a "national reputation" in that person's area of expertise. A national reputation generally results from the production of peer reviewed materials such as exhibits, publications, books, grant proposals, conference proceedings and the like. It is not likely that one can achieve a national reputation with activities that are restricted to the MSU campus.

## PROCEDURES FOR FACULTY TENURE

Consideration for tenure can be initiated by the Department Head or by the individual faculty member who has met the minimum requirements. A faculty member must apply for and be recommended for tenure by the president during the sixth full contract year of employment in a tenure-track position. Failure to earn tenure at the end of the sixth full contract year will result in a terminal contract in the seventh full contract year. The probationary period for tenure-track faculty begins at the start of the faculty member's first full contract year. A full contract year is defined as one that starts on August 16 for 9-month employees and on July 1 for 12-month employees and continues until the next contract period. If the initial contract is for a partial year, e.g., starts after August 16 for a 9-month employee and after July 1 for a 12-month employee, that time is not included in the probationary period. Faculty members applying for tenure must provide the Department Head with all pertinent information by at least six (6) weeks before a decision must be made at the departmental level. If the faculty member applying for tenure is at the rank of assistant professor, then the faculty member will be considered for promotion and tenure.

When a faculty member is being considered for tenure, the vote of all members of the **tenure subcommittee** present will be taken. The committee will base its decisions on documented evidence provided by the faculty member under consideration. The promotion and/or tenure application materials forwarded beyond the department for consideration should be filed in the faculty member's permanent departmental file. Committee recommendations, with accompanying reasons, will be given to the Department Head. The Department Head's own recommendations, based upon all documented evidence provided by the faculty member under consideration, may agree or disagree with the recommendations of the committee.

Departmental recommendations must be submitted to the academic dean. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to transmit both the departmental committee's and Department Head's recommendations to the dean.

For procedures at the university and college levels refer to the section, "Promotion and Tenure Policies" in the "Faculty Handbook" (<http://msuinfo.ur.msstate.edu/handbook.fac>) and the Bagley College of Engineering Promotion and Tenure policy (<http://www.bagley.msstate.edu/downloads/EOPs/EOP 18 Promotion and Tenure.pdf>)

#### EXTERNAL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

The committee will request at least six letters of recommendation from individuals outside the university who are familiar with the candidate's area of work. According to University policy, "external reviewers will generally be tenured professors at MSU peer institutions, or more prestigious institutions, and should not include individuals who are in a conflict of interest with the candidate." Occasionally reviewers may be selected from government or industry but these should not make up the majority of the letters. In cases where a letter from a state agency or association may be especially relevant, such letters should be in addition to the external reviews. Generally letters from campus colleagues should not be included except to explain collaborations or where colleagues may have been involved in a formal peer review process (e.g., teaching observation, etc.). In such cases these letters should be in addition to the external letters. The candidate may provide the committee with a list of ten potential external reviewers and up to three specific individuals who should not be selected as reviewers. The committee must choose at least six reviewers, with at least

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three from this list and at most three from outside the list respecting the candidate's request. The candidate will not be informed as to the identity of reviewers actually used from either list). Once reviewers are selected, their names will be sent (confidential) to the Department Head by the Chair of the Department P&T Committee. At least four external review letters must accompany the candidate's application for promotion and/or tenure when forwarded from the Department to the College P&T Committee and Dean. Unless the committee in consultation with the Department Head determines that the text in a letter demonstrates a conflict of interest, all letters received must be forwarded. Letters indicating a conflict of interest may be removed from the packet with approval of the committee and the Department Head.

The CSE Department Head will act as the point of contact for all external evaluation letters. In soliciting the letters, the Department Head will, in most circumstances, request that the evaluators assess the scholarly contributions of the candidate, including specifically, an evaluation of (i) the quality of the publications of the candidate – including comments on the quality of the specific conferences and journals, (ii) the impact of the candidate's research, (iii) the quality of the candidate's educational impact, (iv) the candidate's service to his or her profession, (v) the potential for future contributions, and (vi) a comparison of the candidate to others in the field at a comparable stage in their careers. If a candidate has special tenure and/or promotion considerations approved by the University administration, the Department Head may choose to request that external reviewers assess the candidate in areas relevant to the special considerations granted. Along with the solicitation letter, the Department Head will include a copy of the candidate's promotion and tenure application, vitae, and other documentation deemed appropriate by the candidate and approved by the Department Head and the department's Promotion and Tenure (P&T) committee (the term "appropriate" means that the document must be a document in the P&T packet). A copy of the section within the MSU Faculty Handbook that outlines the criteria and guidelines for the promotion and tenure process will also be included. In addition, a succinct statement about the general criterion for promotion/tenure, a statement about confidentiality, and a request for information concerning any past association of the reviewer with the candidate will also be included. Internal documents, such as annual reviews by the department Head, or P&T committee evaluations, will not be included.

The letters of solicitation will be prepared by the chair of the CSE P&T committee for the department head's signature. These letters may be sent electronically or by the postal system. The chair of the CSE P&T committee is also responsible for contacting potential reviewers to determine their willingness to serve as a reviewer.

Each solicitation letter will contain a statement informing the reviewer that blind copies of their responses may be shown to the candidate. Original letters received by the department head will be secured for a period not less than two years following the tenure application and made available to those on the P&T committee on a need-to-know basis only. A synopsis of comments received in external review letters will be made available to the candidate not later than one week prior to forwarding the P&T packet from the Department to the Dean.

#### TIMELINES FOR SUBMISSION

The following milestones may be modified by the P&T committee on an annual basis if deemed necessary by a majority of the committee members. Absent such modification, the

following times will guide submissions, requests for external letters, and reviews.

- Candidate informs Department Head in writing of desire to be considered a candidate for promotion and/or tenure by May 15.
- Candidate begins to prepare the initial promotion and/or tenure dossier.
- Within one week, the Department Head recommends to the candidate whether a formal application should be submitted.
- Candidate provides the Department Head and the P&T Committee with their initial dossier by August 15.
- A list of up to ten potential external reviewers and a list of up to three specific individuals who should not be selected as reviewers are submitted to the Department Head and the Departmental P&T Committee by August 15.
- Department Head and the Departmental P&T Committee begin finalizing the list of selected external reviewers which should be completed before September 1.
- No later than September 1<sup>st</sup> – Department Head or the Departmental P&T Committee Chair solicits letters from external reviewers with candidate's curriculum vitae and other pertinent information attached to the solicitation.
- External review letters are due to Department Head or the Departmental P&T Committee Chair by October 8. Candidate is provided with excerpts from all letters received and can include comments about the letters in his/her final dossier.
- Candidate provides final dossier to the Department Head and Departmental P&T Committee by October 15. The dossier may contain comments concerning the external letters.
- Candidate dossier reviewed by Departmental P & T Committee and letter submitted to Department Head by Nov. 1. The Department Head adds his/her recommendation and that of the Departmental P&T Committee to the dossier.
- P&T dossiers are forwarded from the CSE Department Head to the college P&T Committee by November 8.

## ORGANIZATION OF MATERIALS

Faculty members applying for tenure or promotion or who are requesting review by the Computer Science and Engineering Promotion and Tenure Committee are requested to organize their materials in a single notebook that will serve as the faculty member's primary application packet. The particular materials to be submitted and the organization of these materials are specified by the Dean and Provost and vary from year to year. The most recent outline of the required material and its organization may be obtained by contacting the P&T Chair. If there are still other materials that the faculty member wishes to submit to support the application, they should be indexed and organized in a separate file.

The promotion and/or tenure documentation should be placed in a white three-ring notebook with divider tabs separating the major components. The materials to be included in the notebook and used to judge achievement must include and be organized as follows:

- TAB1
  - Original, signed, and completed promotion and tenure application form
  - Original letter from candidate to Department Head requesting promotion and/or tenure
  - Copy of candidate's offer letter



- Copy of any other letters regarding significant changes in duties
- TAB 2
  - Recommendation of Department Head
  - Recommendation of department's Promotion and Tenure Committee (including Committee Report Form)
- TAB 3
  - Candidate's current curriculum vitae covering entire professional career

Note: Publications should be separated as follows: books, book chapters, journals, refereed conference papers, non-refereed conference papers, and technical reports. All of these should have appeared in print; include complete citations.

- TAB 4
  - One-page statement highlighting teaching accomplishments
  - Teaching documentation
    - Summary sheet of teaching evaluations
    - Copies of teaching evaluations, including peer evaluations, since joining MSU or since most recent promotion or tenure decision at MSU
    - Other evidence of good teaching as appropriate

Note: Do not include individual student evaluations, course handouts, etc.

- TAB 5
  - One-page statement highlighting research accomplishments
  - Documentation of research that describes contributions in research and that does not appear elsewhere in candidate's dossier (e.g., brief description of research initiatives developed by candidate)

Note: There is no need to list publications as they should have been included elsewhere. Research contracts/grants should not be listed here as they also should have been included elsewhere in the application. The candidate should always ensure their role in a research endeavor is appropriately indicated (e.g., principal investigator).

- TAB 6
  - One-page statement highlighting service accomplishments
  - Documentation of candidate's service activities (on campus and professional) not placed elsewhere in dossier
- TAB 7
  - Original letters of recommendation from external reviewers
  - Example letter from Department Head or departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee Chairman requesting external review

Note: For faculty being considered for tenure, letters of recommendations from academicians should be from tenured external reviewers; for faculty being considered for promotion, letters should be requested from external individuals who hold rank equal to or greater than the rank for which the candidate is applying.

- Short biography (2 or 3 paragraphs) for each external reviewer

Note: Such statements will address any cases where a reviewer might be selected from less than a peer institution and whether a reviewer was selected from the candidate's list or the department's list.

- TAB 8
  - Candidate's rebuttal to external reviews (if applicable)
- TAB 9
  - Copies of a maximum of five publications

The complete list of external reviewers and the sample copy of the letter sent to the external reviewers will be added by the Chair of the Departmental P&T Committee.

Each of the sections on teaching, research, and service activities should start with a one-page statement highlighting accomplishments in the respective area.

#### COMPONENTS OF TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE

The following items represent the framework to evaluate a faculty member's performance in the areas of teaching, research, and service. The items are neither inclusive nor exhaustive. Every attempt should be made to characterize an individual's entire contribution to the Department, College, University, and the profession.

##### a. Teaching

- Awards and honors
- Publication of a textbook or monograph
- Journal publications
- Formal lecture courses
  - Class size
  - Teaching Assistant support
  - Lectures
  - Supervision of laboratory work
  - Course notes
  - Presentation materials
  - New course development
  - Problem sets
  - Design component of subject
  - Teaching evaluations
- New laboratory development
- Supervision of Doctor of Philosophy Dissertations
- Supervision of Master of Science Theses and Directed Projects
- Supervision of undergraduate research projects
- Advising of undergraduate students
- Other contributions to teaching

##### b. Research

- Awards and honors
- Journal papers published, accepted or submitted

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- Other peer reviewed scientific and technical literature published, accepted or submitted (with documentation indicating acceptance rates when available)
- Conference papers presented, accepted, submitted
- Proposals/Proposal wins (as Principal Investigator, co-PI, investigator)
- Dollar volume of funded research
- Graduate students supported by faculty research program
- Undergraduate students involved in faculty research program
- Development of a research facility
- Other contributions to research

c. Service

- Awards and honors
- Membership/activity in professional societies including offices held
- Editorial positions
- Review activities
- Conference responsibilities
- Invited lectures
- Service to the Department, College, and University
- Mentoring of students and faculty
- Outreach to K-12
- Outreach to industry
- Other contributions to service