



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA®

Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost

Policy Approval
Department of Film and Media Studies

Policy Document:

Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

Approved by:

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Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences
Film and Media Studies
Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

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To Be Approved by the Provost's Office

1. Tenure and Promotion Procedures for Tenure-Track Faculty

A. Distribution of Effort

The Department of Film and Media Studies (FMS) affirms its commitment to excellence in teaching, research/creative activity, and service to both the University of Oklahoma (OU) and to the profession. The following general formula for these functions is to be used for faculty housed in FMS:

- Research/Creative Activity (40%)
- Teaching (40%)
- Service (20%)

This formula is to be used for tenure-track faculty through the tenure decision and may be changed only in exceptional circumstances. However, the contributions of tenured faculty members may not, and need not match these proportions, and there is some flexibility in making contributions in areas of individual strength, subject to approval by the Dean's Office. At the beginning of the calendar year, faculty members can negotiate with the Chair and Committee A concerning the relative weight to be assigned to each function within the following limits:

- Research/Creative Activity (30-60%)
- Teaching (30-60%)
- Service (5-30%)

Faculty with special appointments such as department chair negotiate with the Dean and/or the Chair concerning the weighted distribution of their efforts. Per the Faculty Handbook, the distribution of effort for service must be at least 50% for Chairs.

Promotion and tenure decisions rely in part on the candidates' annual evaluations, but the dossier is far more than the sum of those evaluations. The following procedures and criteria will be used in reaching decisions on tenure and promotion cases within FMS.

B. Tenure Probationary Period

Except in unusual cases, where specific criteria are established, in writing, by the Dean and the Provost, faculty members on tenure-track appointments will be assistant professors. These appointments are made, by state law, on a yearly basis. (See *Faculty Handbook*, 3.5.6-7).

Reappointment is not automatic; tenure-track faculty on probationary status must be reappointed annually. The decision to reappoint will be based on careful review, by Committee A and the Chair, of the faculty member's satisfactory performance in the areas of research/creative activity and teaching as well as of department needs, by means of annual evaluation not only of the faculty member's performance but of their cumulative progress towards meeting the criteria for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

C. Tenure-Progress Review and Progress Towards Tenure Letters

Each tenure-track faculty member participates in an annual tenure progress review supervised by Committee A and the Chair. The review is designed to enhance teaching, to evaluate a faculty member's progress, and to assist them in developing the qualifications and materials necessary for an affirmative tenure decision.

In addition, Norman campus policy requires that tenure-track faculty be provided with a progress-toward-tenure letter during each year in which they are in probationary status. The purpose of this review is to provide feedback to the faculty member on the degree to which they are meeting the expectations for earning tenure. The letter should give an honest and frank evaluation as to how the faculty member is progressing in the quantity and quality of their teaching, research/creative activity, and service relative to their stage in the tenure process. The letter should reflect on the faculty member's cumulative accomplishments while employed at OU and use as a reference point the academic unit's criteria for tenure and promotion. The letter should include a copy of the criteria by which the faculty member will be evaluated during the tenure decision.

A copy of the progress-toward-tenure letter with the unit's evaluation criteria should be sent to the Dean's Office; the deadline is usually in late April. The Dean will review these letters and forward copies to the Provost.

D. Third-Year Review

All tenure-track faculty receive a comprehensive review of their progress toward tenure in the spring of their third year. The process should result in a thorough written evaluation by the chair and committee A of the faculty member's teaching, research/creative activity, and service, including a summary of the previous annual evaluations and reports on any classroom visits made by the chair or other members of the faculty for the purpose of evaluating teaching. As part of the review, the faculty member should prepare a self-assessment that includes long-range research and teaching plans, an updated curriculum vitae, and copies of publications submitted since arriving at OU. The third-year review serves as the progress-toward-tenure letter for that year.

No later than April 1 of the faculty member's third year, the chair will ask them to submit part of a version of the tenure dossier which will include the following:

- a mini-vitae covering the faculty member's years in the department
- research or creative work published, accepted, submitted, and in progress

- evidence of teaching effectiveness

The Chair and Committee A will, after consulting the faculty member, appoint three senior tenured faculty members within the department in appropriate fields to evaluate research/creative work and write an assessment of its quality, judged on a national scale, and of the candidate's potential for further development in the areas of scholarship and/or creative work. This ad hoc committee should also indicate ways in which the work may be improved or new directions explored. The Chair and Committee A will assess the faculty member's progress as a teacher and, if appropriate, suggest means of improvement. Finally, the Chair and Committee A will decide whether or not to appoint the probationary faculty member beyond a fourth year and will forward a written evaluation and recommendation to the Dean.

The goal of these reviews and of less formal mentoring and advising is to help tenure-track faculty develop professionally and to prepare a solid case for tenure. It is the sense of the department that the evaluation process should be used to advise and aid the probationary faculty member. It is expected that under normal circumstances appointment will be continuous up to the time of the tenure decision unless there is compelling evidence that the faculty member is failing to perform satisfactorily.

2. The Tenure Process

The *Faculty Handbook*, section 3.7.5, describes the procedures for the tenure decision, and these will be followed. Faculty being considered for tenure will be evaluated for tenure and promotion simultaneously in the sixth year of probation. Exceptions to this policy are governed by section 3.7.3 in the *Faculty Handbook*.

The candidate, with the advice of the Chair and Committee A, should begin preparation of the tenure dossier in the preceding spring. The candidate will suggest six names of referees from outside OU who are acquainted with the candidate's research/creative work and professional standing. The Chair and Committee A will select an equal number of external referees and request evaluations from both lists. The dossier must contain letters from at least six external reviewers, who should have no close academic or personal connections with the candidate: Ph.D. advisors and committee members, co-authors, and close personal friends should not be asked to evaluate the candidate. Not more than half of the received external review letters should be from the candidate's list. Before external reviewers evaluate the candidate, they must be approved in advance by the Dean's Office. For other details about procedure, see *Faculty Handbook* 3.7.5.

Tenure votes are normally held in the fall semester of the candidate's sixth year of appointment. Tenured full and associate professors from the FMS core faculty may vote on tenure and promotion decisions for tenure-track faculty. Core faculty are defined as faculty members (ranked and non-ranked renewable term, tenure-track, and tenured) whose appointments rest entirely or in part in the Department of Film and Media Studies.

The tenure decision is based upon the candidate's record in research/creative work and teaching. To qualify for tenure, the faculty member must have: 1) established themselves as a successful teacher, and 2) engaged in research or creative activity that has appeared in significant national or international refereed publications or juried venues, and that demonstrates in concrete fashion promise of continuing achievement. Committee service within the department is expected, but service outside the department or at college or university levels is less important than teaching and research/creative activity.

A. Research and Creative Activity

Film and Media Studies is interdisciplinary across the arts and humanities. Faculty members may practice academic scholarship and/or film and digital media production, which is increasingly varied and multi-genre as well as intensely collaborative with many specialties, complex production and distribution systems, and technical requirements.

Because the department values the rich variety of media forms, creative arts and critical scholarship that make up a robust research agenda in film and media studies, there is not one single criteria or narrow profile for the tenure dossier. Among other things, for example, a successful research/creative activity dossier for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor might include:

- a feature film or other major media production (of any genre—narrative, documentary, experimental, animated, digital, interactive or game-based, etc.) circulated and exhibited in multiple national or international juried festivals, competitions, gallery shows, film markets, and/or incubators, with the faculty member in a key production role such as director, screenwriter, editor, producer, post production supervisor, etc.
- a peer reviewed print or digital book published or in production with an academic press or a nationally reputable commercial press (publications may not be with vanity presses or pay to play venues)
- a similarly substantial assembly of impactful shorter works, such as six articles or chapters published in peer-reviewed venues or short films circulated in juried festivals and competitions.

In addition to the elements mentioned above, evidence of excellence in research/creative work is also demonstrated by a wide range of evaluative processes and outcomes, including (but not limited to):

- screenplays, video games, or VR prototypes produced and distributed
- awards and fellowships
- external grants and funded projects
- wide public visibility through such venues as publication with an established commercial press, theatrical or home release licensing of creative work or its distribution to a studio televisual broadcast or streaming platform, or significant circulation of public scholarship
- editing and editorial contributions
- film/media programming in national or international venues
- archival work, preservation, and cataloguing

- peer reviewed conference presentation of research or creative activity

The department is deeply invested in elevating film and media studies and production for everyone, and greatly values projects that are socially transformative; that focus on or are broadly inclusive of global and non-Western film and media; and that enhance or recover film and media contributions of women and under-represented minorities. Similarly, the department recognizes the social relevance and intensive time and skills required for community-based work, public scholarship that reaches multiple audiences, and collaborative and interdisciplinary projects, and supports and values these emphases in research and creative activity.

Length is not a primary indication of quality or craft, since shorter duration is standard practice for some media forms (such as stop-motion and computer animations, which are extremely labor-intensive).

The department recognizes the collaborative nature of film and media production as well as many forms of scholarly production and public intellectual work; scholarship and creative activity for promotion in the department encompasses co-authored publications and films (which are almost always collectively produced). In cases of multiple authorship, the dossier statement should include a robust description of the faculty members' key role along with intent and craft contributions to the work.

B. Teaching

Teaching is defined and discussed in the *Faculty Handbook*, 3.6.1. In order to be granted tenure, the candidate should demonstrate teaching effectiveness in introductory and/or core departmental courses and a high quality of performance in their area(s) of specialization. Evaluation of teaching is based upon the following:

- student experience surveys
- annual classroom visits by a member of the tenured faculty, chosen in consultation with committee A
- copies of instructional materials (syllabi, course assignments, etc.)
- other relevant indications of success such as teaching awards, individual mentoring or advising, resources developed for online or in-person teaching, professional development in teaching, and efforts in developing and fostering a diverse, open, and inclusive learning environment

The department places great importance on developing and fostering learning communities that are diverse, open, respectful, accessible, and inclusive. Evidence towards these efforts might include incorporating course materials concepts, readings, screen media and scholarship from underrepresented perspectives, employing inclusive and accessible teaching methods, or serving as mentors to students or student organizations from underrepresented groups. Student evaluations are included in this record but may not be substituted for other indications of teaching excellence, since extensive research has revealed many problems of inequity in student teaching evaluations.

C. Service

While service plays a secondary role in the tenure decision, candidates are expected to perform service duties within the department as it is essential for both the department's basic functioning and its culture of collegiality. However, probationary candidates are cautioned not to overburden themselves with service responsibilities outside the department, either for OU or for regional or national organizations.

3. Procedures for Promotion to Rank of Professor

Tenured faculty promotions will follow the timeline articulated in the Provost's Tenure and Promotion memo. Each year the Chair and/or Committee A shall notify members of the faculty of deadlines for the promotion process in the coming academic year. Those wishing to be considered for promotion will be given a copy of the schedule and format for assembling a dossier. As in tenure cases, both the candidate and Committee A will prepare a list of external referees able to judge the quality, significance and impact of the candidate's work. The candidate will provide a list of six possible reviewers, and the Chair and Committee A will provide a list of six possible reviewers and request evaluations from both lists. The dossier must contain letters from at least six referees outside OU. External reviewers must be at the rank of Professor and, ideally, from R1 institutions. Not more than half of the received external review letters should be from the candidate's list.

The dossier, including external evaluations, the candidate's vita and narrative of accomplishment after promotion to Associate Professor, and copies of published and creative work, will be available to all faculty members eligible to vote. Tenured full and associate professors from the FMS core faculty may vote on promotion decisions for tenured faculty.

A. Research and Creative Activity

The candidate for promotion to the rank of Professor should, in addition to successful teaching and service, provide evidence of continued growth as a scholar and/or as a creative artist beyond work prior to tenure and promotion to Associate Professor and should have warranted national recognition for that work. Both quality and quantity are important. Research and creative activity before but particularly after tenure count as part of the overall record for promotion to full professor. In addition, the dossier statement should include an indication of ongoing development including plans for future research or creative work.

A successful research/creative activity dossier for promotion to the rank of Professor may include any of the following elements:

- a feature film or other major media production (of any genre—narrative, documentary, experimental, animated, digital, interactive or game-based, etc.) circulated and exhibited in multiple national or international juried festivals, competitions, gallery shows, film markets, and/or incubators, with the faculty member in a key production role such as director, screenwriter, editor, producer, post production supervisor, etc.

- a peer reviewed print or digital book published or in production with an academic press or a nationally reputable commercial press (publications may not be with vanity presses or pay to play venues)
- a similarly substantial assembly of impactful shorter works, such as six articles or chapters published in peer-reviewed venues or short films circulated in juried festivals and competitions.

As well as other possible evaluative processes and outcomes such as:

- screenplays, video games, or VR prototypes produced and distributed
- awards and fellowships
- external grants and funded projects
- wide public visibility through such venues as publication with an established commercial press, theatrical or home release licensing of creative work or its distribution to a studio televisual broadcast or streaming platform, or significant circulation of public scholarship
- editing and editorial contributions
- film/media programming in national or international venues
- archival work, preservation, and cataloguing
- peer reviewed conference presentation of research or creative activity

The dossier might also include other activities showing national and/or international recognition or leadership in the field, such as

- invited plenary or keynote talks
- invitations to review national or international grants, scholarship, or creative work
- leadership activities such as leading national scholarly associations and organizing national or international conferences, festivals, and symposia

Finally, the department recognizes the value of editorial work as essential to the vitality of ongoing scholarship and as an important factor in national recognition of scholarly accomplishment. Edited book collections, special issues of journals, and other editorial contributions, when accompanied by a record of other scholarship or creative production, significantly enhance the case for promotion to the rank of Professor.

B. Teaching

Evaluation of teaching, including peer evaluation, will also be conducted in evaluating a faculty member for promotion to Professor. In addition to the standard elements considered in the tenure review process, evidence of teaching excellence in the promotion dossier might also include a record of activities and recognition related to teaching, such as:

- teaching awards
- pedagogy training; individual mentoring or advising
- professional development in teaching

- one-on-one or group teaching activities in addition to regular course loads (e.g. reading groups)
- resources developed for online or in-person teaching
- new course development
- letters of recommendation written for students
- program-wide or individual course or curriculum revision
- mentoring or training other instructors; leading internship initiatives, student trips, or other experiential learning opportunities
- organization of teaching events such as masterclasses, guest speakers, workshops or symposia
- any other activities that evidence growth as a teacher and contributions to student success.

C. Service

Evidence of success in service spans all levels from department to college to campus to system-wide, as well as community service and service to the profession locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally. Faculty should demonstrate consistent service to the department and beyond, and an expansion of the scope of service since tenure. The department especially recognizes the significant time involved in administrative service and leadership and its importance to the well-being of the unit and the entire university community, and the department encourages service that promotes inclusion and equity at all levels of the profession.