



## Research and Scholarship Guidelines

*May 1, 2019*

### **Faculty Expectations**

Faculty members are expected to contribute to the research and scholarship mission of the University. These guidelines consider research production and dissemination throughout all phases of a faculty member's career life cycle, across all dimensions of faculty duties, and at all institutional levels. Like research programs and platforms, these guidelines will evolve as we analyze our performance and determine additional means to advance our research and academic mission. The College of Social Science (hereafter, "the College") is large and diverse; thus, research-related metrics are likely to be discipline-specific. *To this end, each unit's by-laws will contain an explicit statement clarifying expectations and describing how research and scholarly outputs are measured to guide faculty along the path to promotion and tenure.*

### ***Research across the Faculty Life Cycle***

One goal of the university is to support faculty pursuit of research and scholarship. Faculty across the College are, in most instances, appointed with the expectation that at least 40% of their effort is dedicated towards conducting research and producing scholarly works. We recognize that a faculty member's expertise develops and evolves over a career.

### ***Pre-tenure Personal Strategic Plan***

At the beginning of the pre-tenure period, new faculty members should work with their unit's Chair or Director and/or formally assigned mentor(s) to create a personal strategic plan outlining a research trajectory leading to their tenure application. The University and College expect all junior faculty members to establish strong publication records comparable to faculty in their disciplines awarded tenure at other doctoral universities with the highest research activity (Carnegie R1 institutions) and at other Association of American Universities (AAU) institutions. The expectations for external support, including specific funding sources and appropriate amounts, for junior faculty members, should be determined by the unit at the time of initial appointment.

It is understood that individual research plans will vary by discipline and sub-discipline, but they should focus on activities aimed at establishing a successful and long-term research program. The ultimate goal of this pre-tenure agenda is for the faculty member to produce publications to establish a research record and begin to acquire professional recognition within a discipline. The pre-tenure personal strategic plan specifically should map the path towards that goal by describing the types of activities in which pre-tenure faculty plan to engage, with descriptions of the desired results.

The personal strategic plan should be reviewed annually and revised as necessary. During the pre-tenure period (especially around the time of annual reviews), chairs, directors, and/or mentors will work regularly with the pre-tenure faculty member to evaluate progress towards

tenure. Initial pre-tenure personal strategic plans may change over time. In these cases, the pre-tenure faculty should discuss revisions to their personal strategic plan with their mentors or unit administrator. Mentors and unit administrators should work with the faculty member to create a new set of goals that also meet the College's and University's expectations. The typical start-up package for new faculty members is designed to support research program development, so it is important for new faculty members to plan how and when these resources are used.

In addition to disciplinary research, high-quality interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship are priorities in the College's Strategic Plan. For many units in the College, interdisciplinary/collaborative scholarship is a core value, and is viewed as a complement to disciplinary scholarship. Therefore, high-quality interdisciplinary and collaborative publications, including multiple-authored publications from multiple disciplines, are valued by the College.

### ***Post-tenure Personal Strategic Plan***

Following promotion with the award of tenure, faculty members should strive to remain research active by creating a new personal strategic plan that specifies a set of ongoing and planned activities that will lead to recognized leadership in the field and/or significant professional recognition within their disciplines. These "mid-career" research plans should include specific expectations for publications that are equivalent to faculty in the same disciplines who have been promoted to Professor at other R1 or AAU universities. Increased involvement in interdisciplinary projects offers one way to further develop research plans that hold the potential for generating transformative scholarship while also providing leadership opportunities for post-tenure faculty.

In many (but not all) cases, promotion to Professor may not be appropriate without external research support. The expectations for external support for promotion to Professor, including specific funding sources and appropriate amounts, should be determined through individual discussions with mentors and unit administrators. Research plans should also include a timeline specifying target dates for specific activities, including an application for promotion. During annual reviews, mentors and unit administrators will work with mid-career faculty members to jointly evaluate their progress towards promotion to Professor. Modifications to the mid-career plans will be made as appropriate.

### ***Expectations for Re-appointment, Tenure, and Promotion to Associate Professor (Junior Faculty)***

The Dean's Advisory Council on Promotion, Tenure, and Reappointment examines junior faculty portfolios for evidence of sustained and improving independent scientific and scholarly production. "Independence" generally entails not continuing to heavily collaborate with a doctoral advisor and not being dependent upon other scholars, such as colleagues in the department. Independence may be demonstrated by sole authorship or senior co-authorship in high-quality refereed journals, books published by highly regarded academic presses (all appropriate to their field of expertise), or emerging media of diverse types. Interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship are valued by the College, and contributions to interdisciplinary efforts are therefore acknowledged in the RPT process according to the expectations defined by each unit. Interdisciplinary and collaborative work are viewed by the College as a complement to core disciplinary scholarship, not as competition. Standards around multiple authorships, lead authorships, novel media, and quality are driven largely by disciplinary norms, professional organizations, and national metric collection

organizations. *A significant part of the evidence of independent intellectual production will be based on work completed while at MSU.*

In addition, the faculty member's record should indicate a positive future research trajectory. The College also expects evidence at the time of the promotion and tenure review that the faculty member has engaged in a sustained and good faith effort to seek external support, where grant availability is consistent with a research agenda and grants would help advance the research. If a candidate is recommended by a unit despite little or no opportunity for external support, the Chair/Director must demonstrate that promotion is consistent with standards prevailing at peer institutions.

Tenure evaluation is both a retrospective evaluation of the faculty member's overall record, including their research, teaching, and service, and a prospective evaluation of their capacity for future accomplishment and leadership in their field. Because external evaluations tend to evaluate candidates for tenure relative to their peers at other universities, junior faculty should also seek to meet or exceed the expectations of junior faculty in their disciplines at peer institutions.

### ***Research Activity Following Promotion & Tenure (Senior Faculty)***

It is expected that senior faculty demonstrate intellectual leadership in their fields and, when appropriate, build multi- or interdisciplinary research teams across units or colleges. Associate Professors and Professors are expected to develop and sustain their national and/or international reputations based on original research, scholarship, and publications or other units of productivity, and to lead externally supported projects whose source and scope is appropriate to their discipline and area of expertise. Unit guidelines will define and maintain standards of productivity for senior faculty. Sabbatical applications should clearly emphasize research and scholarly productivity, such as the anticipation of high-quality refereed journal articles and peer-reviewed chapters in edited books, books published by academic presses, and/or the development of external research applications.

### ***Promotion to Professor***

Promotion to Professor requires that a faculty member has established a well-developed, nationally (and, where appropriate, internationally) recognized body of scholarship and research which demonstrates impact in one or more fields leading to a high level of professional stature. It therefore represents something more than the fact that a faculty member has continued to regularly author articles and seek external support. Rather, it signifies that they have demonstrated leadership in their field through significant scholarship and professional service.

The nature of the scholarly activity, impact, and intellectual leadership that is expected for promotion to Professor will vary across disciplines, but normally includes producing frequently cited articles in the most highly regarded refereed journals, books published by respected academic presses, and/or publications with extensive reach to the professional community and/or public. A sustained record of sponsored research may be necessary to produce such publications, and, if so, leadership on extramurally funded projects is expected. Again, an active interdisciplinary program of research is one important way to demonstrate the kind of scholarly accomplishments expected of full Professors.

In addition, successful applicants will demonstrate leadership in service through: editorial board and/or professional association leadership; journal editorship; election as a Fellow of a professional society; directing sustained research programs, centers, or institutes;

professional awards or prizes; invited articles and lectures; success at recruiting, training, and placement of doctoral students; and/or evidence of influence on public policy or practice. The quality of such achievements is as important as their quantity.

## **Administration**

In order for individual faculty members to maintain the high standards expected of all MSU faculty, both the individual units and the College should set clear and consistent expectations. This section describes some of the initiatives that units should undertake to facilitate faculty accomplishment.

### ***Strategic Plans and By-Laws***

Consistent with the University and College strategic plans, all units are expected to develop and maintain a set of by-laws. The by-laws serve as a statement of that unit's mission, faculty expectations, and decision-making processes. The by-laws should provide a clear set of procedures for annual evaluation, describe associated expectations, and identify the benchmarks that faculty should reach in order to ensure successful and timely reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. Given the priorities of the College to promote interdisciplinary scholarship, all units should explicitly address this issue in their by-laws.

An essential element of each unit's by-laws is an explicit statement of how research and scholarly output are measured. Measures should consider refereed or peer-reviewed publications, citations, external awards, and similar indicators of excellence. These indicators should include explanations of how they are tracked with justification based on standards accepted within particular disciplines. Expectations regarding research productivity should be informed by disciplinary culture and the scholarly output of a unit's peers (e.g., comparable units in the AAU). At the same time, each unit's plan should provide sufficient flexibility to allow every faculty member to play a productive role, given faculty members' interests and strengths. Units should also allow variation in workload assignments to reflect these considerations.

The prototypical teaching expectation in the college is 4 courses per year. Individual units are given authority over sequencing, stacking, and all scheduling. The College encourages variable teaching load policies in units and supports a range from 0 to 8 courses per year. Variation from the typical should be based largely on research and scholarship production, service obligations, and other opportunities. Unit by-laws should include a statement of the unit's standard workload for research active faculty members and carefully outline the circumstances that would trigger deviations from this norm. It is also important for units to ensure that the assignments of junior faculty, in particular, facilitate the development of their scholarly activities. Examples of such initiatives might include modified assignments, such as reduced instructional responsibilities (e.g., temporary reductions in course load, student enrollment, or course preparation), reduced service assignments, summer research support, preferential access to research assistants or work-study students, and/or help from other support personnel that the department or school can afford.

The necessity for and availability of external support varies across disciplines. Therefore, units should issue clear directives about the importance of extramural funding in assessments of faculty productivity. A determination of the importance of external support should reflect disciplinary standards, which can be gleaned by examining the grant-seeking activities of peer units in peer institutions.

The College expects that each unit will develop and implement a formal mentoring program. A document describing the specifics of the unit's mentoring program should be provided to every new faculty member at the time of their orientation.

### ***Non-Research-Active Faculty***

All faculty members in the tenure system are expected to meet and maintain high scholarship standards. If a tenured faculty member fails to maintain a level of research activity necessary for meeting annual expectations as specified in unit by-laws, the Chair or Director and faculty member will work together to craft a Faculty Development Plan or Performance Improvement Plan that will enable the faculty member to reinvigorate their research program. Such a Faculty Development Plan may include attendance at grant writing workshops, participation in research mentoring activities, and/or other constructive activities agreed upon by the tenured faculty member and their Chair or Director. Additionally, the College may offer inducements (e.g., temporary course releases) to facilitate the revival of a faculty member's research program.

If the faculty member is still unable to meet the scholarship standards stipulated by their unit, that individual will a) be assigned an increased teaching load, b) have a reduced appointment, or c) be assigned other activities as determined by the department chair unrelated to research that better match their current interests and skills. Annual reviews will then reflect the newly revised research, teaching, and service model or appointment structure. Post-tenure review is implemented through several existing policies and procedures (found in the Faculty Handbook). Triggered by three consecutive years of low performance as defined by units' by-laws and recorded in annual reviews, discipline in a variety of forms may be invoked under the "Discipline and Dismissal of Tenured Faculty for Cause" policy.