

Department of Physics and Astronomy

Evaluation and Procedures

Approved: 2024



Policy 1003 Criteria and Standards for Annual Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure

Purpose

To describe the criteria and standards for annual evaluation, promotion and tenure for the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The original version of this document was originally approved by the faculty on May 4, 2001. Minor changes were approved on September 3, 2003. Additional revisions were made on February 11, 2011. The most recent revisions were approved on November 17, 2022.

Definitions

The Faculty Handbook referenced in this document is found at the Faculty Senate web site.

Applicability

These criteria and standards apply to all RTA, tenured and tenure-track faculty in the department.

Policy

Introduction:

The Physics Department considers evaluation to be an ongoing process designed to support professional development and encourage performance at the highest levels. Evaluations are used in making personnel decisions, including allocation of merit pay increases, continuation of employment, and promotion. All

evaluations shall consider a faculty member's performance in the areas of 1) teaching, 2) scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and 3) professional service. In addition, contributions that are of such a general nature that they do not easily fall into one or more of the above categories may be considered. These could include significant contributions to students' overall development, commitment to the discipline, the department, the college, the university, and the community. Because there are numerous methods of achieving excellence, the standards for evaluation should not be interpreted as inflexible and absolute.

The reward system at James Madison University, and specifically within the Physics and Astronomy Department, should be sufficiently flexible that all members of the faculty will be able to concentrate on their strongest areas within teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service. Each faculty member will set the approximate level of effort in each category in consultation with the Department Head. As stated in the Faculty Handbook, there are five types of evaluations:

- The Initial Evaluation
- The Mid-Point of Tenure Track Evaluation
- Annual Evaluations
- Comprehensive Evaluations Concerned with Promotion
- Comprehensive Evaluation Concerned with Tenure

Faculty should consult the Faculty Handbook for detailed descriptions of each type of evaluation. "Copies of all evaluations shall be maintained in a faculty member's personnel file. A faculty member may examine their personnel files wherever they are kept."

The Physics and Astronomy Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC):

The Department of Physics and Astronomy Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) advises the Department Head and makes recommendations on personnel matters within the Department including appeals. In making their evaluations and recommendations, PAC and the Department Head will follow the procedures set forth in the James Madison University Faculty Handbook. The composition and selection of the PAC is defined in Policy 1008. The PAC is broken into three different subcommittees based on the task needed: the Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC), the Full-Professor Promotion Committee (FPC), and Faculty Performance Review Committee (FPRC).

Procedures

Evaluations:

Initial Evaluation and Conference

The Department Head shall provide a new faculty member with a copy of the Physics Department's evaluation procedures Criteria and Standards (this document) and a written set of expectations, Requirements and Expectations of Tenure Track Faculty, (Faculty Expectations.pdf). The initial evaluation will be conducted at the beginning of the second full semester of full-time employment at James Madison University. All policies and procedures set forth in the Faculty Handbook (*JMU Faculty Handbook*, Section III.E.3) will be followed.

At the start of a new faculty member's second full semester, the Department Head shall schedule an evaluation conference with the faculty member. The conference provides an opportunity to discuss the faculty member's first semester performance and professional needs as perceived by both the faculty member and the Department Head. The Department Head will provide to the faculty member a written initial evaluation within 14 days of the evaluation conference. As stated in the Faculty Handbook, "The evaluation shall state whether the faculty member's overall performance has been satisfactory or unsatisfactory."²

<u>Annual Evaluations</u>

The Annual Report of Professional Activities will be used as primary data for evaluation, but a faculty member may submit additional materials for the evaluation if they choose. Each faculty member's Annual Report of Professional Activities should include material for the year reporting period as defined by the University and normally will be due to the Department Head within two weeks of the end of that period.

The annual evaluation shall consider the performance of the faculty member in the areas of teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service. In each of the areas, a faculty member shall be evaluated as excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. In addition to an evaluation in each of the three areas of performance, the faculty member's overall performance must be evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The annual evaluation of an RTA faculty member also must include a recommendation on extending the faculty member's appointment (*JMU Faculty Handbook*, Section III.E.4.)

While annual evaluations are the specific responsibility of the unit head according to the JMU Faculty Handbook, in Physics & Astronomy the FPRCPAC plays a role by providing the AUH with input that is then integrated into the annual evaluation as the AUH sees fit. The FPRC-PAC will evaluate full-time faculty on the following schedules:

- all tenure-track and fixed-term appointment (FTA), and renewable-term appointment (RTA) assistant professors and lecturers every year,
- all associate professors and senior lecturers every two years,
- and all full professors and principal lecturers every four years.

These evaluations are shared with the AUH and incorporated in whole or in part in the faculty member's annual evaluation. Since this is due to the faculty on October 1, the input from the FPRC-PAC should be delivered to the AUH by September 15 unless a later date is agreed upon. The FRPC-PAC evaluations should categorize each faculty member as excellent, noteworthy, satisfactory, marginal, or poor in each of the three standard categories: teaching, scholarly activity, and professional service. They should also provide an overall evaluation of satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Justification should be provided for any rating other than satisfactory. The FRPC-PAC will not provide a rank ordering of faculty within any of the categories, nor overall. Every faculty member will meet with the unit head to discuss their evaluation and plans for coming years unless they explicitly decline this opportunity.

In the event of an appeal, a committee made of PAC members who were not on that year's FRPC-PAC will hear the appeal.

Promotion:

The promotion of a faculty member shall be determined by merit regardless of the distribution of faculty by rank within the Department. Normally, a faculty member should have completed five years in rank in the Department before being reviewed for promotion. For example, if a faculty member applied for promotion in the 2000-2001 academic year and was awarded that promotion, their new rank would have started in 2001-2002, and the soonest they could submit an application for promotion to the next rank would have been fall 2006 after completing five full years at rank. (PAC suggests, but does not require, that physics faculty members have their supporting materials reviewed by the PAC one year in advance of any anticipated comprehensive evaluation for promotion.) The candidate for promotion must inform the Department Head and Dean of the college of their intention to apply for promotion by September 1. Contact information for letters of recommendation need to be submitted to the AUH by September 15. All remaining supporting materials for promotion are due to the Department Head and PAC by October 1. Candidates are encouraged to review the dossiers submitted by recent candidates for promotion and/or tenure to learn what a typical dossier might look like, though there is no defined format. All faculty in the department are strongly encouraged though not required to share their materials with candidates unless there is reason not to such as conflict of interest or personally confidential information. The promotion process is separate from the annual evaluation process. This is a comprehensive evaluation that takes into consideration the contributions and future potential of the candidate. The specific criteria listed for annual evaluations may be used with an emphasis on sustainability.

The promotion process will be based on a comprehensive evaluation of the candidate's promotion package. The criteria and standards below will be used in

determining the eligibility and recommendations for promotion of a faculty member of the Department:

- Associate Professor (tenured)
 - Excellent rating in either teaching or scholarship and minimum satisfactory ratings in the others are required for promotion to Associate Professor. The candidate must submit the names of at least three references who are at or above the rank of associate professor or are regarded as pre-eminent experts and external to JMU. The AUH and/or TPC-PAC will request letters from these or others of their choosing to evaluate the candidate's application.

• Professor (tenured)

 Excellent ratings in two areas and satisfactory rating in the other are required for promotion to Professor. The candidate must submit the names of at least three references who are at or above the rank of professor or are regarded as pre-eminent experts and external to JMU. The AUH and/or TPC-PAC will request letters from these or others of their choosing to evaluate the candidate's application.

• Associate Professor (RTA)

- Excellent rating in teaching and minimum satisfactory ratings in the others are required for promotion to Associate Professor (RTA). The candidate should provide the names of students or colleagues who can comment on their teaching. The AUH and/or TPC-PAC will request letters from these or others of their choosing to evaluate the candidates teaching. The requirements for teaching are emphasized for RTA faculty, though an RTA faculty applicant can ask to be evaluated on the same weighting of teaching/scholarship/service as a tenure-track faculty member after consultation with the AUH and TPC-PAC chair.

• Professor (RTA)

- Excellent rating in teaching, an excellent rating in one of the other two categories, and no less than satisfactory ratings in any category are required for promotion to Professor (RTA). The candidate should provide the names of students or colleagues who can comment on their teaching. They also should submit at least three names of external reviewers for their scholarly work or service. The AUH and/or TPC-PAC will request letters from these or others of their choosing to evaluate the candidate's teaching. Note that the excellent

rating in either scholarship or service should come from a larger percentage of effort than the minimal expected for a non-tenure track faculty member so the candidate should be able to show increased effort in one of these areas in the preceding years. For promotion to professor, an RTA candidate must demonstrate a level of achievement in scholarship or service that is well beyond that which would typically be expected of a non-tenure track faculty member.

· Senior Lecturer

Excellent rating in teaching and minimum satisfactory ratings in the
others are required for promotion to Senior Lecturer. The candidate
should provide the names of former students or colleagues who can
comment on their teaching. The AUH and/or TPC-PAC will request
letters from these or others of their choosing to evaluate the
candidate's application.

· Principal Lecturer

- Excellent rating in teaching, an excellent rating in one of the other two categories, and no less than satisfactory ratings in any category are required for promotion to Principal Lecturer. The candidate should provide the names of students or colleagues who can comment on their teaching. They also should submit at least three names of external reviewers for their scholarly work or service. The AUH and/or TPC-PAC will request letters from these or others of their choosing to evaluate the candidate's teaching. Note that the excellent rating

in either scholarship or service should come from a larger percentage of effort than the minimal expected for a non-tenure track faculty member so the candidate should be able to show increased effort in one of these areas in the preceding years. For promotion to Principal Lecturer, a candidate must demonstrate a level of achievement in scholarship or service that is well beyond that which would typically be expected of a non-tenure track faculty member.

TPC-PAC or FPC-PAC Recommendations

A simple plurality of those eligible to vote will suffice for recommending excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory in the three areas of achievement (teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service.) Although consultation among the TPC-PAC, the Department Head, and the Dean is encouraged, the Department Head and TPC-PAC shall make independent evaluations and independent recommendations.

The TPC-PAC's recommendation regarding promotion will be determined by a secret ballot of the PAC.

Tenure Guidelines:

Mid-Probationary Review

A mid-probationary review will be conducted by the FPRC-PAC. The intent of the review is to inform the candidate of progress at the mid-point of the probationary period, and to provide guidance for the candidate. This review is intended to be formative in nature and should give the candidate a good sense of what changes they should make in order to make proper progress toward tenure. The review should be succinct and honest. It should include input from and be approved by both the PAC and the AUH with a knowledge that the people evaluating the candidate later for the actual tenure and promotion application could be different. That is, it should rely on the criteria here explicitly and avoid any guidance that might depend on personal opinions that others with which others might not agree.

Tenure Recommendations

The process of granting tenure and promotion involves the AUH and the PAC in parallel efforts.

To be awarded tenure, the faculty member must meet performance standards required for promotion to associate professor and should enhance the academic environment of the academic unit and the university.

Early Promotion and Tenure:

Proposals for early promotion and tenure are considered extraordinary actions. It is not in the best interest of a candidate or of the institution to propose candidates for tenure and promotion ahead of schedule unless the case is very well justified. Proposing early consideration should only be a result of extraordinary accomplishment readily distinguished from a strong case submitted on a normal schedule. Even if the case is sufficiently strong to consider early tenure and promotion, the candidate should keep in mind that the reviewers will not recommend early tenure and promotion unless they are confident that the high level of achievement in scholarship, teaching and service already exhibited will continue once it is granted. The following list serves as a guideline for consideration for early tenure and promotion:

- No candidate shall be considered for early tenure or promotion before two years prior to the end of their contractually agreed upon probationary period.
- 2. The criteria for consideration must exceed all department criteria in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service. This means that the candidate

- (a) has established a clear track record of publication of ongoing research or other scholarly activity in refereed professional journals and that it is of demonstrably higher quality then is normally expected for tenure and promotion.
- (b) has established a sustained program of research or scholarship including having procured external funding to support the program.
- (c) has successfully developed a course or has been recognized for novel teaching techniques.
- (d) is capable of teaching at multiple levels and in a variety of subject areas across the physics curriculum.
- (e) has demonstrated clear instructional prowess.
- (f) has engaged willingly, competently and energetically in service on departmental, university or other committees in appointive or elective positions, in public relations events and through student recruiting.
- 3. The department head must receive a preliminary dossier including the CV and any other supporting documents before consideration by the PAC or external letter writers. They will then discuss the case with the dean and reach an agreement that the case is sufficiently compelling for early consideration.
- 4. External letters writers must be asked to comment specifically on the special grounds for an early decision. The department head and the PAC must also specifically address this issue in their letters that accompany the application.

Evaluation Criteria:

The reward system in the Physics Department is sufficiently flexible that all members of the faculty will be able to concentrate on their strongest areas within teaching, scholarly achievement and professional qualifications, and professional service. Each faculty member will set the approximate level of effort in each category in consultation with the Department Head. The level of effort of a faculty member in each category may change by mutual agreement of the faculty member and Department Head during the year.

Examples, but not requirements, of considerations that will be used in determining the quality of effort of a faculty member in the Physics Department are listed below. All determinations should be made in the context of the agreement between the faculty member and the AUH on the distribution of the workload. Order in each list does not indicate rank or importance.

Teaching

- Excellent

- * Effective implementation of novel instructional technology
- * Receiving a teaching award from the University or external professional organization.
- * Teaching a variety of levels and subject areas in the sciences.
- * Demonstrated ability to teach across the core physics curriculum
- * Developing new courses or significantly redesigning current courses and/or workshops.
- * Consistent long-term above average ratings on student evaluations. An excellent rating on student evaluations is not required for obtaining an excellent rating in teaching by PAC or the Department Head.
- * Demonstrated instructional accomplishments that the PAC deems excellent.
- * Receiving grant funding for student and/or teacher training
- * Organizing and/or leading pedagogical workshops at a regional or national level
- * Giving an invited talk at a pedagogical organization, e.g., AAPT

- Satisfactory

- * Supervising independent study and honors projects.
- * Competently and professionally teaching assigned academic load consistent with agreement with AUH
- * Receiving a satisfactory peer review of teaching and addressing comments and suggestions therein
- * Coordinating a laboratory or other instructional program.
- * Acceptable ratings on student evaluations and evidence of addressing comments and suggestions therein
- * Effective mentoring of Learning Assistants and/or Tutors
- Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications

- Excellent

- * Publication of ongoing research and other scholarly activity in refereed professional journals.
- * Presentations at national or regional meetings by students of supervised research or projects.
- * Mentoring an undergraduate Honors thesis
- * Presenting invited papers at national and regional professional meetings.
- * Initiating a successful grant proposal as a PI or a co-PI for external funding and/or directing the resulting project.
- * Receiving a patent
- * Consulting activity that brings recognition or resources to the department.
- * Receiving a research award from the University or external professional organization
- * Publishing an academic textbook or contributing one or more chapters to a published academic textbook
- st Other scholarly achievement, recognition, or professional development that PAC deems excellent. Satisfactory
 - * Supervising student research projects and/or independent study
 - * Active participation in grant proposals for support of research or other scholarly activities.
 - * Maintaining an active research program
 - * Presenting papers at national and regional meetings and publishing in non-refereed journals.
 - * Development of instructional or education materials.
 - * Ongoing personal professional development (NSF short courses, attending national meetings, etc.) or an organized program of self-study in a new area of research.

- * Acting as a professional consultant.
- * Memberships and participation in professional organizations.
- * Presentation of research work at faculty seminars and colloquia.
- * Current professional activity at other academic institutions and in non-academic settings.

• Professional Service

- Excellent

- * Serving in an organization in an office that brings positive recognition to the University.
- * Initiating and carrying out a program that leads to a significant increase in the resources and/or recognition of the Department or University or in its ability to perform its mission.
- * A major contribution which applies the resources of the University to solving a problem of local, regional, state, or national concern.
- * A major service or office at the college, university, or state level.
- * Significant service at a professional journal, e.g., editor
- * A major effort conducting workshops, symposia, and training sessions in one's professional area.
- * Initiating effective outreach programs and events
- * Receiving a service award from the University or external professional organization
- * Distinguished service in any of the Satisfactory categories *
 Other professional service that PAC deems excellent.

- Satisfactory

- $*\ Serving\ on\ departmental,\ college\ and/or\ university\ committees.$
- * Participating in outreach events
- * Participating in student recruiting.

- * Serving as a faculty advisor to a student organization.
- * Serving as a competent student academic advisor.
- * Serving as a referee or reviewer of scholarly articles or textbooks.

While the items listed above can be used as evidence of excellent or satisfactory performance in a given year as part of the annual evaluation process, it is important to note that the standards for promotion do not consist simply of a collection of annual evaluations. Instead, promotion and tenure require not only meeting a set of the above standards but demonstrating that there has been and will continue to be performance at this level over the span of several years.

Criteria and Standards Updates

The criteria and standards for annual evaluation, promotion and tenure may need to be modified on occasion and updates will be undertaken at the discretion of the Department as a whole.

Responsibilities

Each newly hired faculty member review the Requirements and Expectations of Tenure Track Faculty. A copy of this document is to be printed, signed by both the faculty member and the Department Head, and kept on file in the department.

Sanctions

None.

Exclusions None.