**Department of Biochemistry & Biophysics Guidelines for Tenure/Tenure-Track Promotions**

Stephen Crews, Wolfgang Bergmeier, Jean Cook

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This document is meant to provide clarification and interpretation of the School of Medicine guidelines for appointment, reappointment, and promotion of faculty. This document interprets the guidelines for such appointments within the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics. Whereas it emphasizes some of the areas where the department has flexibility, it cannot conflict with the School of Medicine Guidelines, which have priority.

**Appointment and Reappointment to Assistant Professor**

Most appointments to Assistant Professor on the tenure-track are for 7 years and include an initial 4 year probationary term followed by reappointment to a second 3-year term. During the beginning of the 3rd year of the initial probationary term, the faculty member undergoes a review for reappointment. This involves the formation of a faculty subcommittee (distinct from the faculty member’s mentoring committee) that evaluates the faculty member’s progress regarding research, teaching, and service and writes a progress report to be discussed by Departmental faculty followed by a faculty vote. In addition to a Departmental review and faculty vote, appointments and reappointments for Assistant Professors on the tenure-track are also reviewed by the Health Sciences Advisory Committee, the Provost’s Appointment, Promotions & Tenure Committee, and the Board of Trustees. Outside recommendation letters are not solicited for the reappointment evaluation. One important function of the 3rd year evaluation is to assess the faculty member’s forthcoming progress regarding tenure. This includes a critical evaluation of research progress, including the acquisition of grant funding and expectation of publications. It is better to address potential problems at this point while there exists sufficient time before tenure for corrective actions.

**Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with Tenure**

While the initial appointment is for 7 years, promotion to Associate Professor with tenure usually occurs at the beginning of the 7th year. Thus, the promotion package is generally assembled at the beginning of the 6th year. This promotion packet includes an updated CV with research and teaching statements in the SOM format, a Chair’s letter of recommendation, at least 4 letters of recommendation from external reviewers (none of these four external reviewers should have a current or a prior academic and/or professional affiliation with the faculty member who is being reviewed) which two of these letters coming from individuals who have been identified by the faculty member undergoing review and 2 letters coming from individuals selected by the faculty member’s Chair, a peer letter of review, teaching evaluations, and a UNC form for personnel action (AP2). The Department appoints a subcommittee of faculty (also distinct from the faculty member’s mentoring committee) who review the candidate’s dossier and presents a recommendation to the assembled faculty followed by a vote by the faculty on the promotion. The recommendation of the Department then proceeds through a series of reviews, including the: (1) School of Medicine Associate Professor Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee, (2) Dean’s Advisory Committee, (3) Health Sciences Advisory Committee, and (4) UNC Appointments, Promotion and Tenure (APT) Committee. APT sends its recommendation to the Provost who decides on the promotion and the Provost’s recommendation is approved by the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees. Reappointment from Associate Professor without tenure to Associate Professor with tenure is a similar process except that the initial appointment is generally for 5 years.

**Criteria for promotion**

Faculty are appointed to the tenure-track, or are granted tenure, in one of three areas of excellence: research, clinical scholarship, or educational scholarship. Most often in the Department of Biochemistry our tenure-track and tenured faculty are appointed based on excellence in research. When reviewing the criteria for promotion based on excellence in research, there are 3 components of the promotion package that are considered: research, service, and teaching.

**Research** is the most important criterion and includes publications, funding, outside letters, and national/international recognition.

**1) Publications**: The expectation is for multiple research articles demonstrating independent research directorship. This is most commonly indicated by senior-author publications. Collaborative papers are also important contributions and are encouraged; the candidate should provide context to their contributions to collaborative papers in their Research Statement, when other investigators are the corresponding/senior authors.

**2)** **Funding**: Substantial external research funding that can sustain an active research program is expected for promotion. This will commonly be an NIH R01 or R35 grant(s), although funding from collaborative grants, industry, and private foundations are also acceptable and encouraged.

**3) Outside letters:** External letters of recommendation are solicited from at least 4 distinguished scientists from UNC peer institutions: two letters are selected by the Department and two by the candidate (none of these four external reviewers should have a current or a prior academic and/or professional affiliation with the faculty member who is being reviewed). These letters address the quality, significance, and impact of the candidate’s research program and their standing in the scientific community.

**4) National/international recognition:** It is expected that the candidate will be achieving national and international prominence due to their research accomplishments. This is often demonstrated by invitations to speak at conferences and universities.

**Service** at the Assistant Professor level will most often involve duties in the Department, School of Medicine, and the University. However, service on journal editorial boards and organizing national/international conferences or conference sessions are notable. Service should be undertaken with input from the Department Chair and mentoring committee to achieve a successful balance of research, service, and teaching.

**Teaching** involves the mentoring of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and undergraduates, as well as classroom teaching in courses with graduate students or medical students. Satisfactory teaching, as commonly demonstrated by student evaluations, is expected for promotion.

**Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor**

The School of Medicine guidelines considers 5 years in rank as an Associate Professor as a typical time for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. Promotion earlier than 5 years is considered “exceptional”. Truly outstanding individuals may be considered for early promotion if he/she has been in the active employment and in his/her current rank at the University for at least 18 months. The request for an early promotion cannot begin until the 19th month (i.e. solicitation of letters, vote of assembled full professors, etc.). The process for promotion is the same as promotion to Associate Professor with tenure except that the School of Medicine review involves a distinct Full Professor APT Committee.

**Criteria for promotion**

The criteria for promotion to Professor are the same as promotion to Associate Professor with tenure with the added expectations below.

**Research** is the most important criterion.

**1) Publications**: The expectation is for a consistent and sustained publication record.

**2)** **Funding**: Sustained external research funding that can support an active research program.

**3) Outside letters:** External letters of recommendation are solicited from leaders in the candidate’s field of research. (none of these four external reviewers should have a current or a prior academic and/or professional affiliation with the faculty member who is being reviewed)

**4) National/international recognition:** It is expected that the candidate will have achieved both national and international prominence due to their research accomplishments and service. This is often indicated by invitations to speak at conferences, delivery of seminars at universities, service on grant review panels, presence on journal editorial boards, and organizing conferences.

**Service** is expected to be substantial in the Department and University, as well as in the broader scientific community.

**Teaching** is expected to be substantial and may include acting as a course director.