

Department of Political Science Expectations for Tenure and Promotion

This document is meant to provide guidance to candidates for tenure and promotion. Each tenure and promotion case will be considered carefully and individually. Thus, the standards for research, teaching, and service articulated below should be taken in the spirit they are intended—general guidelines rather than rigid constraints. The department chair and faculty mentors will be able to provide candidates with details on the timing and administrative requirements of the process for tenure and promotion.

Standards for Research

Candidates for promotion to tenure and to full professor should give evidence of a robust research agenda and productivity. The political science department recognizes as legitimate a wide range of methods and approaches. Scholarly work may be published as books, articles in leading journals of political science, articles in journals specific to the candidate's subfield and to their particular area of research, book chapters in edited volumes and, in some cases, reports (for example to NGOs) or articles in periodicals. Each piece of the candidate's record will be evaluated for its quality and impact.

Candidates for tenure and promotion to associate professor should have produced a body of published materials related to the dissertation project (or other significant first project) and should show evidence of substantial work on a second major research agenda. Such evidence may include one or more published articles, data sets, or well-developed working papers. Candidates for promotion to full professor should have produced a body of published materials related to the dissertation project and second major research agenda, and should be engaged in a third major area of research.

In its evaluation of productivity, the department does not differentiate between single-authored and coauthored output. For example, a single-authored piece is not necessary given greater weight than a coauthored piece. Rather, the department evaluates the contributions made to the field by the individual researcher, and will form its evaluation, in part, based on the candidate's own reporting. Whether through single- or co-authored work, the scholar should establish their distinctive strengths and contributions through their publication record.

The department recognizes that there are many valid paths to promotion and tenure, and that each candidate's path will be shaped by the norms of their subfield and the nature of their work. For scholars focused on shorter publications, seven to eight journal articles (at least some of which appear in leading journals) would be a rough research standard for promotion to associate professor with tenure. Twelve to thirteen journal articles constitute an acceptable standard of productive research for promotion to full professor. For scholars focused on long-form publications, a book and four to five articles or shorter pieces would be a rough estimate of an acceptable standard for promotion to associate professor with tenure. Two books and seven to eight articles are a rough estimate of scholarly output necessary for promotion to full professor. A record consisting mostly or entirely of books may also be a successful path to tenure and promotion.

The quality and impact of a candidate's work are more important than quantity of publications. The department encourages rigorous scholarly work which engages academics and practitioners. Quality is documented in a number of ways: the prestige of the presses and journals that publish the scholar's work, published reviews of the author's books, testimonials in the letters by external reviewers, citations,

honors, awards, grants, fellowships, and invitations to present work at invited conferences and departmental seminars. The preeminent, but not exclusive, indicator of quality is the standard of review employed; for example, publishers that use a peer review process will, in general, be considered of higher quality than those which do not employ peer review. For books, publication by a top-ranked press (with rankings understood to vary by subfield and/or topic) will have considerably more weight than other books. For articles, publication in appropriate high-quality journals (depending on the particular subfield and/or topic) will have the most weight. In some cases, faculty will produce scholarship for governments or non-governmental organizations; in general, these will not be considered equivalent to peer-reviewed scholarly publications, but if they are based on relevant research, they will be considered as a measure of research productivity and impact. The department also encourages multidisciplinary work.

Candidates for promotion to tenure should demonstrate evidence of national recognition in their major subfields, as measured by participation in national conferences, reviews of their work, invitations to present work or collaboration with colleagues at other universities, or grants and awards from national institutions. Candidates for promotion to full professor should demonstrate international or disciplinewide recognition of their work as evidenced by participation in international conferences, publication in international journals, invitations to present work at foreign universities, exchanges with international scholars, or funding from international sources.

Whether or not candidates receive external grants and fellowships, they are encouraged to provide evidence that they have applied for funding from external sources.

Standards for Teaching

Faculty are currently expected to teach two courses per semester, with a mix of undergraduate and graduate courses where possible. The Department of Political Science prides itself on the quality of its instruction and it is expected that all faculty members will develop teaching materials and pedagogical skills that will contribute to the success of all their students. We also invite faculty to consider ways in which their teaching methods might place students with different backgrounds or characteristics at a disadvantage. Where appropriate, we encourage faculty to include material in their classes from authors with different backgrounds. We also encourage faculty to be supportive of efforts by students to resist oppression (e.g., on the basis of race, class, disability, religion, gender, or sexual orientation). Undergraduate and graduate student advising and mentorship are crucial elements of the department's mission to provide high quality of instruction and ensure all student populations receive the encouragement and support to thrive educationally and professionally, and they will be considered as part of the candidate's teaching portfolio. Teaching contributions are evaluated in a multidimensional way that considers course development, enrollments, student evaluations, observation by faculty colleagues, and (as appropriate) provision of service courses.

Student evaluations are understood to be imperfect measures of teaching quality and prone to race and gender biases. Together with other indicators, evaluations are still sometimes useful in identifying strengths and weaknesses or to highlight actionable problems in the course. Teaching observations by senior faculty will, in general, be conducted at least yearly for assistant professors and will be shared with them as part of a constructive effort to improve teaching skills. Persistent problems, as identified by enrollments, student evaluations, and/or teaching evaluations, can lead to the failure of a tenure case, even if research output is excellent. In contrast, outstanding teaching performance and provision of service courses can justify promotion and tenure in cases where research output alone is not determinative. The same principles hold for promotion to full professor, although teaching observations are likely to be less frequent than for assistant professors.

Standards for Service

All faculty are expected to contribute to the success of the department, the College of Arts and Science, and Boston University through service. Departmental citizenship allows for an equitable distribution and shared costs of public goods. Over time, faculty will serve on a variety of committees and in a variety of administrative roles. In general, the most time-consuming service responsibilities will fall to tenured faculty members, especially full professors. For assistant professors, a typical load would be an average of one committee membership per year (e.g., on a search committee, graduate admissions committee, or curriculum committee at BU). Service to external communities of scholars and/or policymakers is also encouraged (e.g., APSA section prize committee). Associate professors seeking promotion to full professor are expected to take on greater responsibilities, whether internally (e.g., Faculty Council, administrative roles in centers, policy committees) or externally (e.g., board membership in governmental or non-governmental bodies, APSA program committees, conference organizing, grant reviewing for foundations or agencies). We invite faculty to consider engaging in either internal or external service that resists oppression in the department, college, university, discipline of political science, or the academy writ large. Avoidance of service adversely affects colleagues and may, in egregious cases, lead to denial of tenure or promotion. In contrast, exceptional service to the university or the profession can supplement research and teaching so as to make tenure or promotion more likely. Evidence of excellent service is particularly important for promotion to full professor, as full professors have important governance functions within the university.