

TENURE CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES  
University of South Carolina  
Libraries Faculty, Columbia Campus

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## INTRODUCTION

The University of South Carolina is responsible to “state and society to promote the dissemination of knowledge, cultural enrichment, and an enhanced quality of life.” University faculty develop, deliver, and evaluate the University’s academic programs in support of its mission. The Libraries faculty are partners with University teaching and research faculty and administration in maintaining and enhancing the quality of instruction, research, and service at the University. In keeping with University policies, the tenure policy of the Libraries is designed to contribute to the academic and scholarly excellence of the University by fostering high standards of librarianship.

As noted in the American Association of University Professors’ Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians:

Librarians perform a multifaceted role within the academy. It includes not only teaching credit courses but also providing access to information, whether by individual and group instruction, selecting and purchasing resources, digitizing collections, or organizing information. In all of these areas, librarians impart knowledge and skills to students and faculty members both formally and informally and advise and assist faculty members in their scholarly pursuits. They are involved in the research function and conduct research in their own professional interests and in the discharge of their duties. Their scholarly research contributes to the advancement of knowledge valuable to their discipline and institution.

The University Libraries, hereinafter referred to as the Libraries, are under the overall supervision of the Dean of University Libraries, hereinafter referred to as the Dean. The role of this unit is to acquire and access resources in support of the University’s programs, to facilitate resource access through appropriate technologies, to provide assistance to faculty, students, and others in resource use for the retrieval of information, and to preserve resources for teaching and research need. The support of this mission requires the collaborative use of a diverse set of skills and knowledge, represented by the unique roles and responsibilities of the Libraries faculty. As such, the expertise demonstrated across the Libraries faculty will vary according to their roles within the University Libraries and shall be evaluated within that context. Successful performance requires that librarians be involved in, aware of, and responsive to the information needs of the University while working within accepted standards and established policies.

## APPOINTMENT

Terms of appointment shall follow institutional procedures for all faculty as outlined in the University's Policies and Procedures Manual. At the time of appointment, all faculty members are to be advised of the University's renewal and tenure procedures and provided a copy of the Libraries' Tenure Policy and Criteria. Candidates for appointment are normally expected to hold a master's degree in library or information science from an institution accredited by the American Library Association or a graduate degree in another appropriate discipline.

## TENURE POLICY

This document outlines the procedures followed by the Libraries in implementing University tenure guidelines as specified in the University's Faculty Manual. Any issues not specifically referred to in this document are governed by those guidelines. The policy statement will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Libraries Select Tenure Committee. Any recommended changes will be forwarded to the Libraries faculty for approval.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can provide useful assistance in many areas of librarianship and service. The use of such tools in preparation of files submitted to the Libraries Select Tenure Committee is permitted to the extent allowed under relevant university policies, but candidates must verify their dossiers for accuracy before submission. Committees may, during their reviews, check citations and claims. Misleading or hallucinated activities, papers, or other activities relevant to tenure will be a serious risk to a faculty member's tenure case (or review).

It is the responsibility of the unit to keep and maintain all the unit's tenure criteria and procedures and to give the Office of the Provost copies of all unit criteria and procedures.

## SUMMARY FOR THE CANDIDATE

The Office of the Provost annually issues instructions for making an application for tenure. Each candidate is expected to follow these instructions and is responsible for the preparation of the file. Relevant data for a tenure file include information from the candidate's vita, a statement by the candidate, letters of recommendation and other evaluations of the candidate's work submitted by colleagues, members of the USC – Columbia teaching faculty and outside reviewers, and material written or prepared by the candidate. Evidence of the following must be provided:

- Librarianship in the candidate's area(s) of expertise
  - Experience at the University of South Carolina and elsewhere
- Service activities

The faculty member has the choice of using unit criteria in effect at the time hired, or

the unit criteria in effect when the candidate is going up for tenure.

## TENURE CRITERIA

All candidates for tenure must earn a rating of Outstanding or Excellent, as defined in this document. Librarianship, because it contributes most directly to the academic community, is the most important consideration for the granting of tenure. Tenure shall be recommended upon demonstration of the following:

**Librarianship** refers to competence, creativity, and initiative in the performance of professional responsibilities, effectiveness in applying subject knowledge and bibliographic techniques in managing library collections, skills in meeting user needs and in stimulating wider use of resources, and demonstration of administrative skills necessary for the operation and oversight of the library. Due to the unique nature of librarianship, the duties and activities which constitute the librarian's primary responsibilities may vary significantly. Therefore, each librarian may demonstrate notably distinct activities upon which they should be evaluated. The following list is illustrative, not prescriptive, and the items are not listed in rank order. Candidacy need not be supported by all items listed:

- Selecting and assisting in the acquisition of materials in support of the missions of the University and Libraries,
- Instructing and advising library users, both formally and informally, in the efficient and effective use of library resources,
- Mentoring colleagues and otherwise improving professional skills and knowledge in the use of resources and technologies within the Libraries,
- Extending access to library resources by implementing effective and accurate descriptive standards and metadata,
- Assisting library users in information acquisition and resource utilization,
- Developing innovative programs or workflows that facilitate the delivery of library services,
- Improving unit performance through creative problem solving,
- Monitoring trends and pursuing professional development to support the creation and delivery of impactful library programs and activities,
- Extending access to library resources and services through the creation and/or support of web pages or other online access methods,
- Ensuring continuing access to collections through the implementation of digitization, preservation, and conservation policies and practices,
- Providing efficient access to local or external materials through document delivery, interlibrary loan, or other means,
- Implementing or developing automated systems designed to enhance access to library resources or to improve unit performance,
- Communicating and cooperating with faculty, students, and staff in furthering the missions of the Libraries and the University,
- Conducting activities related to research and scholarship, for example, publication in professional and peer-reviewed, scholarly journals, presentation of

papers, and reviews of books or other resources. Research and scholarship may also encompass more creative outputs, such as generating displays, exhibits, or publishing in nontraditional media to achieve new or innovative approaches to problem-solving in the discipline of librarianship.

### Descriptive terms used for tenure in the area of Librarianship

Outstanding	<p>Examples of outstanding performance may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• creative problem solving that demonstrably improves or enhances unit performance,</li><li>• demonstrating advanced subject knowledge and professional expertise used to build, organize, and preserve collections,</li><li>• developing innovative programs or services,</li><li>• developing collaborations with units across campus to facilitate research,</li><li>• leading initiatives with other libraries to develop regional and national library services,</li><li>• creating and implementing administrative programs to encourage leadership capabilities of the unit,</li><li>• developing software, automated processes, or open-source code to facilitate research or the delivery of library services,</li><li>• building impactful services, spaces, collections, or programs to enhance diversity, community, and belonging among library users,</li><li>• leading assessment initiatives to anticipate and react to user needs,</li><li>• teaching University courses related to professional expertise,</li><li>• authoring professional or scholarly peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, or monographs,</li><li>• editing a scholarly monograph, contributing as an indexer or translator to state, regional, or national publications in any format,</li><li>• serving as the Principal Investigator (PI) on a grant if outside the normal duties of the position.</li></ul>
Excellent	<p>Examples of excellent performance may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• problem solving that improves or enhances unit performance,</li><li>• building, organizing, and preserving collections,</li><li>• assisting in the development of innovative programs or services,</li><li>• assisting units across campus with research,</li><li>• cooperating with other libraries to develop regional and national library services,</li></ul>

- managing administrative programs to encourage leadership capabilities of the unit,
- implementing software, automated processes, or open-source code to facilitate research or the delivery of library services,
- coordinating services, spaces, collections, or programs to enhance diversity, community, and belonging among library users,
- assessing and monitoring changing research patterns and trends to anticipate and react to user needs,
- supporting University courses related to professional expertise through curriculum development or collaborative instruction,
- presenting at professional conferences,
- serving as a Co-PI on a grant if outside the normal duties of the position,
- moderating or participating in panel discussions at a regional, national, or international level,
- preparing and mounting in-depth physical or digital exhibitions if outside the normal duties of the position.

Good

Examples of good performance may include, but are not limited to:

- maintaining standard unit performance, organizing, and managing existing collections,
- continuing existing programs or services, connecting units across campus with research services,
- participating in regional and national library services,
- maintaining administrative programs to encourage leadership capabilities of the unit,
- continuing the use of software, automated processes, or open-source code to facilitate research or the delivery of library services,
- coordinating services, spaces, collections, or programs for library users,
- assessing and monitoring changing research patterns and trends,
- instructing University courses through single instructional sessions,
- moderating or participating in panel discussions at local or state level,
- publishing reviews,
- contributing as an author, indexer, or translator to local publications and newsletters in any format

Fair

Examples of fair performance may include, but are not limited to:

- maintaining minimal unit performance,
- maintaining existing collections, informing units across

- campus of research services,
- holding membership in profession-related community organizations or activities,
- holding membership in professional organizations.

**Unacceptable** Candidate's job performance consistently does not meet expectations in the performance reviews submitted in the tenure file.

Assessment of Librarianship is supported through impact metrics, demonstrated outcomes, administrative review, internal and external peer review, and letters from colleagues.

**Service** refers to participation in institutional governance, successful service on committees, contributions to the educational component of the University, and sharing professional knowledge with the University and the community. Service also refers to activity in local, state, and national professional organizations, especially serving as an officer in such an organization or serving on a committee of such an organization. The following list is illustrative, not prescriptive, and the items are not listed in rank order. Candidacy need not be supported by all items listed:

- Participating actively, or assuming a leadership role, in Libraries or unit committees, task forces, and other in-house forums,
- Participating in University governance and/or committee work,
- Participating substantially in the management of community projects under the auspices of the University or the Libraries,
- Participating in profession-related community organizations or activities,
- Serving as chair or member of a committee, or as an officer of a local, state, regional, national, or international professional organization,
- Actively participating in the regular meetings or conferences of professional organizations,
- Editing a journal for a professional organization,
- Organizing and programming workshops, professional meetings, or conferences, etc.,
- Consulting or assisting in a professional capacity.

#### Descriptive terms used for tenure in the area of Service

**Outstanding** Examples of outstanding performance may include, but are not limited to:

- serving as chair of a University level committee or as an officer in University governance,
- consulting in a professional capacity,
- serving a professional organization as a committee chair or as an

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>officer,</li> <li>• planning workshops, professional meetings, or conferences,</li> <li>• serving a leadership role in the editorial publishing process, such as a journal editor,</li> <li>• leading or coordinating an award program for another department on campus,</li> <li>• teaching a course as Instructor of Record if outside the normal duties of the position.</li> </ul>
Excellent	<p>Examples of excellent performance may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participating in University level governance, such as a Libraries faculty senator,</li> <li>• serving a professional organization on a committee,</li> <li>• serving a leadership role in profession-related community organizations or activities,</li> <li>• serving as chair of a Libraries committee or as an officer in Libraries governance,</li> <li>• participating in the editorial publishing process, such as serving as a peer reviewer,</li> <li>• contributing to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in profession-related community organizations or University or Libraries committees or taskforces,</li> <li>• supervising internships</li> <li>• scoring or evaluating student work for another department on campus,</li> <li>• sharing of professional knowledge as a guest presenter to a class if outside the normal duties of the position.</li> </ul>
Good	<p>Examples of good performance may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participating in Libraries committees or task forces,</li> <li>• participating in profession-related community organizations or activities,</li> <li>• participating in regular meetings or conferences of professional organizations,</li> <li>• serving as a judge or reviewer for an award.</li> </ul>
Fair	<p>Examples of fair performance may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holding membership in profession-related community organizations or activities,</li> <li>• holding membership in professional organizations.</li> </ul>
Unacceptable	<p>Candidate's job performance consistently does not meet expectations</p>

in the performance reviews submitted in the tenure file.

Assessment of service is supported through administrative review, internal and external peer review, and letters from colleagues.

## CONSIDERATION FOR TENURE

Each year all non-tenured, tenure-track faculty may be considered for tenure. The Dean will write the eligible faculty member by April 1 of each year asking if they wish to be considered for tenure. It is strongly recommended that untenured faculty seek tenure during their sixth year in the tenure track; candidates who apply earlier should demonstrate performance equivalent to that which is expected of a sixth-year candidate. The maximum probational period for professional librarians is service for seven years at the University of South Carolina, notwithstanding the exceptions allowed in the Faculty Manual under "Calculation of Probationary Period." The tenured Libraries faculty will consider and vote on all eligible persons except those who waive, in writing, consideration until the following year. The tenured Libraries faculty will consider for tenure each faculty member in the penultimate year of a probationary appointment, as defined in the member's letter of appointment. To coincide with the University's promotion and tenure schedule, Libraries faculty enter the tenure track on August 16 or January 1, whichever date is closest to the first day of employment. Movement between tenure track and non-tenure track may not occur in the penultimate year without the approval of the tenured and tenure-track Libraries faculty.

## OTHER MATTERS

Candidates for Libraries faculty appointments may be recommended for tenure on appointment by a favorable vote of the tenured faculty. A favorable vote is defined as a simple majority of the votes cast, not counting abstentions. An abstention vote does not count towards the total votes for the candidate in determining the existence of a majority vote. Consistency and durability of performance are relevant factors in evaluating faculty for tenure; the length of service which a faculty member has completed is a valid consideration in formulating a tenure recommendation. The policies for casting and counting ballots outlined above must be followed before an offer of appointment with a recommendation for tenure is made.

Librarians with prior faculty appointments at other institutions of higher learning may have shorter probationary periods, as defined in their letter of appointment. The shorter probationary period will run on the same timeline as a regular tenure timeline. In a normal appointment, the faculty member goes up for tenure review in the fifth year of employment at USC. If, for example, the faculty member goes up for tenure during the fourth year of employment, the faculty member's record of four years at USC and one year at a prior institution of higher education will be reviewed. University Libraries does not require a minimum time of service at USC to be considered for tenure.

## PROCEDURES – LIBRARIES SELECT TENURE COMMITTEE

The primary responsibility for the application of all tenure procedures shall rest with the tenured members of the Libraries faculty, who will be represented by a select committee called the Libraries Select Tenure Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee. The Committee conducts annual and Tenure Progress Reviews of probationary Libraries faculty, assesses and votes on tenure applications, and conducts post-tenure review. The specific procedures for the Committee are outlined in the Libraries' Post-Tenure Review Procedures. The Committee shall consist of seven members of the tenured Libraries faculty. Committee members will serve staggered three-year terms. No person shall serve more than three years consecutively as a member of the Committee. Elections will take place each spring, with balloting restricted to the tenured Libraries faculty. Voting will be by secret ballot. Each year the Committee shall elect a chair or co-chairs from among its seven members.

The Committee shall ensure that all tenure files are complete and ready for inspection by the tenured faculty in accordance with the calendar established by the Office of the Provost. The Committee will include reviews of each candidate from at least five outside individuals. These reviewers will normally share the candidate's area of professional specialization. Outside reviewers should not be solicited from the candidate's thesis advisers, co-authors, or colleagues with whom the candidate served at other institutions. Each reviewer will be provided a copy of the candidate's vita, personal statement, samples of scholarship, if applicable, a copy of the Tenure Policy and Criteria, and a cover letter from the Committee specifying parameters for the review. All reviewers must be asked to disclose any relationship or interactions with the candidate. All reviews received by the Committee will become a part of the candidate's file. In addition to external reviews, teaching evaluations must be included if applicable.

Statements by the immediate supervisor, annual and tenure progress review letters, and internal peer reviews may be placed in the tenure file, as appropriate. The Committee will also ensure that all letters of recommendation and other evaluations of the candidate's work submitted by colleagues, members of the USC – Columbia teaching faculty, and others, are included in the file prior to its inspection by tenured library faculty. The results of all votes of the Committee and the tenured library faculty will be included before the file is forwarded.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The University's policy is to provide the candidate with the fullest possible access to their files subject to established rules of confidentiality. The proceedings of the Committee regarding tenure cases shall be confidential with respect to all written materials received and all discussions of individual cases. Letters from colleagues, administrators, outside evaluators, and others will be treated as confidential unless explicitly collected with a different understanding. In accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, the candidate for tenure may request a copy of his/her file from the General Counsel Office. Identifying material is redacted prior to the file being given to the candidate.

## VOTING

The Committee will inform the tenured faculty when the files are ready for their inspection. In addition to external peer reviews, statements by the immediate supervisor, annual and third year tenure review letters, and internal peer reviews will be placed in the tenure file, as appropriate.

Only tenured Libraries faculty may vote on an application for tenure, and all tenured Libraries faculty will submit votes simultaneously. Faculty members on leave may vote if they notify the Dean in writing before beginning leave, and prior to the eligible faculty's vote, but they must review the file before casting a ballot. Each voting Libraries faculty member will be given a secret ballot. Each voting faculty member will vote "yes," "no," or "abstain." The results of all votes of the tenured library faculty will be included in the file. Ballots are provided by the Office of the Provost and are official University forms. Each vote must provide for the file a written justification on the ballot itself.

A simple majority vote of the tenured faculty will determine if the recommendation is positive or negative. Abstentions will not be counted towards the total votes for candidates in determining any appropriate majority. If the candidate receives a favorable vote, the unit administrator (generally the Associate or Assistant Dean) shall write a letter assessing the candidate's qualifications and make a recommendation. If the unit administrator is a candidate, there will be no such statement. Unit chairs or other administrators who choose to vote on tenure and promotion cases as members of their respective tenure and promotion committees may not then make further recommendations on cases at other points in the process. In other words, individuals are allowed to influence outcomes at only one point in the process. The file, including the ballots, justifications, and the unit administrator's letter, if any, will be forwarded to the Dean. The Dean will review the file, add an assessment, and forward the file to the Provost.

## APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES

Candidates receiving a non-favorable vote may request a meeting with the Chair of the University Libraries Select Tenure Committee for a synopsis of the vote justifications. An indication of the strength of the vote of the faculty will be given, without attribution.

Candidates wishing to appeal the unit's decision should follow procedures outlined in the USC Columbia Faculty Manual.

## **Revision and Approvals History**

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