Promotion and Tenure Procedures, Religious Studies Department

Purpose: To articulate the standards and procedures for promotion and/or tenure for the Department of Religious Studies

Applies to: Faculty within the Department of Religious Studies

General Provisions

Scope and Purpose. The award of tenure and/or promotion in rank are among the most important and far-reaching decisions made by the department because an excellent faculty is an essential component of any outstanding institution of higher learning. Promotion and tenure decisions also have a profound effect on the lives and careers of faculty. Recommendations concerning promotion and tenure must be made carefully, based upon a thorough examination of the candidate’s record and the impartial application of these criteria and procedures, established in compliance with the [http://policy.ku.edu/governance/FSRR#ArticleVI](http://policy.ku.edu/governance/FSRR#ArticleVI).

It is the purpose of this document to promote the rigorous and fair evaluation of faculty performance during the promotion and tenure process by (a) establishing criteria that express the Department of Religious Studies’ expectations for meeting University standards in terms of disciplinary practices; (b) providing procedures for the initial evaluation of teaching, scholarship, and service; (c) preserving and enhancing the participatory rights of candidates, including the basic right to be informed about critical stages of the process and to have an opportunity to respond to negative evaluations; and (d) clarifying the responsibilities, roles, and relationships of the participants in the promotion and tenure review process.

Each level of review, including the initial review, the intermediate review, and the University level review, conducts an independent evaluation of a candidate’s record of performance and makes independent recommendations to the next review level. Later stages of review neither affirm nor reverse earlier recommendations, which remain part of the record for consideration by the Chancellor. It is the responsibility of each person involved in the review process to exercise his/her own judgment to evaluate a faculty member’s teaching, scholarship, and service based upon the entirety of the data and information in the record. No single source of information, such as peer review letters, shall be considered a conclusive indicator of quality.

Academic Freedom. All faculty members, regardless of rank, are entitled to academic freedom in relation to teaching and scholarship, and the right as citizens to speak on matters of public concern. Likewise, all faculty members, regardless of rank, bear the obligation to exercise their academic freedom responsibly and in accordance with the accepted standards of their academic disciplines.

Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest. Consideration and evaluation of a faculty member’s record is a confidential personnel matter. Only those persons eligible to vote on promotion and tenure may participate in or observe deliberations or have access to the personnel file (except that clerical staff may assist in the preparation of documents under conditions that assure confidentiality).

No person shall participate in any aspect of the promotion and tenure process concerning a candidate when participation would create a clear conflict of interest or compromise the impartiality of an evaluation or recommendation.

If a candidate believes that there is a conflict of interest, the candidate may petition to have that person recuse him/herself. If a committee member does not recuse him/herself, a decision about whether that person has a conflict of interest shall be made by a majority of the other committee members.
Promotion and Tenure Standards

**General Principles.** The University strives for a consistent standard of quality against which the performance of all faculty members is measured. Nonetheless, the nature of faculty activities varies across the University and a faculty member’s record must be evaluated in light of his/her particular responsibilities and the expectations of the discipline. These criteria state the department’s expectations of performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service necessary to satisfy the University standards for promotion for the award of tenure and/or promotion to associate professor and for promotion to full professor, or equivalent ranks.

Teaching and scholarship should normally be given primary consideration, but the particular weight to be accorded to each component of a faculty member’s activities depends upon the responsibilities of the faculty member. The College has traditionally recognized the 40-40-20 formula for weighting research, teaching, and service, except when weight is differentiated for unclassified academic staff members pursuant to their job description.

**Teaching.** Teaching is a primary function of the University, which strives to provide an outstanding education for its students. The evaluation of teaching includes consideration of syllabi, course materials, and other information related to a faculty member’s courses; peer and student evaluations a candidate’s own statement of teaching philosophy and goals; public representations of teaching; and other accepted methods of evaluation, which may include external evaluations. Additionally the department evaluates candidates’ student evaluations from every course taught at the University, record of student advising and directed readings offered as course overloads, and confidential letters solicited by the department chair from students at the request of the candidate or the department.

High quality teaching is serious intellectual work grounded in a deep knowledge and understanding of the field and includes the ability to convey that understanding in clear and engaging ways.

The conduct of classes is the central feature of teaching responsibilities at KU, but teaching also includes supervising student research and clinical activities, mentoring and advising students, advising theses, and other teaching-related activities outside of the classroom.

Under the University standards for the award of tenure and/or promotion to associate professor, the record must demonstrate effective teaching, as reflected in such factors as command of the subject matter, the ability to communicate effectively in the classroom, a demonstrated commitment to student learning, and involvement in providing advice and support for students outside the classroom.

In the Department of Religious Studies, the following teaching expectations to meet University standards apply for the promotion to the rank of associate professor: The candidate’s record must demonstrate the development of a repertoire of regular offerings of underclass principal courses, courses for junior/senior students (including honors theses), graduate courses (including tutorials, seminars), and thesis work; and demonstrate effective teaching at all levels, as reflected in such factors as command of the subject matter, the ability to communicate effectively in the classroom, a commitment to personal pedagogical development and advancement of student learning, and involvement in providing advice and support for students outside the classroom.

Under the University standards for promotion to the rank of professor, the record must demonstrate continued effectiveness and growth as a teacher, as reflected in such factors as mastery of the subject matter, strong classroom teaching skills, an ongoing commitment to student learning, and active involvement in providing advice and support for students outside the classroom.

In the Department of Religious Studies, the following teaching expectations to meet University standards apply for the promotion to the rank of professor: The candidate’s record must demonstrate continued effectiveness and creative growth as a teacher across the full range of underclass principal courses, courses for
junior/senior students (including honors theses), graduate courses (including tutorials, seminars), thesis work, as reflected in such factors as command of the subject matter, the ability to communicate effectively in the classroom, new course preparations and a refreshing of existing courses with input that reflects new directions in the discipline and/or one’s research, strong classroom skills, an ongoing commitment to student learning, and active involvement in providing advice and support for students outside the classroom.

**Scholarship.** The concept of “scholarship” encompasses not only traditional academic research and publication, but also the creation of artistic works or performances and any other products or activities accepted by the academic discipline as reflecting scholarly effort and achievement for purposes of promotion and tenure. While the nature of scholarship varies among disciplines, the University adheres to a consistently high standard of quality in its scholarly activities to which all faculty members, regardless of discipline, are held.

**Characteristics and Expectations of the field of Religious Studies.** Religious Studies is a complex field comprised of a variety of disciplines and sub-disciplines, including (but not limited to) textual studies, history of religions, philosophy of religion, ethics, and psychology and sociology of religion. Each of these has its own characteristics and expectations with regard to what constitutes sound scholarship; some are distinctly interdisciplinary, requiring a knowledge of several content areas and methods. Nonetheless, some general observations are possible with regard to what constitutes the minimum expectations for research and publication for a scholar in religious studies. In the Department of Religious Studies, expectations regarding scholarship are defined as follows:

1. Each scholar in religious studies is expected to keep current on the research tools, languages, methods of investigation, and scholarship in his or her field. This knowledge is to be reflected in the publications appropriate to the area of specialization.

2. The summarizing of previous studies or offering of concise reviews of such studies can be useful teaching aids but are not scholarship. Genuine scholarship must offer new insight, provide new information, challenge older preconceptions, or introduce new critical methods into the field.

3. The availability of critical editions of important texts is essential in many areas of religious studies, but especially in textual studies and history of religions. The publication of a critical edition of a text, when accompanied by annotations and a clear explication of its importance, constitutes genuine scholarship of a high order.

4. In relatively new fields, the collection of basic data is an important ongoing part of the scholarly enterprise. Here a comprehensive bibliography, when accompanied by a critical introduction to the field and annotations, is considered creative scholarship.

5. The Department of Religious Studies is committed to communicating the results of the research of its faculty both to the scholarly community and to the general public. Thus a faculty member's vita may reflect both publication in recognized scholarly journals and with appropriate scholarly presses, and publication geared to a general audience. However, the former should not be neglected for the latter. The Department of Religious Studies recognizes the need for sound scholarship to be the basis for general presentations as encyclopedia articles and other reference works; while these are not generally recognized as original research, the Department believes they should be acknowledged as a measure of the faculty member's status in her or his field. Exceptions are to be made in the case of articles of substantial length and argument combined with original research; these should be considered the equivalent of journal articles.

Under the University standards for the award of tenure and/or promotion to the rank of associate professor, the record must demonstrate a successfully developing scholarly career, as reflected in such factors as the quality and quantity of publications or creative activities, external reviews of the candidate’s work by respected
scholars or practitioners in the field, the candidate’s regional, national, or international reputation, and other evidence of an active and productive scholarly agenda.

In the Department of Religious Studies, the following scholarship expectations to meet University standards apply for the award of tenure and/or promotion to the rank of associate professor: Expectations on amount of publication vary with each area of sub-specialization; in most cases, however, scholars are expected to demonstrate an ongoing program of research through the publication on the average of one article annually in an academic journal or a collection of edited papers for an acceptable press, and one book every five to six years. Equivalent demonstration of progress may be made by active participation (i.e., presentation of papers) in academic conferences and consultations.

Under the University standards for promotion to the rank of professor, the record must demonstrate an established scholarly career, as reflected in such factors as a substantial and ongoing pattern of publication or creative activity, external reviews of the candidate’s work by eminent scholars or practitioners in the field, the candidate’s national or international reputation, and other evidence of an active and productive scholarly career.

In the Department of Religious Studies, the following scholarship expectations apply to meet University Standards for promotion to the rank of full professor: Candidates are expected to demonstrate a vital record of scholarly production beyond the level of promotion to associate professor, with award of tenure, by (1) publishing on the average one article annually in an academic journal, collection of edited papers for an acceptable press, or equivalent professional venue, since award of tenure and promotion to associate professor, or (2) an equivalent combination of a book and articles (as judged by the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee). Candidates are additionally expected to demonstrate their continued growth as scholars of national and international recognition in their fields by such criteria as application for, and success in obtaining, research grants, presentation of research at professional conferences and meetings, invitations to lecture at academic institutions, participation in conferences, and other professional scholarly activities. The Department Promotion and Tenure Committee may, on occasion, make an exception to these criteria where such an exception is warranted by considerations of academic merit of the given publication portfolio.

Service. Service is an important responsibility of all faculty members that contributes to the University’s performance of its larger mission. Although the nature of service activities will depend on a candidate’s particular interests and abilities, service contributions are an essential part of being a good citizen of the University. The Department of Religious Studies accepts and values scholarly service to the discipline or profession, service within the University, and public service at the local, state, national, or international level.

Under the University standards for the award of tenure and/or promotion to associate professor, the record must demonstrate a pattern of service to the University at one or more levels, to the discipline or profession, and/or to the local, state, national, or international communities.

In the Department of Religious Studies, the following service expectations to meet University standards apply for the award of tenure and/or promotion to the rank of associate professor: The candidate’s record must demonstrate a pattern of service to the University at one or more levels (administrative appointments, committees, boards in the department, College, University), to the discipline or profession (journal referee, grant proposal referee, editorial work, appointment to professional boards or committees, professional consultation, conference organizing), and to the local, state, national, or international communities.

Candidates should exhibit a reasonable amount of professional, University, College, and department service corresponding to the 40/40/20 weighting. This would typically require that the candidate have at least a modest record of professional service; some significant departmental service on one of its standing or ad hoc committees, or perhaps a departmental administrative appointment; and some committee service beyond the department.
Under the University standards for promotion to the rank of professor, the record must demonstrate an ongoing pattern of service reflecting substantial contributions to the University at one or more levels, to the discipline or profession, and/or to the local, state, national, or international communities.

In the Department of Religious Studies, the following service expectations to meet University standards apply for the promotion to the rank of professor: The candidate’s record must demonstrate an ongoing pattern of service reflecting substantial contributions to the University at one or more levels (administrative appointments, committees, boards in the department, College, University), to the discipline or profession (journal referee, grant proposal referee, editorial work, appointment to professional boards or committees, professional consultation, conference organizing), and to the local, state, national, or international communities.

**Ratings for Performance.** Using the criteria described above, the candidate’s performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service will be rated using the terms “excellent,” “very good,” “good,” “marginal,” or “poor,” defined as follows:

(a) “Excellent” means that the candidate substantially exceeds expectations for tenure and/or promotion to this rank.
(b) “Very Good” means the candidate exceeds expectations for tenure and/or promotion to this rank.
(c) “Good” means the candidate meets expectations for tenure and/or promotion to this rank.
(d) “Marginal” means the candidate falls below expectations for tenure and/or promotion to this rank.
(e) “Poor” means the candidate falls significantly below expectations for tenure and/or promotion to this rank.

Absent exceptional circumstances, no candidate may be recommended for promotion or tenure without meeting standards in all applicable areas of performance. The Religious Studies Department expects candidates for promotion and/or tenure to receive (1) a rating of “Very Good” in each of the three areas of teaching, research, and service, or (2) a rating of “Excellent” in teaching or scholarship and, in which case the service expectation could be satisfied by a rating of “Good.” The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee may sometimes make an exception to these expectations when, in its judgment, there is a sound extenuating reason to do so. When such an exception has been made, this fact will be explicitly spelled out in the appropriate supporting documentation sent to the College and University committees and the reason(s) for the exception given.

**Promotion and Tenure Procedures**

The Department of Religious Studies conducts the initial review of the candidate pursuant to the procedures and requirements of section 5 of Article VI of the FSRR in connection with the candidate’s responsibility in the Department of Religious Studies.

**Promotion and Tenure Committee.** The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee shall evaluate the candidate’s teaching, research, and service. In the Religious Studies Department, when a candidate becomes eligible for promotion, the Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee is chosen, in closed session with the candidate(s) absented, by consultation and majority vote of all the department faculty. The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee comprises a minimum of three regular faculty members. A committee to consider cases of promotion to the rank of associate professor is constituted of faculty members at the rank of associate professor and above; a committee to consider cases of promotion to the rank of professor is constituted of faculty members at the rank of professor. When the number of faculty from the Department of Religious Studies eligible for committee appointment is insufficient, additional committee members drawn from regular faculty outside the department may, with approval of department faculty and the deans, be appointed to the review committee.
No students or untenured faculty members, except unclassified academic staff with the rank equivalent to or higher than associate professor, shall serve on the Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee or vote on any recommendation concerning promotion and/or tenure.

**Initiation of Review.** Prior to the beginning of the spring semester, the Provost notifies all faculty whose mandatory review year will be the following academic year, with copies provided to the unit administrators. Upon receipt of this notice or if a faculty member requests it prior to the mandatory review year, the department shall initiate procedures for evaluating the candidate for the award of promotion and/or tenure.

As part of the annual faculty evaluation process, the Department of Religious Studies shall consider the qualifications of all tenured faculty members below the rank of full professor, with a view toward possible promotion in rank during the following academic year. After considering a faculty member’s qualifications, if the department determines that those qualifications may warrant promotion in rank, it shall initiate procedures for reviewing the faculty member for promotion. After seven years in the rank of associate professor, a faculty member who believes he or she has the qualifications for promotion may initiate the promotion review process him/herself. In such cases the unit will treat the candidate in the same way that it treats other candidates for promotion to the rank of full professor.

**Preparation of the Promotion and/or Tenure File.** NOTE: Candidates who hold joint appointments prepare only one set of promotion and tenure materials for review by both units in which they hold an appointment. The initial review units (i.e., departments, centers, etc.) shall consult with each other on their evaluations and the evaluation process, but each initial review unit must provide a separate evaluation of the candidate’s performance in the unit. Please refer to the [College’s Promotion and Tenure Statement](#) for detailed instructions. It is the responsibility of the candidate to complete the appropriate portions of the form and provide necessary documents and information in accordance with the Provost’s guidelines, with assistance from the department.

The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee, as the committee responsible for the initial review, shall receive the form and accompanying materials from the candidate and finish compiling the record of the candidate’s teaching, scholarship, and service in accordance with the Provost’s guidelines.

The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee shall provide for the solicitation of outside reviewers to assist in the evaluation of a faculty member’s scholarship and in accordance with College procedures. Emphasis shall be placed on selecting independent reviewers in the same or related discipline who hold academic rank or a professional position equal to or greater than the rank for which the candidate is being considered. The committee shall give the candidate the opportunity to suggest individuals to be included or excluded from the list of reviewers. The committee, however, is responsible for using its judgment in the final selection of reviewers.

When soliciting external reviews of a candidate’s scholarship, the Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee shall inform prospective reviewers of the extent to which the candidate will have access to the review. The College's confidentiality policy regarding soliciting external reviewers for the promotion and tenure review process is as follows:

"As a part of the promotion and/or tenure review process, we are soliciting assessments of Professor _____’s research contributions from academic colleagues and distinguished professionals. These letters will become part of the candidate's promotion and tenure dossier and are treated as confidential by the University to the extent we are permitted to do so by law."

**Recommendations.** Upon completion of the record, the committee conducting the initial review shall evaluate the candidate’s record of teaching, scholarship, and service in light of the applicable standards and criteria and make recommendations in accordance with the voting procedures detailed below.
In the Department of Religious Studies, voting procedures are as follows: The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee determines, by majority vote, the rating that is assigned in each of the three areas of teaching, research, and service. The recommendation to support or not support an application for promotion and/or tenure is made by a second, majority vote of the appointed Committee. Voting is conducted in a meeting of the Committee and by secret ballot. Committee members may cast affirmative votes, negative votes, or abstentions. A majority of non-abstention votes (i.e., more affirmative votes than negative ones) is necessary and sufficient for an affirmative committee recommendation.

The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee shall prepare the evaluation and summary evaluation sections of the promotion and/or tenure forms. The Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee shall forward their recommendation to a Committee of the Whole, consisting of all tenured professors of the appropriate rank, which shall in turn vote by secret ballot on approving the ratings and recommendations of the DPTRC by simple majority. The Committee of the Whole shall then prepare the final evaluation and summary evaluation sections of the promotion and/or tenure forms and the forms and recommendations shall be forwarded to the Department Chair, who shall indicate separately, in writing, whether he or she concurs or disagrees with the recommendations of the Committee of the Whole.

The Department Chair shall communicate the recommendations of the initial review, and his or her concurrence or disagreement with the recommendation, to the candidate and provide the candidate with a copy of the summary evaluation section of the promotion and tenure form. Negative recommendations shall be communicated in writing and, if the review will not be forwarded automatically, the Department Chair shall inform the candidate that he or she may request that the record be forwarded for further review.

Favorable recommendations, together with the record of the initial review, shall be forwarded to the College Committee on Appointments Promotion, and Tenure conducting the intermediate review. Negative recommendations resulting from an initial review shall go forward for intermediate review only if it is the candidate’s mandatory review year or if the candidate requests it.

**Intermediate Review.**

The candidate may submit a written response to a negative recommendation by the Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee, or to a final rating of teaching, research, or service below the level of “good” included in the evaluation section of the recommendation. The written response is sent separately by the candidate to CCAPT.

A request for information by CCAPT and/or UCPT shall be sent to the Department Chair who shall immediately provide a copy to the candidate and inform the Department Promotion and Tenure Review Committee. The Department Chair and Committee shall prepare the Department of Religious Studies’ response in accordance with the initial review procedures.

The candidate shall be afforded an opportunity to participate in the preparation of the Department of Religious Studies’ response and/or to submit his/her own documentation or comment to the CCAPT and/or UCPT as applicable.

**Approved by:**
The Department of Religious Studies / Faculty Senate Committee on Standards and Procedures for Promotion and Tenure

**Approved on:**
Monday, February 18, 2013
Effective on:
Monday, February 18, 2013

Review Cycle:
Annual (As Needed)

Related Policies:
Faculty Senate Rules and Regulations Article VI: Promotion and Tenure

Related Procedures:
Statement On Promotion and Tenure for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Related Forms:
Guidelines and Documents for Promotion and Tenure

Review, Approval & Change History:
09/02/2015: Made updates to boiler plate text:
1) Under General Provisions, paragraph three, “Chancellor” has been changed to “next review level;”
2) Under Initiation of Review, the following was added, “NOTE: Candidates who hold joint appointments
prepare only one set of promotion and tenure materials for review by both units in which they hold an
appointment. The initial review units (i.e., departments, centers, etc.) shall consult with each other on their
evaluations and the evaluation process, but each initial review unit must provide a separate evaluation of
the candidate’s performance in the unit. Please refer to the College’s Promotion and Tenure Statement for
detailed instructions.”
3) The following was added under to paragraph concerning outside reviewers, “The committee shall give
the candidate the opportunity to suggest individuals to be included or excluded from the list of reviewers.
The committee, however, is responsible for using its judgment in the final selection of reviewers.

02/18/2013: Approved by the Department of Religious Studies
04/01/2012: Approved by The Faculty Senate Committee on Standards and Procedures for Promotion and
Tenure