



UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

Libraries

## **Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure**

**Subject:** Guidelines for promotion for library faculty

### **I. PURPOSE**

To supply guidance for evaluating criteria for promotion of library faculty to associate librarian or full librarian.

### **II. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Hiring and the implementation of fixed-term rolling contracts will follow the established University of Wyoming regulations and processes. Please see University Regulations 2-1: Academic Personnel, 2-4: Guidelines for Establishing Academic Professionals, and 2-7: Procedures for Reappointment, Tenure, Promotion and Fixed Term for additional guidance.

### **III. GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. Judgment**

These guidelines are to be applied with common sense, rather than rigidly. A pythian paper from Academic Affairs ([http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/\\_files/docs/tenure\\_phil\\_criteria\\_expect.pdf](http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/_files/docs/tenure_phil_criteria_expect.pdf)) relating to tenure and promotion considerations cautions against “algorithmic” thinking or reference to minimal requirements. Rather, promotion is a decision about the future instead of the past. As such, it should assess the candidate’s potential for continued intellectual growth, as evidenced by the cumulative record established during the review period.

Accordingly, library faculty are strongly encouraged to apply reasoned and nuanced judgment when evaluating colleagues’ research and scholarship. Each faculty member brings a unique set of interests, capabilities, strengths and weaknesses to his or her position. This implies a unique mix of scholarly activity as well, whether it is quantity, means of dissemination, or intended primary audience.

Colleagues in other departments may not be familiar with the details and importance of a candidate’s activities. Therefore, to aid in evaluating the varied scholarship records, candidates should consider supplementing the information found in the vita, etc., with brief statements contextualizing their body of scholarship as a whole as well as any individual components of it that they think would benefit from background explanation. Ideally such statements would answer basic questions such as how the research or other scholarship fits into the overall body of professional knowledge or practice, who the intended audience is, how the item—particularly if outside the traditional peer-reviewed journal model— is expected to reach the audience, how the impact can be

measured, and anything else the candidate believes would assist in assessing the record. These statements may be included in the personal narrative.

#### B. Consistency, Quantity vs. Quality and Progress

A pattern of significant research, scholarly, and creative activity demonstrating continuing development is expected. Consistency is as important as total output over the long term, but year-to-year variations in quantity are to be expected as projects are planned, developed, and completed. Activity should show evidence of overall planning, as opposed to isolated, ad hoc projects. Extraordinary circumstances, such as significant understaffing in the individual's department during a given year, which divert time and energy from scholarship, should be considered in appropriate cases. Such circumstances, if applicable, should be explained and documented in the annual review, vita, or elsewhere in the dossier as deemed appropriate by the candidate and the supervisor.

There is no required proportion of output by category. Acceptable approaches to research, scholarship, and creative activities include concentration in one area OR a combination of several areas. Significant scholarly activity is expected: a pattern of low level activity is not acceptable. Evaluations of quantity must be applied with flexibility and common sense. Length of articles, books, presentations, or reports is not a measure of their merit.

Library faculty are reviewed according to the schedule set forth in UW Regulation 2-7 and SAPP 2.7.1: Procedures for Implementing and Evaluating Rolling Contracts. Scholarly activity for the entire period under review should show consistent accomplishment.

In general, it should be possible to document some tangible progress at each review. Full credit will be given only upon actual publication or presentation. For long-term, substantive research projects, evidence of significant progress is expected. Examples of such evidence are copies of correspondence with editors or other designated reviewers, or a statement from the candidate summarizing progress to date if copies of the work or associated correspondence are not feasible to include. In any case, there must be clear, unambiguous documentation of research, publication, or other work listed as being in progress. The judgment of what constitutes a reasonable time period for work to remain in progress will be guided by the circumstances of each case and the nature of the activity.

#### C. Definitions and Guiding Principles

Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines research as: careful or diligent search; **studious inquiry or examination; especially: investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws** [emphasis added]; the collecting of information about a particular subject.

Scholarship is defined as the acquisition, creation, or dissemination of knowledge or learning through study or research in a field.

Research and scholarship in fields outside of librarianship, including creative contributions in the fine arts or literature, are acceptable.

Research and scholarship include the following general categories:

- Research leading to the development of new knowledge or the expansion or

- reinterpretation of existing knowledge.
- Research leading to the development of techniques or systems that significantly improve library services, access to resources, or procedures.
- Publications, presentations, or other products involving literature searching, including in-depth searching on the open web.
  
- Publications, presentations, or other products involving significant judgment, evaluation, organization, and/or description based on expertise.

#### D. Justification

Reports of original research published in peer-reviewed journals remain vital to our profession, but are by no means the only examples of research and scholarship activities. As new or innovative opportunities to publish and present various kinds of work continue to emerge and grow in prominence, candidates may produce works that could arguably fall under research/scholarship, practice of librarianship, teaching, or service depending on an individual's perspective. Candidates may choose to place ambiguous or items under research and scholarship, but they should provide justification for their choices in the dossier. The personal narrative is an excellent vehicle for explaining the reasoning behind an item's placement in a particular category as well as its impact. In justifying the placement of an item under research, scholarly and creative activities, a candidate may discuss how others have benefited from the work and/or describe the process behind its development.

#### E. Representative Types of Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities

The following list of possible research and scholarship activities is intended to be representative, not necessarily exhaustive or prescriptive. The order of listing does not imply a ranked hierarchy of quality or merit.

1. Reports of completed research that fit the criteria in section D above.
2. Receipts of grants and awards for research proposals; or other evidence of research in progress. Receipt of a grant alone does not receive full credit as research or scholarship, but may be considered as research/scholarship in progress.
3. Publications in librarianship or other areas. Publications may be in print, electronic, multimedia, or other format and may appear in various types of media, including (but not limited to):
  - a. Nationally, internationally, or regionally disseminated scholarly/professional publications.
  - b. State and local scholarly/professional publications.
  - c. Substantive in-house publications, such as policies, procedures, guides, and bibliographies, including those disseminated on the open web. (See letter l in the following list for further guidance.)

#### Examples of Publications:

- a. Research articles, books, and book chapters.
- b. Literature review articles and/or other information sources of a subject field.
- c. Textbooks. Includes textbooks which present basic principles of a field and advanced textbooks. Does not include collections of readings or casebooks.
- d. Databases or digitization projects. The project must involve significant gathering, organizing, and/or creating intellectual content on the part of the candidate.

- e. Multimedia tools or other electronic media that significantly improve library services, access to resources, or procedures, such as major online tutorials.
- f. Philosophical essays on basic principles of librarianship (more substantive than opinion pieces).
- g. Descriptive and evaluative reports of library programs, policies or procedures (including, for example, ERIC reports).
- h. Bibliographies or Webliographies (annotated evaluative or exhaustive unannotated). A web guide created for one particular course is probably best evaluated in the category of teaching, but a substantive web subject guide that includes evaluative annotations or is intended to be comprehensive may be considered scholarship.
- i. Abstracts or indexes.
- j. Published reviews of books, serials, electronic media (databases, Internet sites, etc.) or other resources of interest to the library profession or subject fields in which the faculty member has expertise.
- k. Editing of books, journals, etc., that requires scholarly expertise.
- l. In-house catalogs, indexes, guides, bibliographies, policy or procedure manuals, or reports of applied research that improve and increase the use of the library. A substantive policy or procedure manual or other item produced primarily for in-house use, may be considered as research or scholarship when it involves significant exploration of the relevant literature and/or evaluation of other libraries' materials, and is mounted on the open web, presented to external colleagues, or otherwise disseminated to benefit other institutions.

Notes: Items such as procedure manuals, web subject guides, digitization projects, or contributions to blogs, wikis and other online tools should not be evaluated solely on the media of dissemination, audience, or venue of publication or presentation, but also on their quality, content, and impact, as well as the means of preparation involved. It is impossible to anticipate every imaginable activity and product and definitively state, for example, that all web subject guides belong in the teaching category, or that no procedure manuals qualify as research or scholarship.

- 4. Scholarly Presentations: Workshops and presentations dealing with areas of library or academic expertise and requiring significant organization and/or research in preparation may be evaluated as scholarship. Scholarly papers and presentations may be given for international, national, regional, or state audiences. The determination of whether a presentation falls under research/scholarship, service, practice of librarianship, or some other category depends on the nature of the audience as well as the content of the presentation.
- 5. Scholarly exhibits. Exhibits requiring significant research and/or expertise in their preparation. Routine in-house exhibits that do not require research or expertise may be evaluated in other areas such as service or other job responsibilities.
- 6. Creative Activities. Individuals choosing to document creative activities such as literature, art, music, or dramatic creations, performances, or exhibitions should indicate the relevance of the activity to the Libraries, the university, and/or the profession.

#### F. Multiple Iterations of Publications, Presentations, etc.

Sometimes there are opportunities for faculty to republish findings or give an encore presentation. This is indicative of relevant and in-demand scholarly work. Reprinting of an article in an anthology is evidence of its lasting importance and should be noted.

However, reprints of publications, simultaneous publications (i.e., identical or near identical content published both as a book chapter and a journal article), and identical or similar presentations given to different audiences do not count as distinct and separate scholarly efforts toward fixed term appointment or reappointment.

A presentation that is later published may be considered as a separate item when the content or extent differs significantly.

It is reasonable to note in the vita any reprints, multiple publishing venues and encore presentations; but multiple copies of the same content are unnecessary in the dossier.

It is the candidate's responsibility to document how content is unique, if clarification is needed.

#### G. Items that do not qualify as scholarship

The following are not acceptable as research/scholarship/creative activities, but may be evaluated in other categories, such as service, practice of librarianship, teaching, or outreach.

1. Editing of books, journals, etc., that is mechanical in nature (e.g., layout, style, spelling).
2. Documents resulting from campus service on committees, task forces, etc.
3. Press releases, news reports, and brief information articles on library programs (e.g., newsletter articles).
4. Opinion pieces, including letters to the editor and short responses to others' publications.
5. Official documents deriving from offices in professional/scholarly associations, consulting, government service, etc.
6. Policy and procedure manuals and other in-house publications that are not substantive and not shared with other institutions in any format are best evaluated under practice of librarianship.
7. Handouts and other guides produced for a particular course or library instruction session are best evaluated under teaching.
8. Publications in association journals by virtue of office (e.g., minutes and presidential letters).
9. Recording conference sessions.
10. Popular workshops and presentations on library issues to a general audience
11. Presentations not requiring advance preparation of a paper (e.g., membership on reactor panel, moderating a discussion, etc.).
12. Presentations at association meetings by virtue of office in the association.
13. Training presentations and workshops are typically considered service or librarianship.
14. Routine in-house exhibits that do not require research or expertise.
15. Professional development activities.

#### H. Measures of Quality

New models of peer review are becoming more common. Candidates and colleagues should bear in mind that the traditional model of anonymous peer review is not free from flaws and should not necessarily be considered the only standard of quality or importance.

External measures of quality include evaluations and documentation of scholarship by sources other than the individual performing the scholarship. The appropriate external measure depends on the type of activity and the medium of dissemination. National or regional activities may be evaluated by sources outside the university; in-house projects will be evaluated by library and university colleagues.

## 1. Publications.

- a. For books, reviews are the major external measure and are judged by the medium of dissemination.
- b. For articles, published responses in the literature are the major external measure.
- c. For in-house publications, responses from colleagues and users are the primary external measure.
- d. Certain quantitative measures may be acceptable as secondary evidence, but cannot stand alone:
  - i. For books, documented evidence of sales.
  - ii. For articles, frequency of citation.
  - iii. Quotation in other publications, except quotations from book reviews used in advertising.
  - iv. Reprinting in another medium after the original publication date.  
For online resources, documentation of “hits,” links from other resources, or other appropriate evidence of dissemination and/or use, as available.

Note: The lack of external review or comment does not invalidate the worth of a publication.

## 2. Presentations.

- a. Published reviews, including recorded commentary in proceedings.
- b. Formal evaluations distributed to the audience and collected and compiled by a neutral party.
- c. Informal evaluations.
- d. Number of attendees.

Note: The lack of external review or comment does not invalidate the worth of a presentation.

## 3. Other.

- a. Grants, prizes awarded for completed scholarship.
- b. Unsolicited letters sent to the individual or to the Dean or a department head.

Note: Letters obviously solicited by the individual him/herself may not be used in evaluating scholarship and may be detrimental.

## **IV. Guidelines for Professional Service**

Service activities draw upon one’s academic and professional expertise in serving the campus, community, state, nation, and the world. Care should be taken that service activities do not detract from other responsibilities.

### A. Representative measures of Professional Service:

1. Participation and leadership in international, national, regional, and state library-related professional organizations and activities. Membership alone is not sufficient.
2. Active participation in groups, other than professional organizations, that serve the community or higher education. Participation in non-library related community groups should be omitted unless it involves the candidate’s academic or professional expertise.
3. Consultation in a professional capacity.
4. Giving talks, tours, special presentations, or seminars to faculty, students, or community groups. Presentations requiring library/academic expertise and significant organization or research in preparation may be evaluated as scholarly or creative activities. Presentations

performed in the course of the Practice of Librarianship, i.e., library tours or instruction, will be evaluated as such.

5. Organization of professional meetings, seminars, and institutes not involving responsibility for content.

#### B. Representative measures of University-Related Activities:

1. Participation in University and Library faculty governance.
2. Serving on or advising University and Library committees, task forces, councils, or boards. Departmental committee work that bears directly on the Practice of Librarianship is evaluated in that category. Committee service by virtue of an individual's position is evaluated under Practice of Librarianship or Administration. Participation in Library or University social or outreach events is typically not considered service unless the individual chairs or coordinates the event.

### **V. Guidelines for Promotion to Full Librarian**

#### A. Statement of Policy:

Associate librarians who achieve national recognition and demonstrate ongoing excellence in all aspects of librarianship, scholarship, and service should be encouraged by peers and department heads to initiate candidacy for promotion to full librarian. The document Best Practices for Promotion to Full Professor: Philosophy, Standards, Strategies, and Best Practices for Candidates emphasizes that readiness for promotion to full professor is more important than setting a schedule for promotion. After consulting with the Dean of Libraries, librarians who proceed as candidates for full librarian will supply a dossier of evidence to demonstrate their readiness similar to the process used for promotion to associate librarian.

#### B. The Role of Full Librarians:

The Best Practices document speaks to the need for academic units to have a mix of assistant, associate, and full professors. A blend of experience brings freshness, reliability, and disciplinary leadership to departments and the institution. Faculty should be hired based on their potential to become full librarians, and the library faculty and administration should cultivate, encourage, and support librarians in their paths through assistant, associate, and full ranks.

Full librarians model librarianship, scholarship, and service for the Libraries, the university, and the discipline. They are not only grounded and recognized as experts in their specialty areas of librarianship, but they also function as ambassadors for the University Libraries within the university community, the State, regional partnerships, and the larger national and international academic library community.

Full librarians take on leadership roles in library and university committees, professional organizations, and initiatives backed by consortia and other partnerships. Wisdom, disciplinary and institutional knowledge, and expertise developed through ongoing successful practice give full librarians the foundation and standing to explore, innovate, and implement ideas that further the profession.

#### C. Criteria for Promotion to Full Librarian:

In general, the successful candidate for full librarian will have a sustained and expanding record of librarianship, scholarship, and service. Following UW Regulation 2-7, Administrative duties included in the faculty job description shall be considered when a decision about promotion is

made.

Associate librarians should consult with peers, department heads, and the Dean about the prospects for a successful promotion. Candidates may withdraw before the end of the promotion process if they determine that aspects of their dossiers need to be strengthened. While some faculty may wish to remain as associate librarians for a variety of reasons, denial of promotion should not discourage librarians from making a more robust case for promotion in the future.

Successful candidates for full librarian will demonstrate advanced competency in librarianship:

- Continuous positive evaluations of job performance by peers and supervisors, as evidenced in annual administrative reviews, unsolicited letters of evaluation, or other recognition
- A record of increasing responsibility or expertise related to job responsibilities
- Demonstrated versatility and a readiness to adapt to ever-changing library environments
- Initiatives that improve workflows or enhance library services
- Collegiality and willing participation in cross-departmental teams or projects that forward the work of the Libraries
- Perennial positive evaluations of teaching when teaching workshops, course-integrated instruction, or credit-bearing courses are part of the librarian's work responsibilities

While the library faculty's supplemental guidelines related to research, scholarly, and creative activities recognize a broad range of undertakings as acceptable scholarship, national recognition and peer review are critical for the faculty member seeking promotion to full librarian. Successful candidates for full librarian will demonstrate a sustained, varied, and advanced record of scholarship:

- At least a portion of scholarly activities have been published in peer-reviewed journals
- Presentations selected through a competitive process for national or international conferences reflect the value of and interest in the librarian's contribution to the field.
- Invitations to submit book chapters, articles, edit books, or present at national or international conferences demonstrate national recognition of a librarian's expertise related to a topic.
- Textbooks and published educational materials may reach deep within or beyond the field of librarianship to learners in a variety of disciplines.
- Serving as a journal editor, book editor, peer reviewer, or regular columnist for a journal or newsletter may blur boundaries between scholarship and service, but these functions reflect recognition of a librarian's expertise or ability to fill such roles

Scholarship plays a role in advancing the ever-changing field of librarianship, but so does service. Regional, national, and international organizations and partnerships create professional development opportunities for librarians, teachers, board members, and volunteers who carry out the work of libraries and information agencies worldwide, and they create standards, manuals, and educational resources to guide that work. Librarian service on such committees keeps these organizations and projects functioning for the good of many. Candidates for full librarian will demonstrate a rich record of service:

- Leadership on library committees and task forces that carry out important work of the organization



- Leadership on standing or ad hoc university committees that write university policy, carry out university governance, and contribute to the university's teaching, research, and extension functions
- Participation and leadership on standing or ad hoc committees in regional, national, or international organizations related to libraries or archives, information access, education, disciplinary fields, or information technology.
- Conference or program planning at a regional, national, or international level
- Publications or presentations

Supporting documents:

McCracken-Flesher, Caroline. (2010) Best Practices for Promotion to Full Professor: Philosophy, Standards, Strategies, and Best Practices for Candidates. Retrieved from [http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/\\_files/docs/pyth\\_full\\_prof.pdf](http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/_files/docs/pyth_full_prof.pdf)

## **VI. Guidelines for Optional Peer Review for Associate or Full Librarians**

In rare circumstances, a faculty member with either a positive or negative annual performance review may request a peer review of their case by the Libraries Reappointment and Promotion Committee.

The faculty member is responsible for notifying the Libraries Reappointment and Promotion Committee and the Dean's office, in a timely manner, that they are requesting an optional peer review. The faculty member will submit a dossier including a personal narrative, their prior four annual reviews, and any evidence of continued growth in all areas of their job description. The committee will evaluate the faculty member's dossier and forward a recommendation for consideration by the Libraries Dean. The recommendation will also be shared with and acknowledged by the candidate.