

Department of Sociology Criteria for Appointment, Evaluation, and Promotion of Professional Track Faculty

Approved May 16, 2025

This document provides guidance for professional track faculty seeking promotion; for department, college, and university committees who are responsible for evaluating candidates for appointment or promotion to mid- and third-level ranks; and for external letter writers (when applicable). It aims to provide general criteria for evaluating candidates. However, this document should not be viewed as a checklist of mandatory requirements for candidates seeking promotion. Instead, it should function as a set of guidelines to inform a holistic review.

I. Overarching Principles

- In accordance with the University of Maryland Policy and Procedures on Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty (II-1.00), and the UM Guidelines for Appointment, Evaluation, and Promotion of Professional Track Faculty, professional track faculty have duties and are evaluated within one or more domains of faculty activity: research, teaching, administration, and service.
- Evaluative criteria should be informed by empirical data and by best practices as much as possible.
- Procedures should reflect the core values of the department and university.
- All criteria established below should be applied to the specific job duties and percentages established in each faculty member's contract.

II. Instructional Faculty

A. Titles and Qualifications

Faculty whose duties are primarily instructional have three ranks: Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Principal Lecturer. These ranks do not carry tenure. Faculty in these ranks are expected to contribute to the overall undergraduate teaching mission of the department.

Lecturer

Appointees will have a proven record of effective teaching within the discipline and at least one year of instruction or at least 5 years' experience practicing within the discipline. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointees to this rank are expected to deliver high-quality teaching as evidenced by syllabi and other course materials, student evaluations, teaching awards, and/or direct faculty observations, as appropriate. Appointments to this rank are typically one to three years and are renewable.

Senior Lecturer

In addition to the qualifications required of Lecturers, appointees must have a proven record of exemplary teaching over the course of at least five cumulative

years of full-time instruction or its equivalent as a Lecturer (or similar appointment at another institution). The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments to this rank are typically one to five years and are renewable.

Principal Lecturer

In addition to the qualifications required of Senior Lecturers, appointees must have a proven record of exemplary teaching over the course of at least five years of full-time service or its equivalent as a Senior Lecturer (or similar appointment at another institution). The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments are typically made as five-year contracts.

B. Evaluative Criteria

1. Teaching

Appropriate to rank, faculty must have a record of high-quality teaching as evidenced by syllabi and other course materials, student evaluations, teaching awards, and/or direct faculty observations, as appropriate. Faculty are expected to contribute to the overall undergraduate teaching mission of the department by teaching both courses in their specialty area and courses that meet core departmental requirements.

Assessments of teaching impact may take into account any of the following:

- Creation of teaching materials and methods that incorporate diverse perspectives appropriate for the course content.
- Engagement in training activities related to new teaching pedagogy, technology, or course innovation.
- Creation, use, and/or dissemination of Open Education Resources, technology (e.g., statistical software), or other materials that reduce the cost of education for students.
- Creation of new courses or curriculum to address needs or gaps in the department's undergraduate curriculum.
- Activities that facilitate community-based teaching and learning (e.g., public presentations through libraries or community groups, webinars, disseminating findings from community-engaged research with community stakeholders).

2. Mentorship and Service

Appropriate to rank and assigned duties, faculty should demonstrate a record of meaningful mentorship of undergraduate students and/or engaged service to the department, campus, or discipline. Assessment of mentorship.

Assessments of mentorship should take into account the substantive content and quality of mentorship provided, rather than the number of students

mentored, and may consider any of the following:

- Undergraduate student mentoring in research. Examples include undergraduate thesis supervision, running labs or other collaborative groups of students engaged in research, and other forms of mentoring.
- Engagement in mentorship through professional organizations, student clubs, or other student-centered organizations or programs.
- Participation in career development workshops and other events throughout the academic year.

Service activities may include:

- Active participation in departmental committees.
- Participation in college-wide or campus-wide committees.
- Service to professional organizations.
- Serving as a faculty liaison for student groups.

C. Dossier Elements for Appointment or Promotion to Senior Lecturer and Principal Lecturer

Candidates for any rank shall submit the following materials. Additional detail may be found in the AEP Manual and Guidelines maintained by the Office of Faculty Affairs.

- A current curriculum vitae
- A personal statement
- A teaching statement
- A teaching portfolio (detailed guidelines on the portfolio can be found on the Teaching & Learning Transformation Center's [website](#))
- For current faculty seeking a promotion, peer observations and a compilation of Student Feedback on Course Experiences from courses taught at the university
- For those seeking appointment or promotion to Senior Lecturer or Principal Lecturer, names of potential evaluators (internal and/or external)

III. Research Faculty

A. Titles and Qualifications

Faculty whose duties are primarily focused on research have four ranks: Post-Doctoral Associate, Assistant Research Professor, Associate Research Professor, and Research Professor. These ranks do not carry tenure. Faculty in these ranks are expected to conduct research or manage research programs, whether their own or under the supervision of a principal investigator.

Post-Doctoral Associate

This title is intended for recent PhDs with established or prospective research skills who are hired to support departmental research activities. Under this appointment, the individual is expected to pursue their own research or execute research project goals as developed and defined by other principal investigators. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD (or equivalent). Appointments to this rank are typically one year and are renewable for a maximum of three years.

Assistant Research Professor

Appointees will have demonstrated superior research ability through conducting independent research and publishing in refereed journals, and been a PI or Co-I on one or more awarded research grants. It is also desirable that the candidate has proven qualified and competent to direct the work of others (such as technicians, graduate students, other senior research personnel). There should be clear evidence that the candidate is capable of acting in an independent manner in relation to carrying out research. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD (or equivalent). Appointments to this rank are typically one to three years and are renewable.

Associate Research Professor

In addition to the qualifications required of Assistant Research Professors, appointees should have extensive successful experience in scholarly or creative endeavors, and the ability to propose, develop, and manage major research projects as a PI. Research should have made an original, substantive contribution in Sociology or a related discipline. They should show significant potential for continued success in research. Publications should be of high quality. Participation in review of refereed articles and/or grant proposals is expected. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD (or equivalent). Appointments to this rank are typically one to five years and are renewable.

Research Professor

In addition to the qualifications required of Associate Research Professors, appointees should have demonstrated a degree of proficiency sufficient to establish an excellent reputation among regional, national, and international colleagues. Appointees should provide tangible evidence of sound scholarly production in research, publications, professional achievements or other distinguished and creative activity. The candidate shall have demonstrated leadership in Sociology or a related discipline, e.g., should be recognized by the external community through awards, roles in international and national professional organizations, and serving in editorial roles for peer-reviewed journals. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD (or equivalent). Appointments are typically made as five-year contracts.

B. Evaluative Criteria

The department recognizes multiple types of research impact. Some research programs have great scholarly impact, introducing new concepts, methodological innovations, or theoretical paradigms of thought. Other research programs have great public impact,

reaching the public through media coverage, blog posts, policy reports, and other public-facing fora. The department also places emphasis on community-based research initiatives, which can have significant local impact and policy applications for local communities. The department also values contributions by faculty in the areas of mentorship and service. Thus, assessments of research faculty may take into account any of the following, as applicable:

Scholarly Research

The candidate's published record must give a sense among scholars both on and off the campus that the individual has established themselves as a scholar of note in one or more areas of expertise. The primary way of assessing this is through refereed publications: ideally, the candidate will have some publications in widely regarded (and often cited), peer-reviewed academic journals, and/or highly regarded and peer-reviewed research monographs published by academic presses.

Additional elements to be considered include:

- The development of new theoretical approaches, new methodological innovations, new concepts, or new paradigm shifts to relevant subfields.
- Selectivity and reputation of research publication outlets.
- Prizes or other honors awarded to publications by professional sociological or allied associations.
- Quantitative markers such as citation counts and H-index.
- Invited talks, invitations to review manuscripts or conference submissions, membership of editorial boards, memberships of professional associations or institutions by invitation or election.

Community-Based Research

- Prizes or other honors awarded by professional sociological or allied professional associations.
- Involvement in community-engaged research aimed at addressing relevant social issues that leads to publication or aiding public policy.
- Evidence of research capacity building or research management. These include the development of research products such as public-use social data and open-source computer code/packages and authorship of publicly-available technical reports
- Media coverage of the candidate's work.

Mentorship and Service

- Directing student research/thesis work, managing student research assistants or other research personnel, and student co-authorship of papers/presentations.

- Teaching evaluations by students/peers.
- Active participation in departmental committees.
- Participation in college-wide or campus-wide committees.
- Service to professional organizations.
- Serving as a faculty liaison for student groups.

C. Dossier Elements for Research Faculty

Candidates for appointment or promotion to Associate Research Professor and Research Professor shall submit the following materials. Additional detail may be found in the AEP Manual and Guidelines maintained by the Office of Faculty Affairs.

- A current curriculum vitae
- A personal research statement that will outline the Candidate's research goals and professional development
- Copies of five relevant publications
- For those seeking appointment or promotion to Associate Research Professor or Research Professor, names of potential evaluators (internal and/or external)

IV. Administrative Faculty

A. Titles and Qualifications

Faculty whose duties contain a significant percentage of administrative duties use various titles. Two series are currently in use: Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Lecturer and Academic Advisor. These ranks do not carry tenure. Faculty in these ranks are expected to contribute to the overall undergraduate teaching mission of the department and oversee core administrative roles.

Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies

Appointees will have a proven record of effective teaching within the discipline and at least one year of instruction or at least 5 years' experience practicing within the discipline. They must show potential for excellence in the administration and/or management of academic programs and are expected to engage in activities such as developing curriculum and/or innovative means for delivering curriculum and training and supervising undergraduate office staff. Appointees also work with faculty and teaching assistants to help them become effective educators. Appointees to this rank must show promise to deliver high-quality teaching as evidenced by syllabi and other course materials, student evaluations, teaching awards, and/or direct faculty observations, as appropriate. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments to this rank are typically one to three years and are renewable.

Lecturer and Academic Advisor

Appointees will have a proven record of effective teaching within the discipline and at least one year of instruction or at least 5 years' experience practicing within the discipline. Appointees to this rank must show promise to deliver high-quality teaching as evidenced by syllabi and other course materials, student evaluations, teaching awards, and/or direct faculty observations, as appropriate. They must show potential for excellence in the advising of undergraduate students (prospective, majors, and minors). Appointees also plan internship and career development opportunities for the undergraduate program, plan and lead orientations, and serve as backup for the Director of Undergraduate Studies. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments to this rank are typically one to three years and are renewable.

Senior Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies

In addition to the qualifications required of a Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies, appointees must have a proven record of exemplary teaching over the course of at least five cumulative years of full-time instruction or its equivalent as a Lecturer (or similar appointment at another institution). Appointees must also possess a record of demonstrating leadership in proactively identifying and pursuing means of growing the undergraduate program (including its majors and minors), reshaping the curriculum in response to market demands, and increasing the overall quality of the undergraduate experience in the department. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments to this rank are typically one to five years and are renewable.

Senior Lecturer and Academic Advisor

In addition to the qualifications required of a Lecturer and Academic Advisor, appointees must have a proven record of exemplary teaching over the course of at least five cumulative years of full-time instruction or its equivalent as a Lecturer (or similar appointment at another institution). Appointees must also possess a record of demonstrating leadership in proactively identifying and pursuing means of improving the undergraduate student experience in the department, and developing processes and materials to streamline and strengthen the student advising. Appointees must have a proven record of growing partnerships with the college and other career planning resources, both on campus and in the community. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments to this rank are typically one to five years and are renewable.

Principal Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies

In addition to the qualifications required of a Senior Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies, appointees must have a proven record of exemplary teaching over the course of at least five years of full-time service or its equivalent as a Senior Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies (or similar appointment at another institution). Appointees must also have a proven record of exemplary

administration of the undergraduate program The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments are typically made as five-year contracts.

Principal Lecturer and Academic Advisor

In addition to the qualifications required of a Senior Lecturer and Academic Advisor, appointees must have a proven record of exemplary teaching over the course of at least five years of full-time service or its equivalent as a Senior Lecturer and Academic Advisor (or similar appointment at another institution). Appointees must also have a proven record of exemplary oversight of advising activities in the department. The normal minimum requirement is a PhD. Appointments are typically made as five-year contracts.

B. Evaluative Criteria

1. Teaching

Assessments of teaching impact use the same criteria established in II.B.1 above.

2. Administration

Appropriate to rank, faculty should demonstrate a record of effective execution of their administrative tasks with an eye towards providing exceptional customer service to the populations they serve, consistent with their specific duties.

Assessments of administration may take into account any of the following:

- Continually assessing and improving administrative processes assigned to them.
- Development of and participation in career planning workshops for students and development of activities for the department's faculty.
- Working collaboratively with the Department Chair to identify program goals and making progress towards meeting them.
- Exercising sound decision making in response to crises and challenges.
- Providing effective oversight and mentoring of undergraduate office staff.

C. Dossier Elements for Appointment or Promotion to the Senior Lecturer and Principal Lecturer Ranks in IV.A

Candidates for any rank shall submit the following materials. Additional detail may be found in the AEP Manual and Guidelines maintained by the Office of Faculty Affairs.

- A current curriculum vitae
- A personal statement addressing all areas of the duties associated with the role they are seeking

- A teaching statement
- A teaching portfolio (detailed guidelines on the portfolio can be found on the Teaching & Learning Transformation Center's [website](#))
- For current faculty seeking a promotion, peer observations and a compilation of Student Feedback on Course Experiences from courses taught at the university
- For those seeking appointment or promotion to Senior Lecturer or Principal Lecturer, names of potential evaluators (internal and/or external)