

**Department of Sociology Criteria for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure**  
**Adopted March 13, 2024**

This document provides guidance for faculty seeking promotion; for department, college, and university committees who are responsible for evaluating candidates for promotion; and for external letter writers. It aims to provide comprehensive 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 of candidates.

**I. Overarching Principles**

- In accordance with the University of Maryland Policy and Procedures on Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty (II-1.00), tenured and tenure-track faculty (T/TT) are evaluated in three domains of faculty activity: research, teaching, 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.
- Faculty apply a diverse set of methodological approaches to sociological research, and different methodological traditions have different norms for research transparency, co-authorship, tools and software, etc. Procedures should recognize the intrinsic value of, and normative differences between, diverse approaches.

**II. Assistant to Associate Professor with Tenure**

**A. Research**

**1. Research Productivity**

Candidates must have established a record of research productivity as evidenced by publication of scholarly outputs (e.g., journal articles, books, chapters in books, or other relevant outlets). The primary metric for evaluating productivity is the publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals or peer-reviewed books. Book chapters and other scholarly products (e.g., editorial, popular science articles, blog posts, non-peer reviewed preprints, etc.) will be considered part of the research productivity record, but they are generally considered secondary, and candidates should be aware that greater weight will be given to papers and books in peer-reviewed outlets.

The department recognizes the value of conducting research on diverse or vulnerable populations and the unique challenges involved with data acquisition and publication that such efforts may entail. The department also places high value on the administration of original surveys or other shared data sources. Because survey administration and other forms of original data collection (e.g., ethnography,

qualitative interviews) may require additional time and effort relative to the analysis of secondary data, the department takes these activities into consideration when evaluating research productivity. We also recognize that some research programs take more time to come to fruition, and we value evidence of a trajectory of productivity as well as markers of past productivity.

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

- Pattern of sustained publication of research in peer reviewed outlets at a rate appropriate for one's research program and method. We recognize that some research methods (e.g., those involving original data collection, community-engaged research, open science, etc.) will be more time-consuming than others; and some research programs will be more collaborative or team-based than others.
- Publication of book chapters, reviews, editorials, and public sociology articles.
- Curation or creation of new public datasets.
- Creation and open sharing of research or analysis tools, computer code, or platforms for hosting datasets to facilitate collaborative science.
- Participation in conferences, colloquia, workshops.
- Active pursuit of external funds, independent of funding amounts.<sup>1</sup>
- Open science practices (including efforts to ensure reproducibility, or providing access to research materials) and open access publication (such as open access journals, "green open-access" options, and/or preprint repositories, in accordance with UMD's Equitable Access policy<sup>2</sup>).

## **2. Research Impact**

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.

The department also 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.

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

- Potential to develop new theoretical approaches, new methodological innovations, new concepts, or new paradigm shifts to relevant subfields.
- Selectivity and reputation of research publication outlets.<sup>3</sup>
- Prizes or other honors awarded to publications by professional sociological associations.<sup>4</sup>
- Involvement in community-engaged research aimed at addressing relevant social issues that leads to publication or public policy.<sup>5</sup>
- Quantitative markers such as citation counts and H-index.

## **B. Teaching**

Candidates 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 teaching mission of the department by contributing to both undergraduate and graduate teaching, and 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 undergraduate and/or graduate education.
- 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).

### **1. Mentorship**

Candidates should demonstrate a record of meaningful mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students. The department recognizes that candidates may have a distinct set of strengths or preferences regarding mentorship: some may

predominantly mentor undergraduate students while others focus on graduate training. Assessment of mentorship should take into account the substantive content and quality of mentorship provided, rather than the number of students mentored.

Evidence of a commitment to mentorship may include any of the following:

- Undergraduate or graduate student mentoring in research. Examples include undergraduate thesis supervision, running labs or other collaborative groups of students engaged in research, involvement of graduate students in research projects leading to publications, and other forms of mentoring.
- Engagement in mentorship through professional organizations, student clubs, or other student-centered organizations or programs.
- Participation in graduate studies career development workshops and other graduate events through the academic year.
- Development of materials or other resources to aid in graduate student professionalization.

### **C. Service**

Candidates must have a record of high-quality service to their department, university, and profession. Candidates for Associate Professor are expected to actively participate in 1-2 committees per year. There are multiple ways to demonstrate engagement and service (candidates are not expected to demonstrate all):

- Active participation in departmental committees.
- Participation in college-wide or campus-wide committees.
- Service on editorial boards or editorships.
- Reviewing for journals and academic presses.
- Service to professional associations (e.g., through elected or appointed positions).
- Development and implementation in workshops aimed at fostering career advancement for undergraduate students or graduate students, or taking on leadership roles for such activities.
- Faculty liaison for student groups.
- Service on grant panels or reviewing for granting agencies.
- Community outreach or engagement with the broader local, state, or national communities (e.g., writing reports for local stakeholders, providing testimony).

### III. Full Professor

#### A. Research

##### 1. Research Productivity

Candidates must have established a record of sustained research productivity as evidenced by publication of scholarly outputs (e.g., journal articles, books, chapters in books, or other relevant outlets). The primary metric for evaluating productivity is the publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals or peer-reviewed books. Book chapters and other scholarly products (e.g., editorial, popular science articles, blog posts, non-peer reviewed preprints, etc.) will be considered part of the research productivity record, but they are generally considered secondary, and candidates should be aware that greater weight will be given to papers and books in peer-reviewed outlets.

The department recognizes the value of conducting research on diverse or vulnerable populations and the unique challenges involved with data acquisition and publication that such efforts may entail. We highly value community-engaged research approaches that involve local stakeholders in research design, data collection and analysis, and reporting. The department also places high value on the administration of original surveys or other shared data sources. Because survey administration and other forms of original data collection (e.g., ethnography, qualitative interviews, community-engaged approaches) may require additional time and effort relative to the analysis of secondary data, the department takes these activities into consideration when evaluating research productivity. We also recognize that some research programs take more time to come to fruition, and we value evidence of a trajectory of productivity as well as markers of past productivity.

Faculty seeking promotion to the level of Full Professor should have advanced beyond their junior professor scholarship to produce research that is more ambitious, including, for example: longer-term projects, research in new directions, new data collection, new collaborations, or contributions to research and data infrastructure (such as data sets or other resources).

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

- Pattern of sustained publication of research in peer reviewed outlets at a rate appropriate for one's research program and method. We recognize that some research methods (e.g., those involving original data collection, community-engaged research, open science, etc.) will be more time-consuming than others; and some research programs will be more collaborative or team-based than others.
- Publication of book chapters, reviews, editorials, and public sociology

articles.

- Curation or creation of new public datasets.
- Creation and open sharing of research or analysis tools, computer code, or platforms for hosting datasets to facilitate collaborative science.
- Participation in conferences, colloquia, workshops.
- Active pursuit of external funds, independent of funding amounts.<sup>1</sup>
- Open science practices (including efforts to ensure reproducibility, or providing access to research materials) and open access publication (such as open access journals, “green open-access” options, and/or preprint repositories, in accordance with UMD’s Equitable Access policy<sup>2</sup>).

## **2. Research Impact**

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.

The department also 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. For promotion to Full Professor, research productivity should evince an upward trajectory in quality and/or quantity – such as defined below – one that appears likely to continue in the next phase of the professor’s career.

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

- Potential to develop new theoretical approaches, new methodological innovations, new concepts, or new paradigm shifts to relevant subfields.
- Selectivity and reputation of research publication outlets.<sup>3</sup>
- Prizes or other honors awarded to publications by professional sociological associations.<sup>4</sup>
- Involvement in community-engaged research aimed at addressing relevant social issues that leads to publication or public policy.<sup>5</sup>
- Quantitative markers such as citation counts and H-index.

Those seeking promotion to the level of full professor should have demonstrated evidence of increasingly wide impact, such as invited lectures and positions, awards and honors at the national or international level, appointed or elected positions in professional academic associations, or other indicators of growing reputational recognition.

## **B. Teaching**

Candidates 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 teaching mission of the department by contributing to both undergraduate and graduate teaching, and 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 undergraduate and/or graduate education.
- 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).

### **1. Mentorship**

Candidates should demonstrate a record of meaningful mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students. The department recognizes that candidates may have a distinct set of strengths or preferences regarding mentorship: some may predominantly mentor undergraduate students while others focus on graduate training. However, for promotion to Full Professor there is an expectation of sustained, successful mentorship of graduate students in our program. Assessment of mentorship should take into account the substantive content and quality of mentorship provided, rather than the number of students mentored.

Evidence of a commitment to mentorship may include any of the following:

- Serving as committee chair (preferred) and/or member on successful dissertation committees in our program.
- Advising, consulting, and collaborating with graduate students on projects, with the student as either lead or co-author, that lead to successful publication of research.
- Other undergraduate or graduate 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 graduate studies career development workshops and other graduate events through the academic year.
- Development of materials or other resources to aid in graduate student professionalization.

### **C. Service**

Candidates must have a record of high-quality service to their department, university, and profession. Candidates for Full Professor are expected to actively participate in 2-3 committees per year. There are multiple ways to demonstrate engagement and service (candidates are not expected to demonstrate all):

- Active participation in departmental committees.
- Participation in college-wide or campus-wide committees.
- Service on editorial boards or editorships.
- Reviewing for journals and academic presses.
- Service to professional associations (e.g., through elected or appointed positions).
- Development and implementation in workshops aimed at fostering career advancement for undergraduate students or graduate students, or taking on leadership roles for such activities.
- Faculty liaison for student groups.
- Service on grant panels or reviewing for granting agencies.
- Community outreach or engagement with the broader local, state, or national communities (e.g., writing reports for local stakeholders, providing testimony).

<sup>1</sup> There is no requirement for obtaining external funding. Expectations for obtaining funding are considered within the context of disciplinary norms, availability and access to funding opportunities appropriate for one's research program, and the need for external funds to sustain one's program of research. The department recognizes both relatively low funding rates for many areas of sociology and evidence for a high degree of arbitrariness in the grant review processes.

<sup>2</sup> Under the Equitable Access Policy, "Faculty members grant certain nonexclusive rights in their scholarly articles to the University of Maryland. This grant of nonexclusive rights, called the Equitable Access License, allows the University to distribute peer-reviewed versions of the articles free-of-charge to the general public, through DRUM, the University of Maryland's online institutional repository. The policy provides waiver and embargo options to help protect authors' freedom and control over their work" (available at: <https://equitableaccess.umd.edu/>).

<sup>3</sup> The department encourages caution in the use of impact factors and citation counts in evaluating faculty. Impact factors may not necessarily indicate research quality or impact. Faculty should avoid publishing in predatory journals.

<sup>4</sup> Candidates should not be negatively assessed for the absence of awards or prizes, since not all subfields award prizes with the frequency.

<sup>5</sup> Community-engaged research activities might include: relationship building with community stakeholders, soliciting research questions from community stakeholders, recruitment at outreach events, curating and managing a community stakeholder advisory board, preparing reports/infographics/presentations for community stakeholders, responding to community members' feedback on preliminary research findings.