

# **Retention, Tenure and Promotion Criteria History Department, Sonoma State University (Effective Fall 2021)**

## **Introduction**

The criteria in this document are used to evaluate applications for reappointment, tenure, or promotion (RTP) for tenure-track faculty in the Department of History. The Department of History expects that candidates for reappointment, tenure, or promotion present evidence to the departmental RTP committee that they have met these criteria in order to receive a positive departmental recommendation.

Evaluation for RTP at Sonoma State University is made on the basis of three criteria outlined in the university's RTP policy: teaching effectiveness, scholarly accomplishments, and university and community service. New and probationary faculty members will be informed of departmental expectations at the time of hire and throughout their probationary periods in departmental RTP evaluations.

## **Teaching Effectiveness**

Teaching effectiveness is a primary consideration in evaluating a candidate's performance. It can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, such as numerical scores from Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness (SETEs), qualitative SETE comments, peer observations by faculty members, and the candidate's self-assessment of teaching.

Although the Department of History considers SETE scores and comments as required by the university's RTP policy, it recognizes problems inherent in this data. The department understands that SETE scores and response rates may be lower for certain types of courses, such as new courses and General Education courses. Studies also suggest that student evaluations of teaching reflect biases of gender, race, and ethnicity of both students and instructors. The departmental RTP committee evaluates SETE scores within the context of departmental experience, seeking always to help candidates become better teachers. The Department of History invites candidates for reappointment, tenure, or promotion to address weaknesses in the SETE mode of evaluation in their self-assessment documents.

Teaching effectiveness will also be measured by peer observations conducted by faculty members within the History Department and when appropriate, from other departments. Peer observations will address teaching style and methods, learning objectives, course content, methods to evaluate student performance, and student engagement. Peer observers will recommend areas and strategies for improvement.

Faculty members may also have teaching-related duties outside of the classroom, such as supervising student interns, graduate students, and teaching assistants. Effectiveness in these teaching-related activities, as well as the development of new curriculum, new styles of pedagogy, and other teaching innovations, should be addressed by candidates in their self-assessment documents. Candidates for retention, tenure, and promotion are expected to contribute to the curriculum in the ways specified in the letter of hire.

To earn tenure and promotion, candidates need to do the following related to their teaching:

- Complete a self-assessment of teaching during each RTP review cycle that describes the candidate's teaching philosophy and practice as well as responses to constructive criticism by students and peers and details a plan for improvement.
- Maintain a minimum 3.75 mean score on the combined means of all SETE teaching items across all courses submitted for RTP evaluation. Any item receiving an average score of 2.50 or less needs to be specifically addressed in the self-assessment of teaching and professional activity, and specific steps to be taken to address the area(s) of weakness,
- Earn consistently positive student comments and peer recommendations on teaching and supervision,
- Produce syllabi that clearly delineate readings, assignments, and due dates.

Candidates for promotion to full professor should illustrate that they continue to meet the above teaching requirements after they gain tenure and should continue to meet these criteria throughout their career at SSU.

### **Scholarship, Research and Creative Achievements**

The Department of History expects that all of its faculty members maintain an active research agenda. The department RTP committee evaluates scholarship, research, and creative activities by considering the candidate's self-assessment, *curriculum vitae*, and other evidence that the candidate submits. Scholarship, research, and creative activities completed prior to tenure-line employment at Sonoma State University are not eligible for consideration, unless a candidate has negotiated a probationary credit. In that instance, scholarship completed during the credited period will be considered by the departmental RTP committee.

Candidates in their first year of a probationary period (their first year at Sonoma State or their first year after tenure) are expected to prepare, in consultation with the Department RTP Committee, a plan for scholarship, research, and creative activities. Candidates must describe their plan for scholarship, research, and creative activities in their initial self-assessment document for the probationary period and then describe progress toward and revisions of these goals in subsequent self-assessment documents.

Candidates for tenure and promotion in the Department of History are expected to demonstrate a significant dedication to scholarship, research, and active engagement with peers in their field of study during their probationary years that results in a pattern of completed products that have been positively evaluated by academic peers who are not a part of the Sonoma faculty.

To that end, candidates for tenure and promotion should present a package of research, scholarship, and creative activity that demonstrates on-going engagement with their primary field of study, including production of peer-reviewed scholarship, recognition by peers in their field, and an active, continuous scholarly agenda resulting in the production of relevant work.

To earn tenure and promotion, candidates need to produce some mix of scholarship that includes one peer-reviewed article, book chapter, or comparable publication as well as two of the following:

- Published monograph translation of historical sources
- Curation of a museum exhibit
- An advanced contract for a book with an academic publisher
- Three academic conference presentations or invited scholarly talks
- Three book reviews in academic journals
- A funded external grant or fellowship
- Authorship of a textbook or peer-reviewed monograph
- An additional article or book chapter

Candidates for promotion to full professor should produce new scholarship meeting the above requirements after they gain tenure.

### **University and Community Service**

The Department of History expects its faculty members to be good citizens in the life of the university and the broader community.

Candidates in their first year at Sonoma State are expected to focus on departmental level service, such as serving as the faculty advisor for the History Club, Phi Alpha Theta or as the internship coordinator. Candidates in their second year and beyond should broaden the scope of their service to the school and university levels. The Department of History recognizes different forms of service, such as the difference between being a committee chair and a committee member. Service to the department remains a constant throughout the years of employment.

Faculty members at a public university, in particular, have a responsibility to be engaged with the community. The Department of History expects all of its faculty members to be active in the lives of their communities, professional, geographical, and otherwise. While all community service is commendable, faculty members are particularly urged to engage in activities that permit them to interact in the life of the community as scholars, historians, and professors. The Department of History considers peer reviews, editorial work for journals and university presses, organizing conferences, and leadership of professional organizations to be important forms of service to the discipline.

By the time of application for tenure and promotion, candidates are expected to have completed one form of service in each of the following categories:

- Department internship coordinator, hiring committee, History Society advisor, or Director of Graduate Studies
- School of Social Sciences standing committees (e.g. Travel, RTP, Elections, etc.)
- University standing committee (e.g. Scholarships, Academic Freedom, EPC, FSAC, etc.)
- Professional or Community (advisory board, editorial board, conference coordinator, officer in a professional organization, etc.)

Candidates for promotion to full professor should perform this same level of service that meets the above requirements after they gain tenure.